



# The Megaphone



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An organ of the Rascals Rogues and Rapscallions

Number 13

## Editor's note

At lair 1, talk about low points on September 9 was eclipsed by tragedy and heroism two days later, and our December muses about the downfall of Westinghouse Corporation paled in comparison to the gas blown by Enron. Nevertheless, we're certain in our conviction that the best stories have yet to be told, and we will do our best to be the ones in the telling.

Hot off the presses we have news of Peter Marino in 2<sup>nd</sup> place to Dan Morrison's Zen iconography at the Lair 3 artistic mass challenge, and the "all about Ron" ball at Lair 1 bestowing Landgraf Medal #9 and the Rascal of the Year trophy on Mr. the DiOrio.

Lair 3 has been able to avoid our correspondents by cleverly changing meeting dates at the last minute. The call for correspondents is still open, volunteers may contact the Lair 1 secretary or myself.

-- Charlei

## Mass Challenge 2001

In June a select group of taxonomically challenged rascals met to select the Mascot for Lair #1. Each candidate critter was to have a scientific name that matched the presenter's initials.

**Bob Edmunds** brought in a stone-like corpse of *Balistidae ellioti*, the stone (or was it trigger?) fish. **Dan Morrison** mailed in a treatise drawing many uncomfortable parallels between *Didelphus marsupialis*, the common Virginia opossum and the majority of our membership. **Lee Wolfson**, frustrated that Latin lacked the letter 'W', after a quest through a website of tacky postcards, nominated the Claw-footed

Jackalope, which lacks a Latin designation but might provide proper Lair nutrition.

Guitar in hand, **Mark Miller** channeled the entire species of *Macropinna microstoma*, the spookfish, out of the depths of the sea. He movingly sang their anthem, which they rewrote from Bob Dylan's "Don't Think Twice, It's All Right."

With no prejudice against putrid flora, we welcomed a remarkable specimen of the poisonous *Veratrum nigrum*, or Black Hellebore, and his puppet, **Vic Norman**. It was a clever display, but the hellebore's mouth moved at times, weakening the effect.

**Dennis Looney** applied classical scholarship in an attempt to lure us into the arms of *Diadumene leucolena*, the white sea anemone, leading us to believe his candidate's namesake was "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" in the form of Aphrodite. He threw in imagery of bursting condoms and Uranus's severed member. The Lair was edified and charmed, yet chilled.

NOT a Hamster! This was the theme and battle-cry of **Woody Cunningham**, who urged us to take a strong, yet negative stand, in re the hamster (*V. Cricetetus*) as mascot. His reasons must, by sworn pact, be kept secret.

*Tarbosaurus efremovi*, a relative of *Tyrannosaurus rex* was lauded by **Tim Esaias** in verse: "I Sing of Teeth and the Mascot", "Stopping by Max's on a Rascal Evening", "Four Clerihews on Those I Did Not Choose", "Why the Megaphone was Late", and -- with help of **Woody Cunningham** -- a

rousing rendition of "The Last 'Osaur".

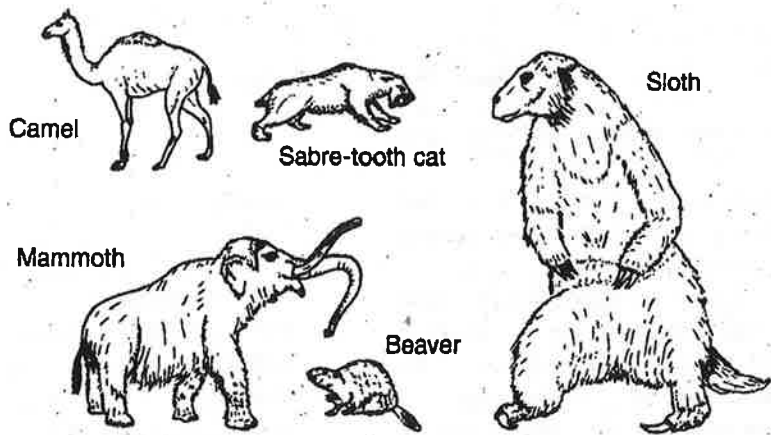
**Charlei George** asserted that the colorful *Coris gaimardi*, the yellowtail wrasse, would complement our flag. As it matures this tropical fish undergoes radical color (and sometimes sex) changes. Named Hinalea Hakilolo, or "headache", by Hawaiian aquarium owners, it constantly digs into the sand and topples ornaments -- no doubt in search of that interesting thing. As proof of concept Charlei retrofitted four Big Mouth Billy Bass™ to resemble adult and juvenile specimens. His electrically choreographed Wrasse School Quartet then sang and flailed "The Interesting Thing". The presentation eked out enough votes to merit the Authentic Imitation Elvis Booger. This being his second time in second place, he is now twice as bitter as any other rascal.

