

P o i n t



I n s i d e

BOO, DAMMIT.

Volume VIII, Number 2, October 30, 1998

Spotlight	1
Fighter Pilot	2
EC Update	2
Ultima Birthday Pics	3
OSI Birthday & Award Pics	4
In Ink	5
Japan Update	6
Tug of War	7
ORIGIN's Grand Prix	8
Calendar	8

Ultima Online Takes Over the World

Happy Birthday kudos go to *Ultima Online*, which turned one year old on September 24th. Congratulations to the UO development team, player relations, game masters and everyone else who has played a part of this history making game. It's been quite a ride, to say the least.



You want numbers of players? Try this on for size — UO enjoys more than 90,000 active registered users! What's even more interesting is that approximately half of those people log on every single day. These are players from all over the world, including places such as Calcutta, India, the Solomon Islands and Antarctica (Richard left a few copies on his recent trip there). The game is so popular that we now have servers in Europe and Japan. In fact, Japan even has a player relations department of their very own. (See related story, p. 6)

To date, articles about UO have been written in such prestigious publications as *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *LA Times* and the *New York Times*. UO has garnered a list of awards including the Academy of Interactive Arts and Sciences 1998 Online Game of the Year award, and the Best Online Only Game of 1998 award from the CNET Network. In Japan, *Ultima Online* was awarded the 1998 Computer Entertainment Software Academy (CESA) award for Technological Innovation honoring the most innovative software for 1998.

Just as importantly, UO fans have organized player-run lunches. The lunches are regularly held in New York, San Diego, Washington, DC and many places in between. This past weekend, several members of the UO team attended a luncheon at the Renaissance Festival in Dallas. But wait, there's more, because just this week we shipped *Ultima Online: The Second Age*!

The Second Age is full of new lands, creatures, chat features and even a translation program. But perhaps the most amazing thing about T2A is that the development team managed to put it together while overcoming some major hurdles, not the least of which was maintaining UO live. Said Rich Vogel of the feats of his development team, "We rule!"

We couldn't agree more. Congratulations!!!!

FOR BIRTHDAY PARTY PICTURES, GOTO 3

★ LOOK, MA! ★ I'M A FIGHTER PILOT!

Strange noises can be heard in the hallways that house Austin's Jane's development team. It's not Bitchin' Betty. It's not the goosebump-generating rumble of an F-15's afterburners. It's the voice of a very agitated flyboy shouting, "Ouch! That's gonna leave a mark!"

It's true, folks. Your very own Jane's team, sim-heads personified, are playing *Fighter Pilot* multiplayer for cash...after hours, of course! So much for the question of whether an action-oriented, less realistic, more in-your-face FUN flying game would be a success with all types of gamers.

We launched *Fighter Pilot* on Tuesday, October 13 and sent it out to more than 300 media people. That's a larger-than-normal roll-out designed to target newspapers nationwide and get coverage in their holiday gift guides. A custom mailing box designated its contents as a hot software gift that's got something to do with blowing stuff up. We've already confirmed that it'll be included in *Time* magazine's "Time Digital" gift guide on the 30th of November. That goes out to roughly 900,000 *Time* subscribers.

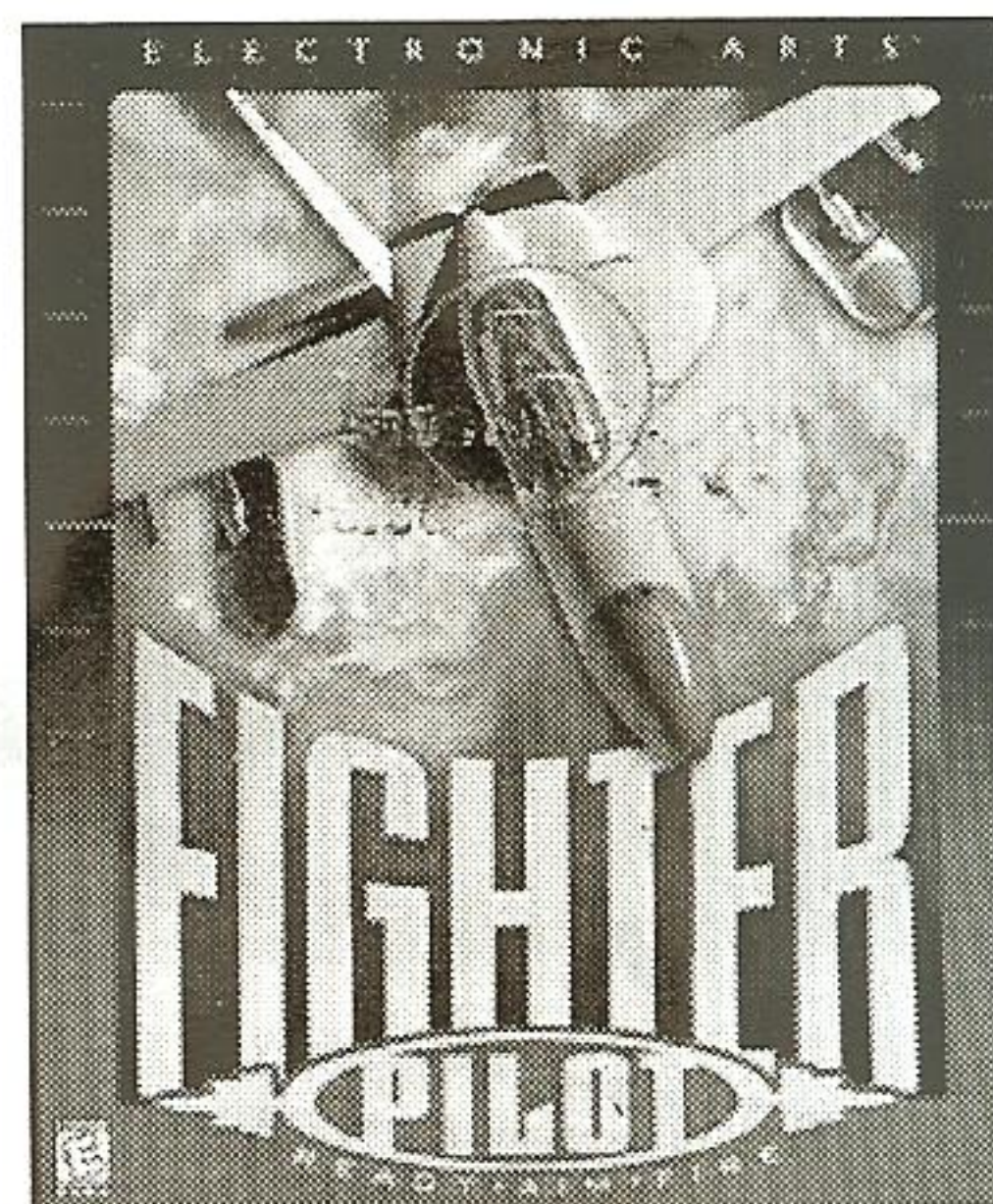
This fall we demoed the product to more than 60 top-tier consumer editors in New York. Attendees included *Newsweek*, *Time*, *CNN*, *Forbes*, *USA Today*, *The Washington Post*, *CBS News with Dan Rather* and other heavy hitters. **Bryan Walker** designed a terrific

