

THE MEGAPHONE

An Organ of the Rascals, Rogues, and RapsCALLIONS

July 1, 1995

Number 4

Rascals Descend On North Braddock

Locals appalled by horde — Injuries limited to palates

The first gathering of Rascals for Courageous Cuisine met at The Ravine (rhymes with "latrine" and, most importantly, "condom machine" — see below) in North Braddock. If you've never been to North Braddock, a May 24 *Post-Gazette* headline is helpful: "State gives North Braddock distress tag." The sub-head tells more: "Town first to carry designation despite borough's objection." I can't say about the objecting voices in the borough but there are a fair share of objectionable people there, some of whom frequent The Ravine and one of whom is the local cook. I am a witness.

About a dozen clean-cut Rascals descended on this place on April 7th, at 7:16 PM. The locals had never seen the likes of us, nor we them. To sit at the bar with a member of the opposite sex requires that the age difference be at least as great as the age of the younger. The younger she is, the better. Once seated at the bar, you are not allowed to speak to anyone until you have drunk at least as many beers as the age difference between yourself

and the nearest member of the opposite sex. Once it gets going, conversation flows, you might say. Or slides, much like the cook's feet on the floor of his kitchen. I know: I stood and slid there: I am a witness.

We sat at several tables pushed together within arm's reach of the bathroom doors. Most Rascals ordered cheese steak sandwiches; there were baskets of fries and some pizza, too; ketchup was everywhere. I, who arrived late and ventured into the kitchen to order after the other Rascals already had and saw the cook slaughtering, as it were, the beef, ordered, instead, a fish sandwich. I can't say that I made the right decision. Our total food bill, if memory serves me right, was around \$31. When I asked for a receipt (to include in the RR&R's archives) the bartender eyed me as if I were an investigator from the Department of Community Affairs — the office that designates boroughs distressed.

Then we began to sing.
Maestro Greg Scheer,

spurred on by the once clean-cut, now swilled and gravid Rascals, adapted "My Last Cigar" to The Ravine. Here are the lyrics:

*With lowered fly
and searching gaze,
I stood at the latrine,
I needed only one more sign
for Bar & Grill Ravine*

*Now I'm not one to fuss & fight
and try to vent my spleen
but if it is courageous
it's got a condom machine*

DCA Secretary William C. Bostic said, "Combined with an inadequate tax base and other economic factors, there is a question of the borough's ability to continue providing basic services to its residents." He must not have seen the certificate the RR&R sent The Ravine to thank its proprietor and customers for having the courage to host us. It designates The Ravine as Courageous Cuisine Shrine No. 1, and salutes the restaurant for its faithful service to the plebeian culinary community, and for upholding the ideals of least-common denominator victualing. Indeed, Bostic must not have visited The Ravine. I did: I am a witness. ~Dennis Looney

Cambell Cops Mass Challenge Prize in Tie-breaker Brawl

The first annual Mass Challenge had its culmination at the June 3, 1995 meeting at Max's Allegheny Tavern. All members of the RR&R were randomly assigned coordinates within [roughly] 150 miles of Pittsburgh. Nine Rascals rose to their geographic challenges, traveled to their locations, and gave presentations lasting, more or less, five minutes each.

Don Kellander used a host of slides and a projector from the late-middle ages to report about his wanderings in deepest, darkest West Virginia. **Greg Scheer** went to Warren County, saw nothing, and took a bunch of pictures it. Upon his return he discovered he forgot to put film in his camera. He redeemed himself by writing a bossa nova ditty amphibolously entitled "There Was Nothing There." **John McGeoy** went to a place he named Nowhere, Ohio and returned to give us a survey of the history and future of navigational devices. **Lee Wolfson** drank beer from the eternal tap at the St. Mary's Brewery, home of Straub's Beer. Later he fondled the udder of the largest fiberglass cow in the world. **Charlei George** took his family into the middle of nowhere. Upon his return to civilization, he passed through Saltsburg, Pennsylvania and learned



about the economics of mid-19th century canals. **Jeff Campbell** hiked across the Pennsylvania-Ohio border and found a water mite, the only fresh-water arachnid. He also participated in the first flying of the RR&R flag. **Glenn Vernon** raised a handmade RR&R sign over a sawdust heap near the Clarion River and returned with a video of the trip which he took with his daughter, Amanda. **Karl Williams** found his way to Bean Settlement, West Virginia, a trip that took a day longer than he and his wife, Diana, had anticipated. **Dan Morrison** visited with the Holden family, who live near Latrobe, Pennsylvania.