## Viva la Mylodon

**Ron DiOrio** (a.k.a. Ron D'Iorio) won the Landgraf handily. First, he had to settle on the proper initials. Science has no mortal creatures abbreviated *R. DiO.*, and those that could match *R. D.*, *R. I.*, or *R. O.* were "vermin that should be squashed underfoot." Seeking a means to his end, he settled on the initial M (for "Mister" or in some lands "Meester" or ultimately "Me") this led him to *Mylodon*, the Giant Ground Sloth. (a.k.a. *Megatherium Armicanum*, *Mapinguari*, *Iemisch*, and *Neomylodon listai*).

Why such a beast for a mascot? Says Ron:

"10. There is confusion about which name to use for this



Some Pleistocene mammals shown in proper relative size.

Modified from Flint, R. F., *Glacial and Quaternary geology*, Figure 29-7, p. 769, copyright © 1971 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Reprinted by permission of John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

### The PA Geological Survey Thinks Giant Sloth Are The Biggest Thing in Commonwealth Mascots

animal, just as there is confusion about my initials.

"9. Moves slowly, so that if it ever turns on you, you have a good chance to run away.

"8. Nocturnal lifestyle, can walk upright, piercing scream, foul stench: qualities that any Rascal can admire and strive for.

"7. Easy to feed...you won't have to mow the lawn.

"6. Large pelt for rug or coat, and lots of meat for a great Rascal cookout.

"5. Named after a cardinal sin, and a good one at that.

"4. Numerous interesting questions concerning mylodon, the main one being whether or not it is extinct.

"3. Rascals can spend endless hours arguing over whether the word is pronounced "slawth" or "slowth".

"2. Big enough that you won't kill it accidentally by stepping on it. In fact big enough that it gives all Rascals another good reason to keep heavy weapons at home, in case you have to bring it down.

"1. Attracts women. Many women have said they love a man who has a giant sloth."

Ron closed his presentation with an Italian prophetic reference linking the re-discovery of the giant sloth to

the resurgence of the Arucanian monarchy. His audience could hardly resist such a noble rogue's challenge, and the majority of votes were cast in this creature's favor. Like Lee Wolfson said "Face it... giant sloth's are really cool."

### Dueling Right

On August 11, 2001, Lair No. 3 met at the Moose Home in Doylestown to hear **Peter Marino's** account of a duel that never was -- a dispute between Charles W. Brooke and Daniel H. Mulvany, two lawyers from Norristown, Pa. The dispute played out in a series of letters to the editor of the *Montgomery Democrat* and included accusations of ghost-writing poison pen letters, plagiarizing poetry and shady business dealing. The public dispute rose to such a pitch that Brooke wrote to Mulvany, calling him a "liar and scoundrel." Mulvany replied by saying that he was willing to resolve this matter according to the "laws of honor," i.e., the laws of dueling. Only problem with Mulvany's response is that he made it to Brooke while the laws of dueling call for such a reply to be made to Brooke's second.

Peter instructed the assembled Rascals and friends in

the 25 laws of dueling, so that we might not make the same mistake when faced with a similar circumstance. He donated a copy of the *Big Dam Book of Sheer Manliness* to the RR&R.

### How Low Can You Go?

"In the confines of our commonwealth, about 3 miles below sea level." So said **Charlei George** on September 9 as he began to outline his quest for the interesting thing at the lowest point in Pennsylvania. The PA Geological Survey, Pittsburgh identified Svet's well in Somerset county. From an opening at ~2,000 feet above sea level it reaches a depth of 21,400 feet, or 3.5 miles below sea level. This low point posed problems in how to remove the pump, get the flag down a 4 mile long by 5 inch wide bore hole, and how to unfurl it once there.

The PA Geological Survey, Harrisburg, identified the lowest point tread by humans as Grace Mine in Berks county, owned by Bethlehem Mine Company. Open from 1948-1978 for iron ore (magnetite) at 600 ft elevation, the shaft delved 2,600 feet, or a net 2,000 feet below sea level. Since then it has been sealed due to economic conditions.