demo mission in which a chimpanzee could blow something up in five seconds with one hand (paw?) tied behind its back. We made our point.

We've gone to great pains to make it clear exactly what *Fighter Pilot* is and what it isn't. So far we think they're getting it. We're very optimistic about scoring a number of major gift guides. We'll know more in a couple of weeks when the editors have had some time to play with it.

On the sales side, while there are no numbers from accounts yet, Walmart displays will hit 488 supercenters this weekend. According to Ron Segar, EA Regional Sales Manager in Dallas, the volume of *Fighter Pilot* sold into Walmart is the most for any EA product to date — exceeding even *Madden 99* and *Tiger Woods* initial orders!!!

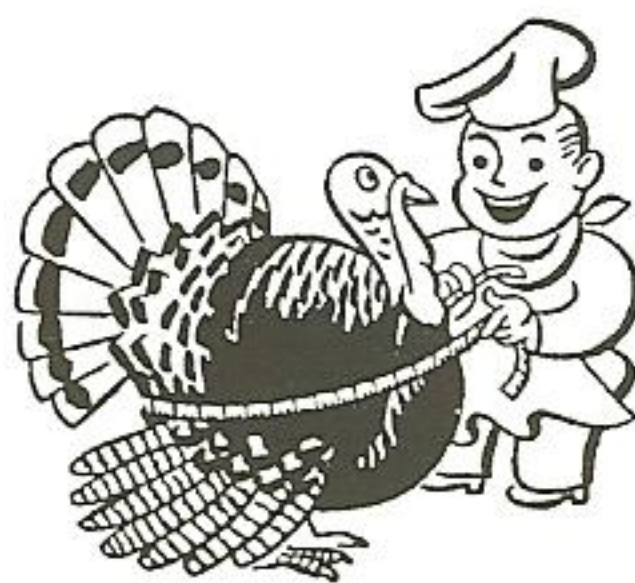
Congratulations to the team on this exciting new title!



News from your Entertainment Committee

Gobble! Gobble!

The annual Thanksgiving lunch will take place on Friday, November 20th. This year's luncheon will be catered by the popular Happy Foods, so you can bet there will be some fried turkey and Cajun inspired side dishes. The price of admission will be either \$3.00, three cans of food or a dessert. Friends are welcome. For more info, contact Cody Loyd.



Kid Stuff

Are you still a kid at heart? If so, Santa and his helpers are needed for the kid's holiday party, scheduled for Saturday, December 5th. There are lots of fun activities planned, and all ORIGIN offspring are welcome. Please contact Kathy Beagle for more info.

Jump, Jive and Wail

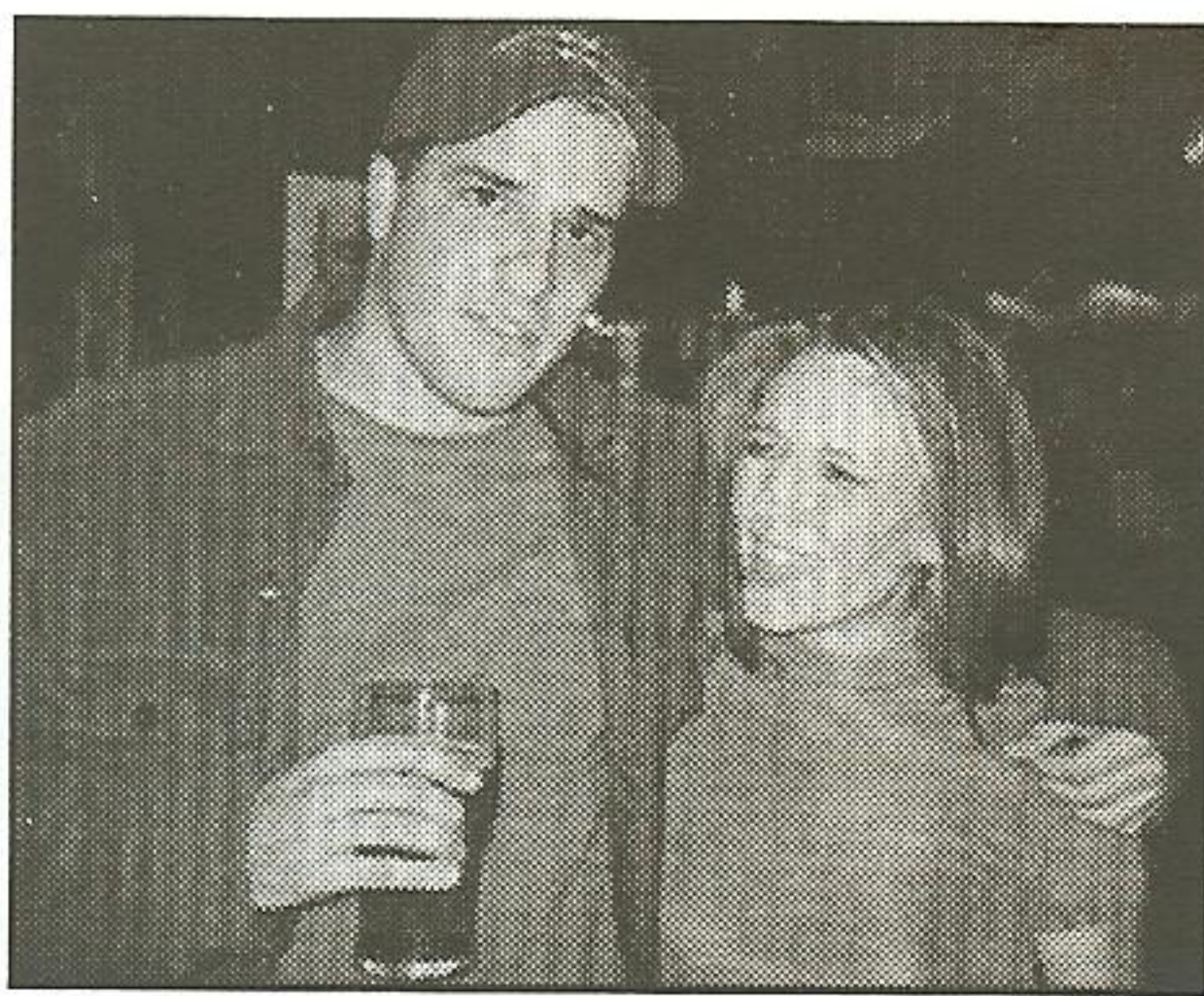
It's hard to believe, but the annual Holiday Party is just six weeks away! This year's festivities will take place at the Speakeasy on Saturday, December 12th with a 1940's theme. There will be lots of swinging tunes, swanky food and cocktails, plus some snappy surprises. Stay tuned for more details closer to the event.