After the presentations, ballots were cast, resulting in a tie between **Greg Scheer** and **Jeff Campbell**. A second ballot produced the same result. [This is an argument for always having an odd number of people —

or a number of odd people — at meetings.] With this second deadlock, some wag suggested an arm-wrestling competition. A table was brought forward and placed in the center of the room. The competitors sat across from each other and exchanged evil looks. After a superhuman struggle that would have shattered the radius or ulna of a lesser man, **Jeff Campbell** won the match and was declared the first winner of the Jonathan Z. Landgraf Memorial Prize.

In his characteristically self-effacing manner, Dr. Campbell said he feels unworthy of the honor. Others nodded in agreement. Since winning the prize, however, he has taken an active interest in bringing the Jonathan Z. Landgraf Memorial Prize to fruition. He said his brother, Vinnie, will be contacting Rascals for contributions to the prize fund.

New Members

The RR&R welcomed two new members at the June 3, 1995 business meeting: **Wyatt Aasen** of O'Hara Township and **Don Pickerine** of Bridgeville.

Mt. Davis Picnic

There will be a picnic for Rascals and their families on July 15 at the Mount Davis picnic area in the Forbes State Forest, near Meyersville, Pennsylvania. Mount Davis is the highest point in Pennsylvania and features tar pits and an abundance of rattlesnakes. The mountain rises 3,213 feet above sea level and is covered by stunted conifers. **Dennis Looney** visited the mountain some while back and reports that such mountains in Tennessee are called "balds." Now ain't that the pot calling the kettle black.

Contact **Jeff Campbell** or **Dan Morrison** to volunteer your services and to arrange car pooling.

As is fitting and sensible, some loyal Rascal wives will arrange the food. We'll buy the beer.

Photographer

It should be noted and fully appreciated that **John McGeoy** has been active in taking photographs of RR&R events. The documenting of RR&R events has been a longstanding need and John has ably taken up the task. With the cream of his photos, he is building a "Rascal Family Album"

which will be present at all RR&R meetings for the perusal and amusement of the Rascals.

Lewis & Clark Luncheon

On May 3, 1995, a contingent of Rascals and friends met at the newly-opened Lewis & Clark restaurant in Oakland.

In addition to eating alligator, drinking Belgian-style wheat beer from Texas, and enjoying each other's company, **Dan Morrison** presented a proposal for the creation and funding of a Jonathan Z. Landgraf Memorial Prize.

It was also at this meeting that **Lee Wolfson** unveiled his Freudian Slip joke. [It's a good one, Lee, but this is a family paper so we can't run it.]

We've heard that...

"Burgettstown," the video documentary produced by **Greg Scheer** and **Dan Morrison**, will be screened at the Burgettstown Library on June 28, at 7:00 PM. It will also air on PCTV June 30 at 6:00. Charter member **Harry Plantinga** will be leaving the bosom of the Pittsburgh lair, heading to Wheaton, Illinois, where he is taking a position at Wheaton College. One condition of his employment at that fine school is his signature on a statement foreswearing booze, tobacco and dancing.

However, he will be allowed to continue to indulge in television, the most vile and stupefying of all evils. Much to the relief of fellow Rascals and Pittsburgh's women, **Jack Brice** reports that he has been accepted into Pitt's MBA program, which means that he will not be moving to Arizona as had been anticipated. Jack was recently seen with **Greg Scheer** and **Dan Morrison** drinking Iron City Beer at the Swissvale Inn. **Dan Morrison** found the atmosphere unpleasant, the service inattentive and the patrons brutish and ill-mannered. The women at the bar had, on average, twice the girth of the men. Anyone who wishes to lose their romantic attitude toward slumming should visit this dive. All others should steer clear. **Bill Baierl** is busy raising money for Children's Charity Fund, an organization which donates equipment to homebound handicapped kids. On the political front, Bill is fighting to prevent the erection of a median barrier on Route 19 in Wexford. Channelizing traffic is bad for business, he says. **Reg Litz**, of Winnipeg, Manitoba, recently visited Pittsburgh. He attended the baptism of **Dan Morrison's** son, Calvin. **Don Pickerine** reports that his wife's pregnancy is going well. A recent sonogram indicates a boy. Don's extra-uterine son, Sam, will undergo hernia surgery on June 28th, the

