

## **Ladies and Gentlemen of the Internet,**

The Sacred Scarab announces that the time has now arrived for history to repeat itself, but on a much grander scale.

Many, many years ago, before most of you were born (in 1936 to be exact) a marvelous game appeared on the scene to celebrate the WPA (Work Projects Administration), the scheme concocted by the government to restore the economy during the Great Depression. This game was known as --

## **“Boondoggling: The Game of a Nation!”**

The contents of the game was make-work projects dreamed up by congressmen and administration officials to put people back to work and get money circulating. The purpose of the game, as the instructions inform us, was “to get rid of a given amount of money in as short a time as possible.” The inventors, Lucien H. Platt and Harold W. Hansen informed us that “There is absolutely no skill attached to the spending of these funds, experience teaching us that the less one knows about how to make or spend money, the greater advantage one has in BOONDOGGLING.” The authors also pointed out that “From an educational standpoint, it is interesting to know that money was actually allotted for every project on the board. It was necessary in most cases to exaggerate the amounts, since it was possible to illustrate only a few of the thousands of BOONDOGGLING projects throughout the country.” Nowadays such “exaggerated” sums spent on such projects seem quite ordinary, if not paltry.

This game is very different from MONOPOLY. In that famous game your aim is to take control of all the money and as much property assets as you can. To win the game of BOONDOGGLING you must get rid of all your money and then return to WASHINGTON, “The Home of the BOONDOGGLERS” via the “ROAD TO INFLATION”.

Our nation has already embarked on a remarkable repeat of the BOONDOGGLE adventure of the 1930's, except that we must add at least three zeroes to each denomination of the BOONDOGGLE money in order to celebrate the inexorable evolutionary progress of INFLATION.

**\*THE GAME IS NOW MUCH MORE EXCITING IN THE “REAL” WORLD BECAUSE WE CAN PLAY IT AT LIGHT SPEED WITH ELECTRONIC FUND TRANSFERS. (\* See Afternote at end of this Introduction.)**

## INTRODUCTION TO BOONDOGGLING

The news on February 12, 2009 forecasted that in addition to continuing the payout of President Bush's \$700 billion bank bailout (with a couple dozen billions tossed to the carmakers so we can keep burning gasoline), President Obama is moving forward with an \$800 billion-plus "stimulus" package. (Guess who gets stimulated.) On top of this the government will run at least a \$1.2 trillion deficit this year, and many think it will reach \$1.6 trillion, all with an annual GNP that generates about \$14 trillion in good times. These rough figures do not take into account many hidden costs that may make it even higher. Of course there is also the usual trade deficit of two or three dozen billions per month.

The good news is that we could make up about a trillion dollars a year in off-the-balance sheet foreign trade deficit if Americans simply stopped snorting cocaine. The Colombian cartel alone produces roughly 700 tons per year for our benefit with a value of around 1 trillion. Only about 100 tons gets intercepted by the narcofuzz, but these good ole boys (the US compadres alone) spend probably more than the value of what they bust. The narco's are good business men. They know they have a loyal consumer market and accept a few risks and operating "expenses" (such as interdicted goods, and chopped heads) to enjoy the excellent financial returns on investment.

If we threw in alcohol, tobacco and all the other recreational drugs, we could probably balance the budget simply with the upgrade in creativity and productivity, not counting the shift in the un-accounted for trade deficit. Naaaa. Nobody's going to do that. That would put a serious dent in the business of cops, lawyers, judges, jail builders, and jail wardens. Let's get really creative and do a caterpillar count or build bird houses like they did in the good old days. Instead of fixing bridges, we can teach people how to play bridge. That is classical civilization at its most ethereal.

Of course we could do something useful domestically instead of distracting ourselves by beating up confused Muslims and muscling in on the heroin trade, but then we could not justify our defense spending Boondoggle.

Al Gore recently pleaded with Congress to put a large piece of the stimulus funds into investments for achieving 100% Clean Energy within Ten Years. That is a worthy goal that would also take the oil cartels off our backs and help clean up the air and reduce global warming at the same time.

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We can also work on building an economy that begins to remove toxic substances from our products and design new products and infrastructure in a way that uses only renewable and easily recyclable materials.

While we are at it we could do a magnificent space program so we (the successful BOONDOGGLERS) may all move to Mars just in case we totally botch this planet (assuming of course that the Martians will grant us visas.) We better hope that the Martian Homeland Security goons and ICE-men are easier on immigrants than we are.

Seriously though, BOONDOGGLING is a very interesting, if rather mindless, game. In this sense it is truly educational. It may inspire players with truly creative BOONDOGGLING that could radically change the meaning of the word as it stands in our dictionaries, e.g. “BOONDOGGLING: To waste time or money on unnecessary, and often counterproductive work.”

Here is how this funny word came into being in its modern sense according to Michael Quinion, a British researcher of English language usage, in an article for “World Wide Words” on the web.

This typically North American term is often applied in two specific ways, either to describe work of little or no value done merely to appear busy, or in reference to a government-funded project with no purpose other than political patronage. It can also be used for an unnecessary journey by a government official at public expense.

Part of its oddity lies in its sudden emergence into public view in an article in the *New York Times* on 4 April 1935. This had the headline “\$3,187,000 Relief is Spent to Teach Jobless to Play ... Boon Doggles Made”. The “boon doggles” of the headline turn out to be small items of leather, rope and canvas, which were being crafted by the jobless during the Great Depression as a form of make-work. The article quoted a person who taught the unemployed to create them that the word was “simply a term applied back in the pioneer days to what we call gadgets today”. He suggested that boondoggles had been small items of leatherwork which were made by cowboys on idle days as decorations for their saddles.