Your friends in the Entertainment Committee put these events together. They have fun doing it. You should join them. Call or email Angela Lyons for more details on how to get involved.





Designer and general bon vivant Raph Koster



Tonda Mueller refuses to believe that Brian Allen played for the Maple Leafs.



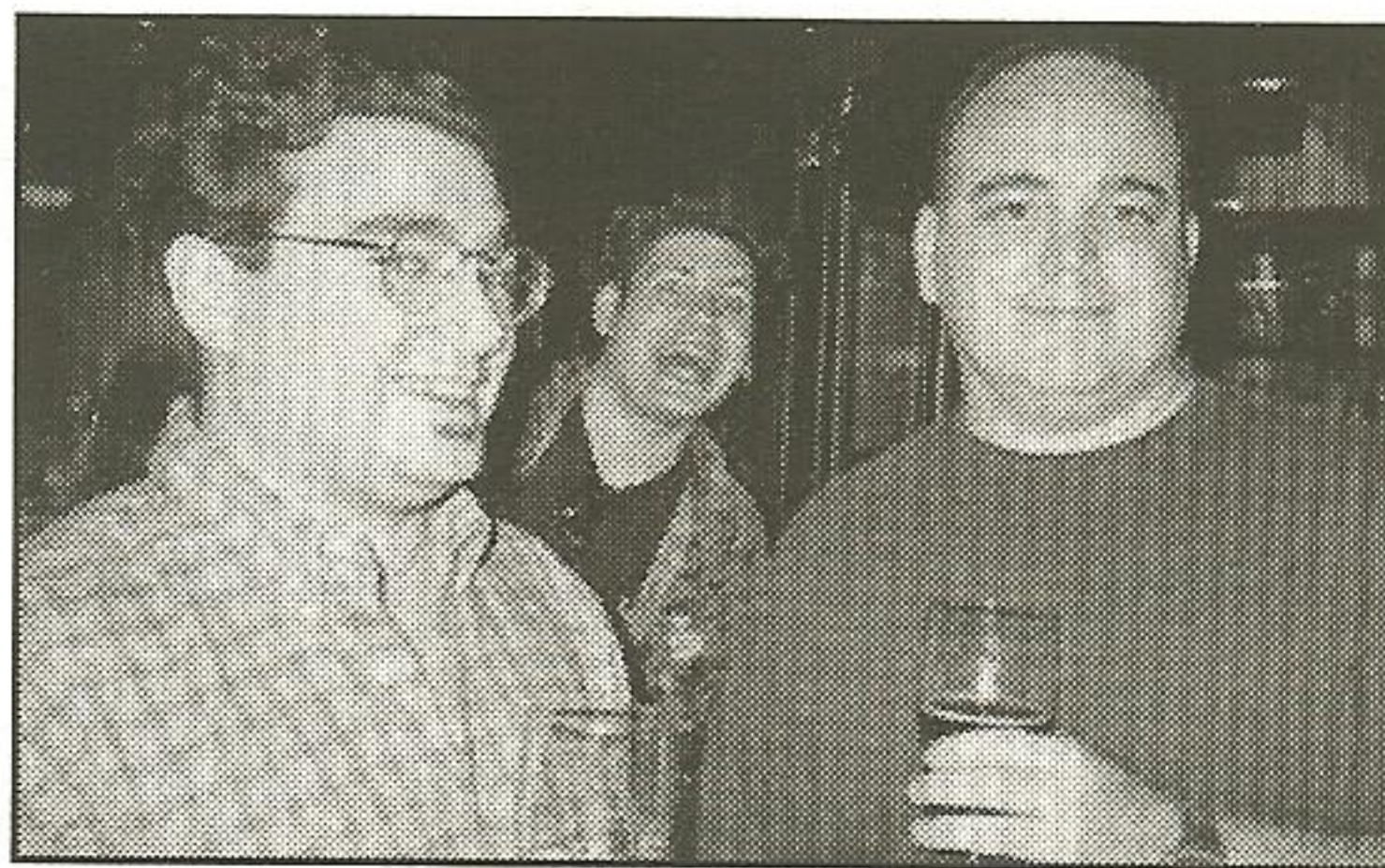
Bob Frye and Michael Morlan celebrate the artistic perspective.

Ultima Online celebrated its first birthday with a bash at Fadó Friday, September 25.

A good time was had by all, particularly those who can't remember it.