Extending a line from these two points we come upon the lowest "point" accessible today -- the Delaware river. Being a tidal river, it's always at sea level. This is not a point, strictly speaking. Charlei considered a tour of the river. In fact Lair 1 had a boat (and captain Vic) at the right time, but it was in the wrong place. Besides, his quest called for a point, not a plane. So he settled on the lowest shoreline feature furthest down river -- Marcus Hook, PA.

This working class town was named after Maarte, Chief of the Okehoing tribe. They were Lene Lenapi indians (a.k.a the

Deleware, but that was a dutch name). Dutch explorers named it Maratties Hoek. Swedes called it Marcus Hook. Queen Christina tried to rename it Finland, but a year later she abdicated to become Catholic. The English tried to rename it Chichester. but the traditional name stuck.

The names of this jut of land indicate some historical lowpoints. First there was Dutch colonization (from Lene Lenapi perspective). Natives massacred the first Dutch settlers in 1630. Swede colonization (from the Dutch perspective) wasn't quite as violent, but the governor complained, "I haven't seen a more stupid people". Finally English colonization. (At this point the Dutch were too cynical to care; and the Swede's evidently too stupid to care.) The land resounded with songs of futility such as "The Grand Old Duke of York".

About this time William Penn granted a Fair and Weekly Market to Marcus Hook. From the Quakers' point of view, this is a low point. (The land now being filled with Market songs like "Ach, Ya!") Penn then returned to England to defend against claims of Lord Baltimore and Mary Ford (wife of Penn's deceased accountant), In his place Edward Teach, Blackbeard, took up residence at Marcus Hook. 20th Century Marcus Hook was shaped by Joseph Pew who saw open land for an Oil refinery, a few yacht-builders who could use some business, and access to secure shipping lanes.

Descending into the Abyss (which is best done with **Dennis Looney** reading Dante's Inferno 16th Canto), one finds oneself in the midst of the Sunoco refinery. Most public art has some association to oil money. Where Maarte once roamed there is now Memorial Park. One may hop over the fence, rest upon a

heap of Shoreline schist, and take in a splendid view of tankers at their berth unloading, the Delaware river flowing beneath the Skukhill bridge, and on the horizon, New Jersey. Just up the road lies the cemetery at St. Martins Episcopal (one of the first in the area) with a striking juxtaposition of rest in peace and industry at its greatest.

Around the Town one could find steel huts, studios, and potential club-houses in run-down business districts. The neighborhoods are not unlike what we may find on Neville Island. And the town bears some resemblance to our Lawrenceville. Leaving Marcus Hook is not unlike a climb out of the abyss. On the edge of town there is a Sunoco filling station with prices that prove cobblers' children don't wear shoes.

The interesting thing? A mystery! As Charlei and **Dan Morrison** were perusing the local archives most of which were compiled by hometown historian Patricia Miller, they came upon a reference to supposed "Gas Storage" caverns beneath Marcus Hook. Charlei's further enquiry with the PA Geological Survey, however, revealed that Gas is not stored in caverns. Guest **Phil Reich** noted that the mining equipment shown in the photo was not congruent with 1971 technology. So where are these caverns really? Was it a Cold War plot? Was Ms. Miller duped? Could she have possibly chosen a less complimentary picture of herself? The answers to these questions will be left as challenges for future rascals.

## Summer Fun

The Rascals Family Picnic at Morain State Park was not held on a splendid summer Saturday in August.

Doylestown Rascals, on the other hand frequently gathered

at the home of **Gary Frazier** to pitch horseshoes.

## If Imitation is Flattery

Then the Lair 1 secretary should be in full blush. On November 10, 2001, Lair No. 3 of the RR&R met for its first **Timons Esaias** Passage Party, "an opportunity for Rascals and friends to read aloud, to each other, their favorite poems, speeches, paragraphs, riddles, and other literary passages."

Among the authors read were Mark Twain, Garrison Keillor, Arthur Morrison, Emily Post, Sam Hazo, Tim Allen, and William Jennings Bryan. Readings included an ode to Jello, a couple of U. S. Patent documents, humorous sketches, poetry from the "New Electric Generation," tips on dressing for fat women, a political speech, rock and roll lyrics, and a short story.

With his flugelhorn, **Peter Marino** accompanied the Rascals in their singing of "Interesting Thing" and "My Last Cigar."

## Corporate Folly

In December, **John McGeoy** told tales of his days at Westinghouse. After Naval duty in WW II, he went to college on the GI bill, started in the public relations department at Westinghouse and relocated from New York to Pittsburgh. Given his war time experience as an electrician he was eventually put in charge of maintaining the UNIVAC 1.