day of the Burgettstown screening. Don's private practice has relocated to the Western Pennsylvania Family Center in Highland Park. **Greg Scheer** will be a bachelor this summer as his wife heads to acting school in York, England. If she attends to her lessons, upon her return she will be able to convincingly deliver the line "Oh Greg, I've missed you terribly." **Lee Wolfson** and his family will be heading to the Grateful Dead concert at Three Rivers Stadium on June 30. Dead concerts are an annual affair in the Wolfson household. He is looking for a fellow Rascal to join him so he can raise the RR&R flag. He received 8 volumes of study material for the state licencing exam. **John McGeoy**, **Greg Scheer** and **Dan Morrison** visited Lisa Kotchey, a Sharpsburg metalsmith who is creating designs for the Jonathan Z. Landgraf Prize. John McGeoy studied jewelry making with Lisa at the Pittsburgh Center for the Arts. **Charlei George** recently purchased a house in Ben Avon, making his escape from Oakland, and finding himself as just one more commuter on Ohio River Boulevard. Oh yeah, is anyone looking to buy a house in South Oakland? **Jeff Sivek** recently broke his collarbone in a mountain biking accident near Loretto, Pennsylvania, where he was vacationing with his family. He reports that the injury could have been worse: at

least he was wearing his helmet. All the same, he smashed his collarbone in four places and finds relief from the pain only by lying on his back. **John McGeoy** was seen with several young Pitt coeds at a lecture in the Strip district entitled "Linguine and Lust: Food and Sex in Italian American Culture." **Dennis Looney** is soon to go to Tennessee, and then to Italy to study frescos. He will visit his in-laws in England. **Jeff Campbell** reports same-old, same-old. Though he is not suicidal [God forbid!] he regularly reports that his life stinks. He not infrequently visits **Dan Morrison** in his office at Scaife Hall to report on his various surgical cases. As might be imagined, Dan is full of good advice on the best approach to complicated neurosurgical problems and constantly reminds Jeff to stop whining about working 120 hours per week. It could be worse, after all. **Karl Williams** reports that his middle son, Peter, graduated from high school with honors and is now heading to Rochester Institute of Technology. Karl will be teaching algebra one at CCAC this summer. His students are high school students who have failed the course already. Karl reports the technical pedagogical term for this population is "sweathogs."

Jonathan Z. Landgraf Memorial Prize

At the June 3rd quarterly business meeting, the RR&R membership adopted a by-law regulating an annual award in memory of Jon Landgraf. The prize will be awarded to the winner of the annual mass challenge and will be presented at the annual Rascals' Ball. The by-law also specifies that the Mass Challenge will take place annually at the 2nd quarterly meeting. The winner of the Mass Challenge is chosen by a majority of members and guests present at the meeting.

While the by-law creates the rules governing the prize, no action was taken on the creation of the prize itself. At the May 3rd luncheon at the Lewis & Clark Restaurant, **Dan Morrison** presented a proposal for the creation of a prize. He proposed that a portrait medal be designed and struck by the Medallic Arts Company, creators of the Pulitzer Prize, Congressional Medal of Honor, and other fine awards. The cost of creating the proposed medal, which would include a minimum order of 250 pieces, exceeded \$4,000.



As adequate support for the first proposal did not develop, a second proposal will be presented at the next quarterly business meeting. This proposal will be based upon designs being created by Sharpsburg metalsmith, Lisa Kotchey. The cost of the second proposal will not exceed \$1,000, within the range of pledged support from RR&R members. Per piece, the second proposal will cost more than the first, but fewer pieces need to be made initially.

Maestro Manhood: Advice on Being Nice

Dear Maestro Manhood:

Recently I was at a social function where time was taken for each man to introduce another to the group. It was a pleasant occasion until Fred introduced Joe [not their real names] Fred concentrated on the impending death of Joe's father rather than on Joe himself. As if that weren't enough, he said, "Joe's father is dying slowly and horribly of cancer of the eyeball. In fact, he may very well have succumbed to this misery even as we speak — leaving this lonely life without the comfort of his son, who is here boozing with us."

Was this proper behavior for a sensitive 90's man?

~ Offended Pipsqueak

Dear Pipsqueak:

On the one hand, Maestro Manhood does not speak of death in vague terms such as "passed away." On the other hand, one of our duties this side of eternity is to seek other's comfort as much as possible. Maestro Manhood believes that Fred may have made other's uncomfortable. It seems he does not understand the embarrassment he caused. Perhaps he has never been humiliated in a similar situation. Maestro Manhood thinks the only way this scene can be avoided in the future is to make Fred aware of what he has done.

At your next meeting, politely ask if you could have the honor of introducing him. Your introduction should concentrate on his bald spots, sexual inadequacies and unfinished doctoral program. In this way you will help this man walk a mile in another's shoes.