This is the only known photo of Hugh David. We think that's Rich Vogel next to him.



Russ Wilkins and Paul Vaden enjoy their beer, unaware that Kent Raffray has just been released from protective custody.

Love comes in many forms... some prettier than others.

Maria-Constaza Vidal and Victor Meinert



Starr Long and Teresa Potts





HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

This birthday bash had all the right stuff. On October 9th ORIGIN celebrated its 15th anniversary with a lunch meeting that included personalized birthday shirts for every employee, food (of course), honors for long-time employees and a BIG birthday cake.

Congratulations to those who received their 5- and 15-year anniversary awards:

5-Year Anniversary

Peter Shelus
Trey Hermann
Richard Zinser
Joe Basquez

Stretch Williams
Graham Wood
Sean Murphy

15 year Anniversary

Jeff Hillhouse (the first ORIGIN employee)



Richard Zinser



Jeff Hillhouse (with major loot)



Joe Basquez



Peter Shelus (and his bifurcated award)



Sean Murphy



Trey Hermann



**Stretch Williams
(with Neil Young action figure)**



Graham Wood



There are few (if any) tricks and mostly treats in the press this Halloween for Origin studio products. *Ultima Online: The Second Age* is on the shelf this week and should be getting in the hands of reviewers as you're reading this. Several journalists who saw the product in recent weeks had mostly positive things to say about T2A. We should be seeing re-reviews of UO in another month or so, as editors use T2A to justify another look at the product.



Most of the treats have been showing up in relation to *Wing Commander* and *Secret Ops*. *USA Today* writer Tom Ham wrote, "The graphics of *Secret Ops* are nothing short of brilliant. The intuitive interface lets beginning wing commanders, as well as veteran pilots, jump right into the action. Tight control and great use of stereo sound round out this truly engrossing space adventure."

Many publications elected not to review the game because of the segmented availability of the product. However, those that did had high praise for ORIGIN. Hot Games.Com gave *Secret Ops* a score of 5 out of 5. "Secret Ops is one of the greatest blasters you can currently get on your PC, it's as simple as that. Stunning visuals, furious action and an overwhelming sense of atmosphere really draw you in."

Another strong review came from *Games Domain Review*. "Whatever Origin's reasons are (for giving it away free), *Secret Ops* is a windfall for any space combat fan."



Voodoo Magazine (the official 3Dfx magazine) said this about *Secret Ops*, "If you've been a dedicated *Wing Commander* player, now's your chance to get something back from Origin."

Even the *Austin American-Statesman* was getting in on the act. "Light years ahead," said business writer Omar Gallaga. "Origin breaks new ground again with its free gaming saga. The company has proved it can change the way software works."

The good news wasn't just limited to *Secret Ops*. *Computer Shopper* magazine, which reaches more than half a million readers selected *Wing Commander: Prophecy* as among its Top 100 Products of the Year. WCP was among 13 games and game gear products

selected in the Top 100, among them *Unreal* and *The Curse of Monkey Island*. Editors wrote this about WCP, "You'll need a fast CPU and a late-model 3-D accelerator to see the game at its best, but if your system has the horsepower, you won't believe your eyes."

Speaking of awards, ORIGIN walked away with its share of them in the recent *PC Gamer* feature on The 50 Best Games Ever. *Ultima VII* was selected as number 37. "If you're looking for the best of the greatest computer role-playing series ever, this is the game you want." *Ultima Underworlds I and II* were selected at number 18. "For many RPG fans, they represent the quintessential first-person experience." *Longbow 2* came in at number 12 and was the highest rated military combat simulation game. "This game strikes the perfect balance between realism and fun — and its campaign model and multi-player support are examples that virtually every other sim developer should study." Coming in at the number 6 slot was *System Shock*. *PC Gamer's* Editor Dan Bennet wrote, "In terms of sheer gameplay and an involving story line, most of today's action-adventures should hang their heads in shame when *System Shock* passes by."



PC Magazine (circulation 1.1 million) editors recently chose their top 100 home-oriented CD-ROMs for the year. Among the games selected was Jane's *F-15*. "F-15 offers an amazing 3-D graphics engine. It's a state-of-the-art jet combat simulator." Also selected was *Wing Commander: Prophecy*.

"Prophecy offers great graphics and exciting game play. A dazzling array of 3-D effects and the detailed, buglike enemy ships are just two highlights of this gripping game."

So where are the tricks this Halloween? Look no further than a San Diego courtroom. The *Ultima Online* lawsuit continues to get coverage especially from *Gamespot*, which has offered reports on every utterance and head fake from the lead plaintiff in the case, George Schultz (a.k.a. BunBoy). The latest news is that Bunboy lost his motion to grant his merry group of pranksters class action status. That was a clear victory for Electronic Arts and ORIGIN in the ongoing courtroom saga. It may not appear that way in *Gamespot* and some of the other publications writing about the lawsuit, but the news on the legal front is upbeat and the last laughs or tricks, when it's all said and done, may be on Bunboy. Stay tuned.

Customer Support Knows No Boundaries

By Paul Sage

The following is an account of my recent trip to Japan to help establish the UO servers. It does not do justice to the terrific EASquare employees, nor does it describe the monumental task of setting up a branch office that took us a full year to achieve. It also fails to impart the amazing way in which UO is viewed in Japan, as the truly unique progenitor for every MMOG that will follow. Instead, this account answers the question on everyone's mind: "What was the food like?"

The answer can be summarized in one word: fish. Actually, the horror stories you may have heard about Japanese food is not true. Some of it is quite tasty, but you have to like fish. They have more fish and fish-like products than you can shake a stick at.

