



Master Blaster, UK TV comic Leigh Francis and Tom

www.bigfootdiscoveryproject.com

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Message from the Curator

Now that we've completed the first year of this newsletter, it's time to look back at our accomplishments and look forward to the next year. As I write this the sun is finally shining, and Spring Fever is already in the air. I can't wait to get out in the woods to seek physical evidence of bigfoot here in the San Lorenzo Valley. But first I want to express my thanks and appreciation for all of you who helped to get this museum underway by becoming Charter Members, Fellows and Associates.

In an effort to honor all of our members I will list them here. First come our **Charter Associates**, those who gave \$100 to help in our mission (These names are on a plaque in the museum and listed in an honored space on the web site)

Tom Yamarone; Greg and Anji Rose; Derek A. D. Lari; Tom and Consuelo Cousino; Ralph Scott Obey; Paul Pinkham; James and Diane Bynum; John and Montra Freitas.

Next are the **Charter Fellows**, those who joined at the \$50 family level:

Mike and Tracey Barrow plus Patrick Raynor; Jim Ross with Kari Capelli and Bill Belfield; Rex Stewart; Rick and Max Walker; Barbara Hammerman and Clint Cam.

The remainder of the **Charter Members** (\$25) are as follows:

James "Bobo" Fay; M.J. Rawle; Lance McVay; Leila Hadj-Chikh; Don Blanchard; Seth Livingston; Paul Lamm; Bill Coombs; Hillary Ferris; Dean Verheyen; Glenn Rabenold; Rick Carter; Terry Davis; Ken Obey; Mellow Russell; Gene Robinson; Bob Strain; Alex Solunac; Jessica Lloyd-Rogers; Mike DeGregorio; Kevin Flavia; David Sierras; Howard Meyer; David D'Arpino; Maren Cellitti; Sam Cowan; Michael Gilbert; Rob Roberts; Tessie

Kennedy; Jason Crossman; Anna Kay; James Miller; Stephen Bringuel; Sean Baker; Amie Stratton; James Buchner; Scott McClean.

Our first two **Honorary Members** are *Patricia Patterson and Bob Gimlin.*

Thanks to every last one of you, without your participation, this museum would be a sad and lonely endeavor.

By the way, Charter Memberships are still available through May 2006. Also it's time to remind you to renew your membership for the next year. Your membership card shows the date you joined—that's when your renewal is due. We hope you'll join us again for the coming year. (Some will need to renew as soon as May 1, while some others have yet to receive their first newsletter.)

Now I'd like to highlight some of our first year's accomplishments.

We've had a year's worth of meetings, most of which had an average attendance of 20 members. Not bad when you consider we have a total of about 60 members now, many of whom live out of the Santa Cruz area and several who live out of the state.

We've taken over 80 reports of strange encounters from visitors to the museum and started a database connected to a GPS mapping system as used by city planners and such to document the reports. We have done field investigations, following up on a number of alleged BF events, and already have a good idea where the most likely corridors and habitats for BF are in this county. We have multiple witness events, as well as overlapping (corroborating) events reported by different experiencers at different times in a particular area at a certain time of year.

We found an interesting structure near a creek less than a mile from the museum that some might say could have been the work of a BF. We've uncovered tales of a "Dump Dweller," stories of dead BF accidentally

killed by bear hunters, and received video from a woman who claims she can talk to BF.

We've had visits from BF authors, bigfoot hunters, reporters and TV crews. Some of the most famous and most infamous members of the BF community have come to visit our museum.

We've watched documentary videos together as a group, shared personal experiences and pet theories, and attempted to plan a methodology for solving the mystery of BF once and for all – at least in this part of the world.

We've hosted school groups and scout dens and told BF stories to believers and skeptics alike. We've added dozens of books and DVDs to our research library, on bigfoot, paleontology and primatology as well as books on woodsmanship, orienteering and tracking.

This is just the beginning, as our Grand Opening will be the week of May 27 - June 4. By then we will have four new exhibits set up in the back of the museum, an audio/video display outside under the oak tree, and the completed diorama. We also intend to redesign most of the interior exhibits, upgrading the graphics and adding narrative plaques and call-outs or captions to all items on display. We look forward to setting up a study area in the back room with work stations and additional research files available to serious seekers.

So, as we embark on our second year, I'd like to invite and encourage you all to renew your memberships now, so you don't miss a single edition of this information-filled newsletter! And I'd like to extend a warm invitation to our next meeting, and hope you can make it for the Grand Opening. It should be fun!

