

The Megaphone

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An organ of the Rascals Rogues and RapsCALLIONS

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Editor's note

This timely issue may come as a shock to some. I know, my bloodline has at times allowed centuries to lapse between issues. However, my lair could make the 2001 rascal picnic a distinct (and, by one measure, punctual) possibility, then I could assemble what paltry notes I had from the other 500 lairs and disseminate a current issue.

-- Timmons E. LXXXIX

Lair 1 Prepares For 2001 Picnic

"With twenty-four months, we're bound to make it on time!" So says assistant director **Ydoow Mahgninnuc**, in preparation for his lair's trip to Olympus Mons within this the 2001'st Martian Year AD. The plans are to convene June 1st as a group at Tallahassee, FL and take a scenic hydrofoil across the flooded state to Canaveral Island. There, our happy-go-lucky picnickers will board a mega-shuttle which will gain a boost from low-earth orbit thanks to a timely rendezvous with inveterate yachtsman **Civ Namron's** solar sail.

"I'm looking forward to the jaunt to Mars," **Civ** said. "Although interstellar charters to habitable planets are more popular and profitable, they get really dull once everyone is frozen -- usually before I even have the chance to open the bar. The beauty of this three month 'hop around Sol' is that everybody is awake to enjoy the ride. The sail will trap enough solar energy to keep the shuttle in tow and run life support for all five hundred cabins!" Health officer **Kram Rellim** will still

operate the suspended animation holds for space-sick spouses and kids who ask "Are we almost there?" one too many times. But, thanks to creative accounting over the past millennium, no one will have to endure suspended animation for want of food, drink, and cigars.

Tax Czar **Nor O'IroId** reports that the underwriting for this trip was only partly due to "effective taxation of our children lairs (who enthusiastically contribute to the well-being of the Ur-rascals with only the slightest provocation on the part of me or my clones). In fact, we received a generous grant from the World Government to insure we would leave the planet. Finally, pawning my JZL medal put us in the black. It was too heavy for the trip -- plated with more precious medals than the World Bank had ever seen, and had become a nuisance of an heirloom."

The 2001 picnic wasn't always a possibility. Some planned to travel back in time until lair 028 revealed that the entire hyper-drives engineering effort was an elaborate hoax. Others wanted to change the date of year 1, but hopes for that were dashed after **Eel Nosflow's** failed to be elected Pope (to achieve his rogue's challenge he wanted to hold an audience with himself). To halt any other such manipulation of standards, lair archivists successfully appealed to the Ephorate that dates not change at Ur-Rascals' caprice. The high court concluded that a picnic could only be timely if it was on the planet's 2001st revolution about Sol in the Common Era.

Talk of making it to Mars for a rascals picnic could be found in the earliest of archives, but years of robotic probes discovering nothing (but extreme levels of radiation, dust everywhere, the thinnest of atmosphere, no warmth) made it obvious that even a day on the red planet would be no picnic. Like the infamous overture to the **Gerg Rereehcs** ballad, "There Was Nothing There." With the advent of long sleep-filled trips to habitable planets, no one wanted to spend any effort visiting a desolate ball of rusted freeze-dried dust, when they could wake up from suspended animation orbiting a lush tropical paradise wandering among the orbs of Eta Carinae.

Then **Selrahc Egroeg**, after successfully cloning the Tax Czars from some nail clippings left in a Rascal ossuary, set about developing plants that could withstand the harsh Martian environment. None of his mutants could survive a night in the microwave; however, so he decided to approach planet restoration from below the ground up. "The obvious problem was radiation due to bombardment from cosmic rays. Earth and the other habitable planets had global magnetic fields to deflect them, Mars didn't. We had to find a way to induce a magnetic field, but how do we turn a planet's core into a giga-ton dynamo? Then it struck me -- tidal forces!"