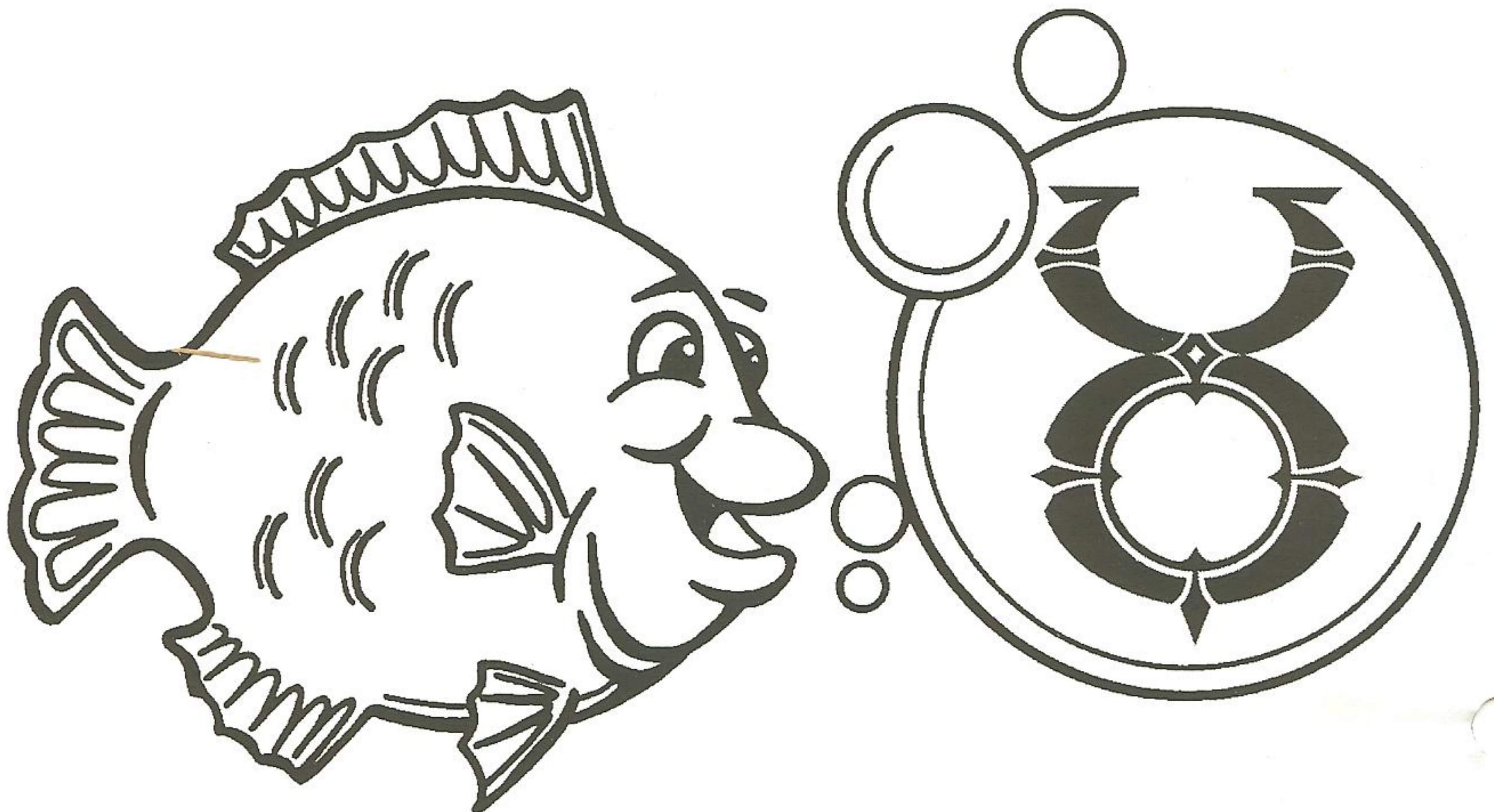
In fact, I actually ate a piece of Tofu-like substance that smelled and tasted like fish. It wasn't made or cooked with fish, it just mysteriously tasted like it. My translator computer device told me I was eating processed devil's tongue. However, my Japanese

friends tell me it is something like a potato. A potato that tasted like fish.

Often they would ask me what I would like to eat. I would reply, "Whatever you like is okay by me." Which, apparently, translates into Japanese and back again as, "Let's go get some fish."

In any case, I definitely wouldn't get any Mexican food. But like I said, some of the food was quite tasty, if you like fish.

All that being said, the servers came up, and are a day-to-day point of reality. The Japanese now have a department much like our own. When everyone leaves the Austin office, things are just getting started in Japan. The lights never go off in their offices anymore, just as they never go off here. When you are asleep at home, somebody is here, or there answering a player's inquiry about Balthazaar the Dark's missing 500 gold. That's Player Relations, the first line of defense on the wall. Only now, there are two lines, one in Japan and one in Austin. And that's pretty cool.



“Ultima-te” Challenge!