John said that at his age, it is a lot easier to remember things in the distant past. At the plant in Sharon, PA, he met many stars of stage and screen. More impressive, however, was the fact that the CEO was able to introduce John by name! Evidently headquarters wanted

to boost moral by bringing a little taste of Hollywood to employees many of whom were put out by the thought of their engineering company getting into entertainment business.

Thus John was on the leading edge of corporate computing. (For posterity's sake, and so we could take notes, he handed out Hollerith cards to all in attendance.) His division would process and warehouse millions of cards of year to store the same amount of information that now fits in your DVD player. Few people knew how to program, and fewer still knew how to proof code. There was implicit trust of programmers, and one fellow in payroll and accounting took advantage of this to divert the half-cent adjustments from all monetary calculations to his paycheck. He could have diverted millions a year without the company ever noticing, but he forgot to increase his Federal withholdings, and the IRS came knocking on the door of H-Q asking questions.

Neither glitz and glamour, nor fraudulent accounting led to Westinghouse's downfall. "The problem was that the company was always run by engineers who knew a whole lot about building brakes and motors, but not much at all about building a business." John went on to describe the "Brick Shithouse Syndrome." Sure it's durable, but folks would only pay for a clapboard edifice to fulfill the same function. The engineers often scoffed at their competitor's poorly manufactured motors, and criticized customers for purchasing a part in their assembly line that would surely brake in a year. The customer, however, only needed the line to run for six months and had no purpose for a motor that would

outlast his production for years to come.

So ended John's work years. He now spends retirement learning to work PC's.

## Central Library

**Dan Morrison** has formed a central library to hold and loan books connected with and of interest to the group. "I think we need to have copies of all the books written by Rascals past and present", says Dan, "as well as other books that might be pertinent to distinctly Rascal themes.

"So consider this an appeal for contributions. If you have an item which would be appropriate for the Central Rascal Library, please mail it to:

Central Rascal Library  
P.O. Box 131  
Horsham, PA 19044"

One may browse the nascent catalogue of the Central Rascal Library at [www.geocities.com/ephorate/library.html](http://www.geocities.com/ephorate/library.html)

It is rumored that one wing of this library contains the rascal ossuary. "Isn't it about time for the confection and distribution of Rascal relics? ... Anyone got spare teeth that could be put into a theca? ... What about relics of subjects of past challenges? Judge Reddick, Mayor Barker, Moses F. Gale, James Hubbard, Panfilo Castaldi, the Patagonian Sloth? ... Interested? Please be in contact with me."

One rogue -- who incinerates his hair and nail clippings lest they be used for some evil purpose -- voiced apprehension over Dan's obsession with relics. This editor assures all that Dan's motives are pure, and doubts that said rogue's body parts could serve a purpose more evil than they are already doing in their current configuration. [This statement was made with no

bitterness intended, although some may take it that way now that it appears in print.] So, those who feel moved to humor Dan may do so without reserve. "And let the Apostolate of Rascal Relics begin."

## Odds and Ends

A new medal for Arucania has been minted.

Burgettstown has a new senior care home.

**Lee Wolfson** aquired a DVD of Peter Jackson's "Bad Taste".

**Tim Esaias** while sporting a Legion of Honor Medal of Napoleon I confessed to reading a biography of Sir Edmund Barkhouse by Trevor Roper.

## Officers 2002

Lair 3:Keeper of the Humidor  
- Michael Moscherosh. Secretary  
- Dan Krewson. Archivist - Peter Marino. Assistant Director - Dan Morrison. Director -- Gary Frasier, Treasurer - Carl Halter.

Lair 1:Keeper of the Humidor  
- Lee Wolfson. Secretary - Tim Esaias. Archivist - Ron DiOrio. Assistant Director - Lee Wolfson. Director - Woody Cunningham. Treasurer - Vic Norman.

## A Homely Challenge

All Rascals and their guests are hereby challenged to appear at Lair #1 meeting June 8, 2002 with a five-minute presentation on the most interesting thing in the 100 year history of their current domicile or the plot of land on which it was built.

This newsletter is a service, underwritten by the dues of rascals in somewhat good standing, to members of any Lair and their guests. Circulation: 'bout 50. Changes of address (virtual or physical), letters to the editor, volunteer correspondents, and questions regarding the surprisingly high percentage of non-firers in combat may be directed to Tim Esaias, 6659 Woodwell Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15217 or [Esaias@compuserve.com](mailto:Esaias@compuserve.com).