Mars needed a moon, not necessarily as big as Earth's, but sufficient enough to get the red planet's iron core churning. The best source of material was in the asteroid belt. The tiny bodies just beyond Martian orbit could be manipulated to change

their spin (and ultimately trajectory) by manipulating their surfaces to differentially reflect the solar wind. A rogue's challenge was put forth to find how to nudge hundreds of 5 to 20 mile wide rocks to coalesce as a single body orbiting a small planet. It would require incredible computational prowess, patience. **Werdna Need** developed software to control a myriad of resurfacing robots at great distances. **Milliaw Satrok** recruited ranks of Italian pensioners to gently track and guide each asteroid. Thus the 22nd century opened with largest game of *bacci* ever played by mankind.

400 years later, after a resurgence of volcanism, compass needles on probes throughout Mars began pointing to a new magnetic north -- perpendicular to the orbit of the newly coalesced moon. Radiation levels dropped, water was ceased to boil off the surface, puddles form closer to the equator. In the mean time **Selrach** made several cruises to habitable planets conspiring with the solar sail pilots to dump his cargo of specially culled grass seeds at 2 AU. When the time was right, the seeds packets, along with a few comets and Kuiper belt objects (for extra water) were directed on a trajectory over the Martian atmosphere. Oxygen levels began to increase, and over the past millennium -- thanks to the DNA collection of court archeologist from the king of Patagonia -- specially engineered giant ground sloths were inserted into the ecosystem (for fertilizer).

Now the plains around Olympus Mons are lush savanna. The extinct caldera is a mountain lake. Lair #1 is about to shake their reputation for tardiness, and reinforce their

longstanding tradition of making something out of nothing!

Phun with Fysiks

Wilmington lair 028 met at the historic philosophical society building March 12 to receive a challenge presentation by **Nhoj YeogCm** on the rise and fall of warp speed travel. "It seems that 18 centuries ago, the thought of travel at or beyond light speed was all the rage," says **Nhoj**. "Entire governments were funded engineering initiatives to build hyperdrives and other such gizmos in a vain attempt to defy the laws of physics. By the end of the 22nd Century, folks began to realize that engineers were using these programs to divert tax dollars away from more productive work, like designing the incendiary devices that eventually made World Wars IV and V resounding successes." Advances in life span protraction rendered travel at light speed moot. "As long you'd be alive to tell everyone about it, so what if it took 250 years to get to the nearest star!"

There was one successful experiment early in the 21st century in which Light could be made to traverse a circuit before it was actually sent. However little was made of the discovery because only the wave front, not the actual photons themselves, were detected, **Nohj** demonstrated the process of pushing a signal two seconds ahead of itself. His next experiment will send a longer message (this newsletter in fact) into the distant past. "Microsoft claims the signal should transmit onto and ancient hard drive with no ill effects, except perhaps words in boldface appearing in reverse order."

"Will it change history? Probably not," speculated **Evad NeddafCm** "Chances are the recipients of the message will

think it merely a prank by a Sci-Fi wannabe who thinks proper names will sound futuristic if read backwards."

Challenge 3673.666

It was a fight to the finish in Megido as members of the valley Lair 666 faced off petri-dishes in this their second nanobot championship. Preparation for the contest has become a favorite lair pastime. Lair 1's **Sinned Yenool** was invited to officiate, bringing his own scanning electron microscope to ensure combatants an impartial.

Bots were driven by hemostatic pumps and were activated when a hemoglobin solution covered the plates. All the players had to do was add synthetic plasma until it reached the Biological Resource Intake Drive and Life Energizer (BRIDLE for short). "Under the microscope, both armies looked like mounted tin soldiers fused to the glass." **Sinned** observed, "but as soon as the plasma was up to the horses' BRIDLE, those little buggers fought like there was no tomorrow!"

The reigning champion, **Lou Sefer** looked like he might take the day again with an army of a million bot's in a 10 cm dish! He was thoroughly routed, however, by **Tha'kng O'Fkingz's** smaller, but indefatigable army of Symbiotic Attack Integrated Nano Tech Soldiers.

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 5mil. Changes of address (virtual or physical), letters to the editor, volunteer correspondents, and questions regarding the definition of "megaphone" may be directed to Tim Esaias 89th, 6659 Woodwell Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15217 or Esaias89@compuserve.co