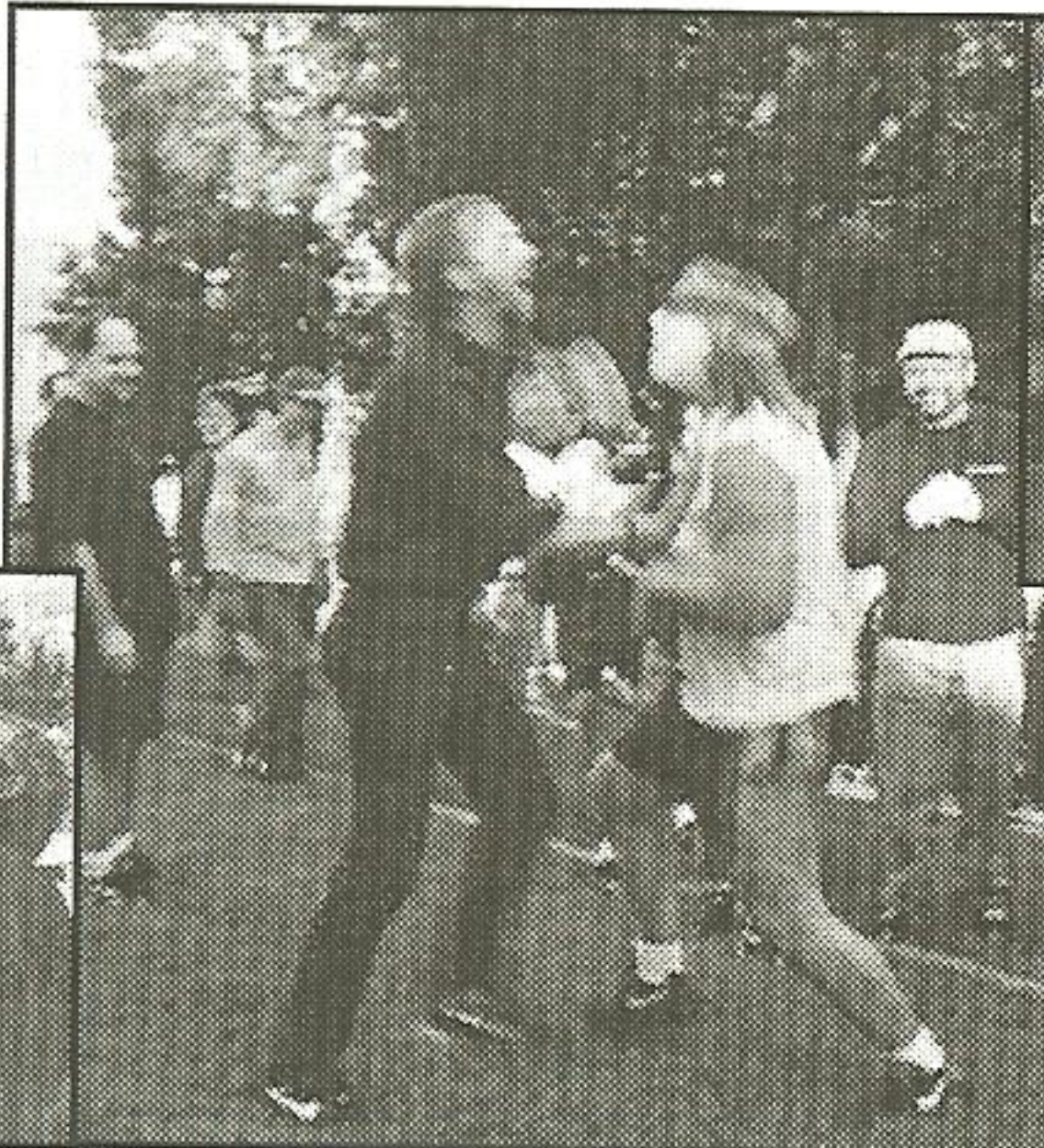
The Players

QA
←

→
LB



Richard and Rand engage in the time-honored tradition of



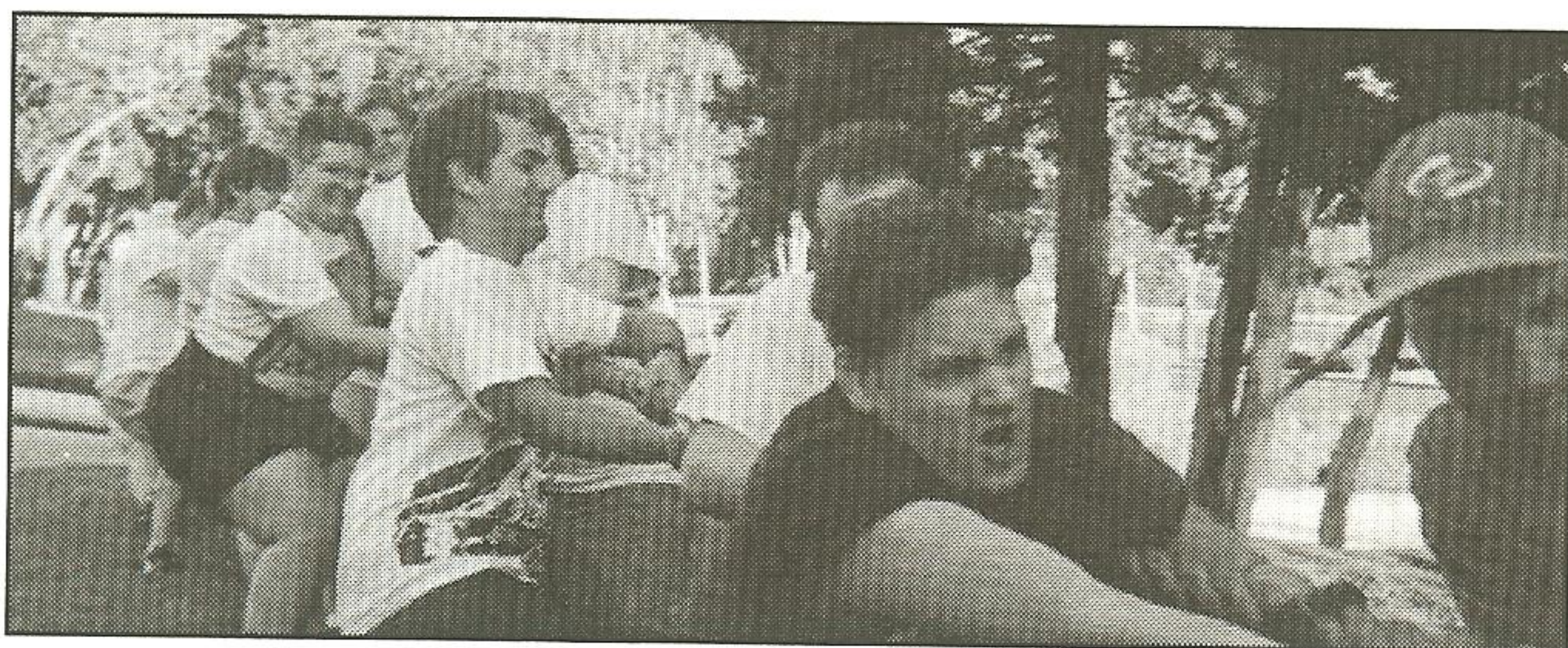
“trash talkin’,” to the delight of Seth and Andy.