~ Maestro Manhood

A Women's Page

There have been a number of malcontent rumblings from Rascal significant others regarding their ill-defined relationship to the most extraordinary social club in Western Pennsylvania. Rather than letting it fester, the editor of *The Megaphone* thought it best to vent this bile.

Thus *The Megaphone* will introduce a page dedicated to the concerns of Rascal adjuncts.

The editor of *The Megaphone* will permit the writers of the women's page complete freedom with regard to content. Editorial restraint will be applied only to uphold the canons of good taste, the principles of masculine supremacy and the ideals of honest reporting.

Those wishing to contribute to this page should contact the editor at PO Box 9033, Pittsburgh, PA 15224.

Constitutional Convention

Jeff Campbell has circulated a letter calling for a Rascal constitutional convention at which a full constitution of the RR&R would be drafted and adopted. At present, the RR&R operates under a broadly-worded charter and a collection of by-laws.

Those interested in this matter should contact Dr. Campbell.

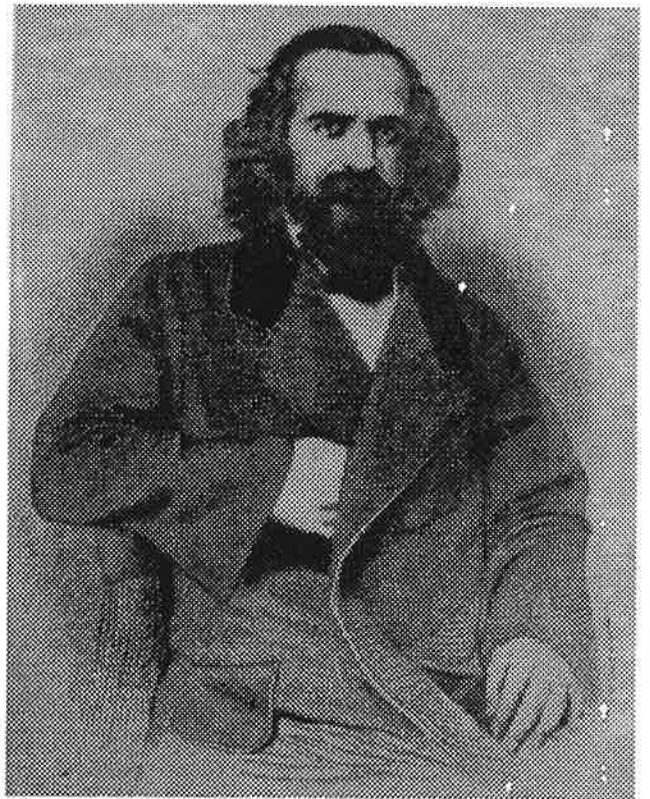
Poker Night

Jeff Campbell graciously hosted a Rascal Poker Night on the deck of his lovely South Side Slopes string bean house, which overlooks the Monongahela River, the new Allegheny County Jail, and Downtown Pittsburgh.

The modest crowd which gathered had an immodest amount of fun. **Bill Baierl** won most of the night's hands, winning in excess of \$3.00. Big loser for the night was **Dan Morrison**.

Orelie-Antoine de Tounens was born in Perigord, Dordogne, France, on May 12, 1825. He arrived in Republic of Chile on August 22, 1858, and traveled beyond its borders into the lands controlled by the Araucanian [Mapuche] people. Knowing the Chilean Republic had ambitions to acquire their land, the Araucanians in November 1860 elected Orelie-Antoine as their toqui, or chief of chiefs. In consultation with tribal chiefs, a constitutional monarchy was formed, with Orelie-Antoine as its first king. Thus the Kingdom of Araucania was born. Orelie-Antoine worked quickly to confederate neighboring tribes against the territorial ambitions of the Republic of Chile. In the process, tribes in Patagonia entered the kingdom which then became known as the Kingdom of Araucania & Patagonia.

Orelie-Antoine's reign was interrupted when he was kidnaped by Chilean troops, who returned him to Los Angeles, Chile, to stand trial in a kangaroo court. After languishing in an appalling jail for nearly a year, the court declared him insane and had him deported to France. Orelie-Antoine continued to fight for his subjects and his rights as the King of Araucania and Patagonia, mounting three expeditions to reclaim those rights. He died September 17, 1878, having spent the last year of his life as a lamplighter in the town of his birth.



Rascals, Rogues, and RapsCALLIONS
P.O. Box 9033
Pittsburgh, PA 15224