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The word instantly became famous. It seems that Americans had been feeling the lack of a good word to describe unnecessary, wasteful, or fraudulent projects and leapt upon it with delight.

It wasn't quite new. The first appearance of the word is actually in a British publication, *Punch*, on 14 August 1929:

The chief scout has recently been presented by the University of Liverpool with a Degree, and by the scouts of America with a boondoggle. Of the two, I think I should prefer the boondoggle. Great as is the honour conferred by the Seat of Learning, there is a homely flavour about the other gift which touches the heart even more. "Boondoggle." It is a word to conjure with, to roll around the tongue; an expressive word to set the fancy moving in strange and comforting channels; and it rhymes with "goggle," "boggle," and "woggle." three of the most lighthearted words in the English language.

The *Daily Messenger* of Canandaigua, New York, explained the background to this puzzling item on 20 August 1931:

The boondoggle, which leaped literally into fame overnight when it was introduced by Rochester Boy Scouts at the jamboree in England, is a braided lanyard on which various things such as whistles can be hung. So fascinating do the boys find it, that they have spent practically all their spare time on the work.

On 6 April 1935, two days after the New York Times article appeared, a contrary view about the origin of the word was published in a syndicated snippet in the *Nevada State Journal*:

"The word 'boondoggle' was coined out of the blue sky by Robert H. Link, eagle scout," wrote Hastings. "It has absolutely no significance except that it has come to mean a good-looking addition to the uniform."

Mr Link, later a scoutmaster, was also said to have been its originator in an item in a magazine called *Word Study* later the same year. He is now often quoted in reference works as its inventor. As all the early appearances of *boondoggle* — none before 1929 — are in connection with Scouts' lanyards, it is indeed likely that it was created in that milieu. The stories about cowboys and pioneer days have nothing going for them apart from the guesses of one person reported in the 1935 *New York Times* article.

Whatever its origin, it was that article that converted *boondoggle* from a word existing quietly in its own small world to one of public importance and continuing usefulness.

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(Examples of Boondoggle Lanyards from Boondoggelman.com)

I recall the fun of braiding what we called “gimp” lanyards in my days as a scouting youth. In those halcyon days I never dreamed that there was another word and a more complex story behind this innocent handicraft. Handicrafts made with the flat plastic gimp cord are still very popular. Cowboys and frontiersmen worked with leather strips, probably using skills learned from the Native Americans.

The word “boondoggle” has undergone some further evolution in recent years that you may not wish to share with your young scouts if you wish to invite them to join the game. If you dare, read the various definitions of “boondoggling”, “doggling”, and “prairie dogging” in the online Urban Dictionary.

The Sacred Scarab Dung Beetle approves of BOONDOGGLING because it represents a branch of the fine art of eating bull shit, which is of course what all self-respecting Sacred Dung Beetles do for a living. The ancient Egyptians understood this and worshipped the little bugger as an incarnation of the Sun God and the essence of creativity. The key to successful Scarabing is total integrity and sincerity.

We could shift the word to something like BOON-DOUBLING: “Investing time and money on creative and productive projects that will prosper and ensure a stable, comfortable spiritual and material future for the inhabitants of the planet.”

### BOONDOGGLING MONEY

The BOONDOGGLING currency of 1936 was in units of millions. Nowadays a million dollars does not mean anything anymore, so we begin with a billion as the bottom line for doing anything. The highest denomination is only \$500 billion, and that does not even match the Bush Instant Bank Bailout of \$700 billion or come close to the Obama stimulus package of \$800-plus .... billion. We now talk glibly in terms of trillions, and seem to double the amount every day or so. I find the whole thing a mind boggle, because I and several billion others on the planet can enjoy living quite comfortably on a few dollars a day.

Remember, creativity is the ability to generate something from nothing. Therefore

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there is no limit to the amount of wealth we can create. Money is an idea that is only limited by our individual and collective imaginations. The same, of course is true of “reality” and “happiness”.

I have given the American People a goal to strive for by suggesting a wealth fund -- including Treasury Money, Money in Circulation, and Boondoggling Money (assuming up to six players) that totals \$14 quadrillion, 360 trillion Work Project Administration dollars in “stage money”. This gives us something to shoot for in the next few years so that we can begin to compete with the creativity of the Zimbabweans.

So remember to add three zeroes to all the payments indicated on the BOONDOGGLING Game Board. . . . .000.



Afternote: **How the World Almost Came to an End on September 18, 2008**

February 10, 2009

On Thursday (Sept 18), at 11 in the morning the Federal Reserve noticed a tremendous draw-down of money market accounts in the U.S., to the tune of \$550 billion was being drawn out in the matter of an hour or two. The Treasury opened up its window to help and pumped \$105 billion into the system and quickly realized that they could not stem the tide. We were having an electronic run on the banks. They decided to close the operation, close down the money accounts and announce a guarantee of \$250,000 per account so there wouldn't be further panic out there.

If they had not done that, their estimation was that by 2pm that afternoon, \$5.5 trillion would have been drawn out of the money market system of the U.S., would have collapsed the entire economy of the U.S., and within 24 hours the world economy would have collapsed... It would have been the end of our economic system and our political system as we know it...