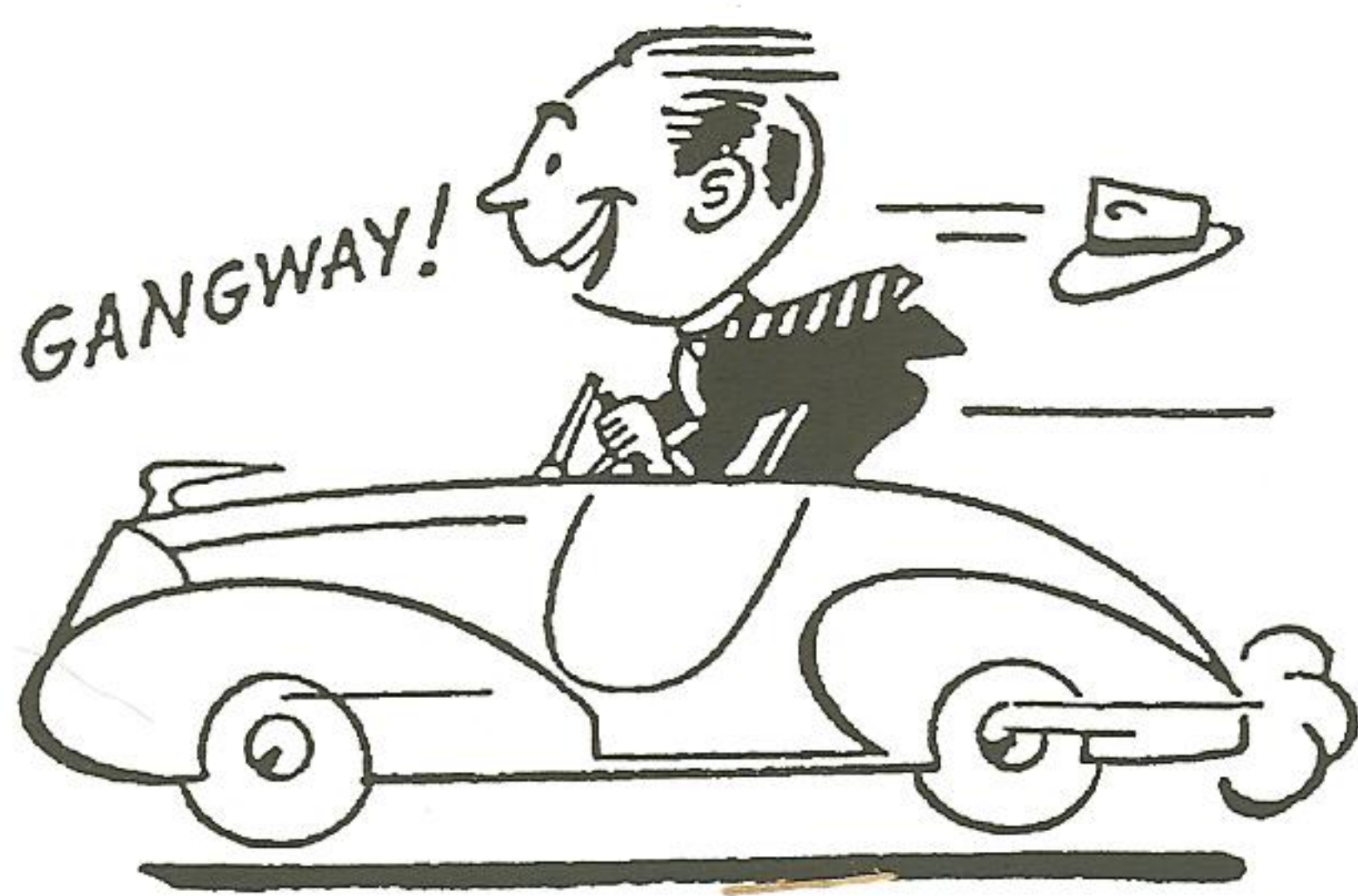
Scott Wetterschneider laces his cleat, and the Reverend Brian Martin leads a prayer in preparation for battle.



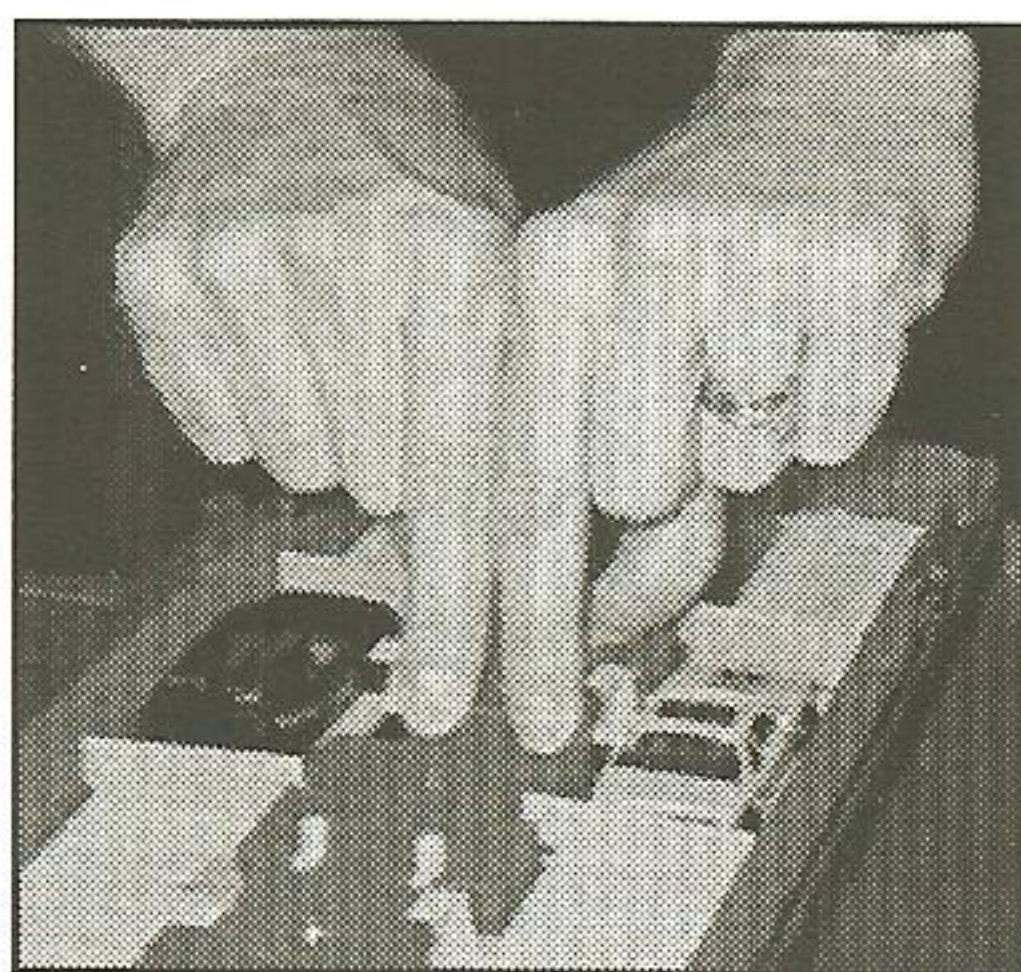
The Struggle



And lo, though each team fell, Lord British’s minions fell more than once, making QA victorious and entitling them to a free lunch or something like that. Congratulations, QA and a big thanks to all!

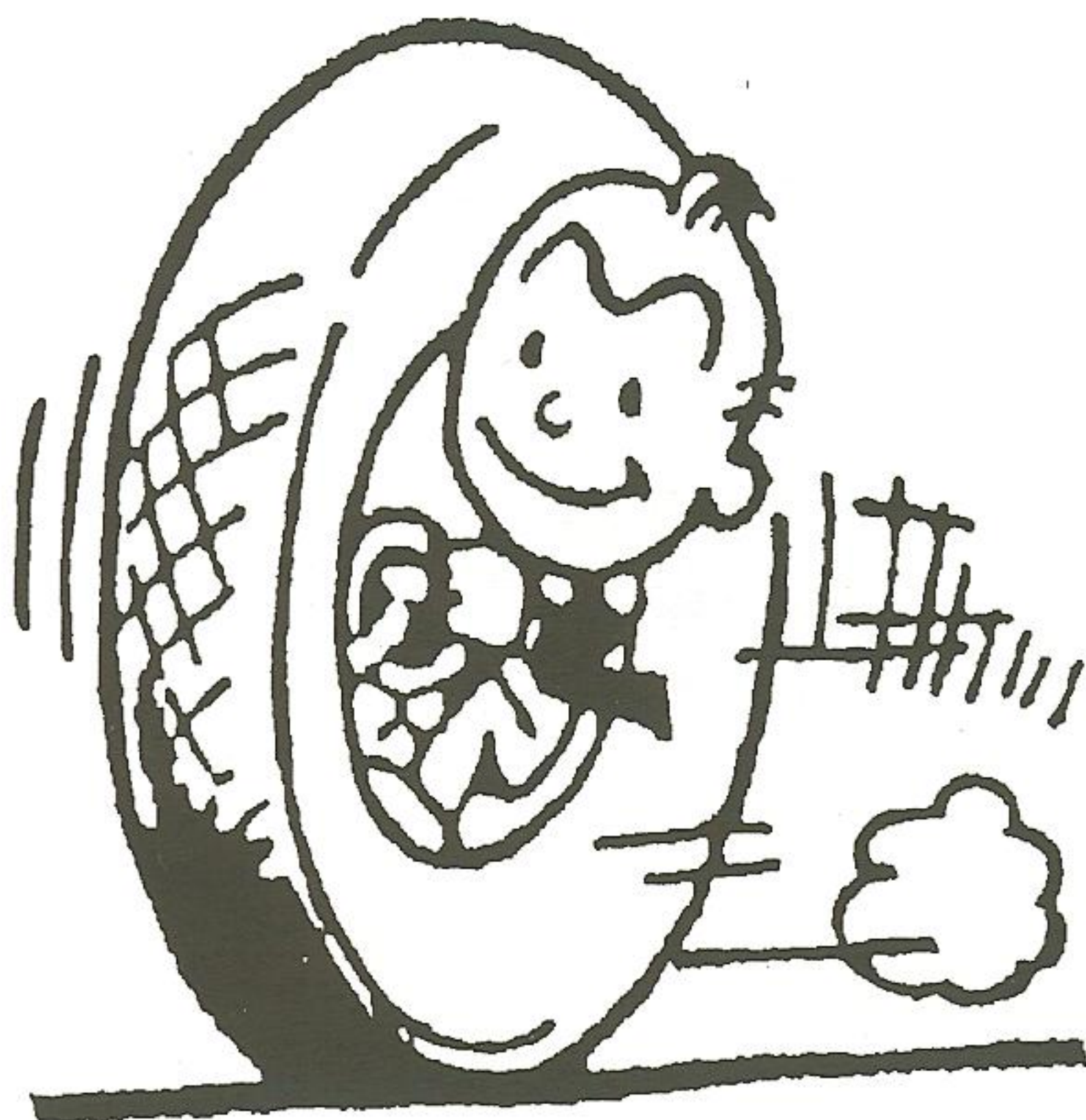


Hot Wheels Spin Out of Control at Grand Prix



Drivers, start your engines!

The competition was once again hot and heavy for the 2nd Annual Grand Prix which took place in September. Elimination races were held on every floor, with the winners advancing to the finals. This year's finalists included Kevin Kwast, David Russ and J. Allen Brack. The grand prize went to Paul Sage who raced a mean Fiero. Paul was later quoted as saying, "Fieros rule! Fieros rule!"



t h e F u t u r e



October

31

Halloween

November

3

Election Day

20

Annual Thanksgiving lunch

26

Thanksgiving Day

27

Holiday

December

11

Annual Awards Luncheon at the Alamo Drafthouse

12

HOLIDAY PARTY!

14

Hanukkah

25

ORIGIN closes for Christmas Holidays

January

1

New Year's Day

4

ORIGIN reopens

Congratulations to Paul and all the finalists. Be sure to drop by and see his magnificent trophy.



Paul and friends celebrate his stunning victory, as Richard stands guard lest too much fun be had.

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 and Copy Editor: David Swofford. Staff Writer, Photographer and Clip Art Queen: Teresa Potts. Contributing Writers: Kristen McEntire, Paul Sage. Contributing Photographers: Michael Morlan, David Swofford. Layout and Production: Carl Cantieri. Word of the day: Pork.