---Michael Rugg



What's Going On? Texas Bigfoot Event – 18th Annual Ohio Conference – Bigfoot Rendezvous in June

by Tom Yamarone

Here we are well into the New Year, a month into Spring and the west coast is still being inundated on a weekly basis by relentless rounds of rain. We're setting records all along the west coast from British Columbia to Central California for the number of rainy days this year. Oh, well, what can you do? The folks up in Seattle and Portland are grinning as they read this – rain, a problem? Yes, for us umbrella users it is. And it's wreaking havoc on the roads and mountain by-ways with slides and closures. Let's hope we get back to normal with regard to the weather.

Should this occur, late April and May promise to be active here in the Santa Cruz Mountains. We have identified several areas separated by miles of mountain roads and isolated from vehicular traffic altogether. We intend to have several outings that will involve day hiking and night investigations. We'll detail these plans at the meeting and you can find out more about this by contacting Mike at the museum. Of course, we'll have a full report in the newsletter as we continue our search for evidence in these hills.

Bigfoot in Texas? Yeah, we would think so. And so does the University of Texas at San Antonio. They are co-sponsoring an exhibit on the subject of bigfoot at their magnificent Institute of Texan Cultures. This four month exhibit will be highlighted by single day events each month featuring a series of lectures on the topic. The first occurred on Saturday, April 8, 2006 and was attended by close to 200



photos courtesy of Texas Bigfoot Research Center

people. The speakers included Peter Byrne, Kathy Moskowitz-Strain, and Daryl Colyer of the Texas Bigfoot Research Center. Catherine Nixon Cooke, the niece of Tom Slick, was also on hand to sign copies of her book, *Tom Slick, Mystery Hunter*.

According to Bob Strain, a close friend and museum member, the exhibit is outstanding. It features an entry hallway depicting a dark night in the swamps near Caddo Lake, Texas. Purported bigfoot sounds pierce the darkness and visitors glimpse a mock creature lurking behind





the trees as they exit into the exhibit area. On display are artifacts from the Pacific Northwest including a native mask depicting a sasquatch, a carved stone head with very ape-like features and two copies of the Skookum Cast - both original and reverse representations of this partial body imprint. Footprint casts and photographs complete the compact exhibit and a short documentary produced by the museum runs on a loop in a small viewing area.

We bring this historic collaboration with a major university to your attention should you happen to be making summer travel plans. San Antonio, Texas might just become a destination of interest to bigfooters on the go this summer. The exhibit runs until July 30th and events are scheduled for the following Saturdays: May 6th, June 3rd and July 8th. For more information go to the Texas Bigfoot Research Center's website at www.texasbigfoot.com.

The Bigfoot Rendezvous in Pocatello, Idaho is taking shape as we go to press. Tickets for this event are now available at www.bigfootrendezvous.com and there is also a schedule of events posted there as



Peter Byrne at the podium

well. This should be an amazing gathering in southeast Idaho on the weekend of June 16, 17 and 18. Chris Murphy's Meet the Sasquatch Exhibit (the one displayed in Vancouver, British Columbia in 2004 – 2005) will be at the Idaho Museum of Natural History and some of Dr. Jeff Meldrum's footprint cast collection will also be on display.

I haven't spoken with Don Keating regarding the Ohio Bigfoot Conference/Expo on April 29, 2006, but I read about it in the Bigfoot Times. It's a one-day event, free to public and those who have attended have always had great things to say about it. Larry Lund from Vancouver, Washington will be there this year and 3 other speakers. For information, go to www.ohiobigfoot.com.

The bottom line is that all of these events are an indication that the subject matter is alive and well – and getting the message out there to the bigfoot community and the general public as well. Now let's see what 2006 holds in store for us regarding the actual documentation of this elusive species. Many of the museum's members are active in this quest, not only locally here in the Santa Cruz Mountains, but throughout California and the Pacific Northwest.

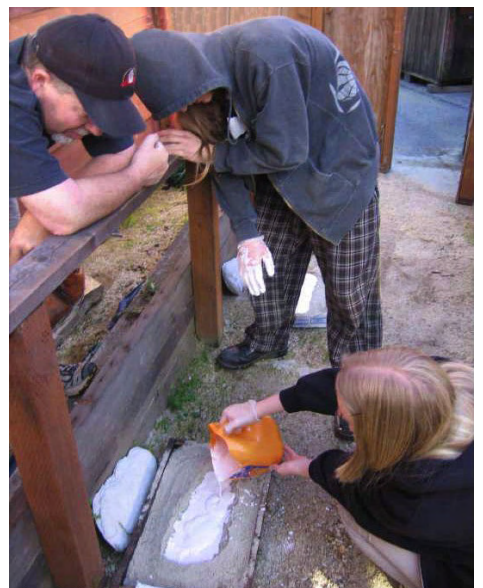


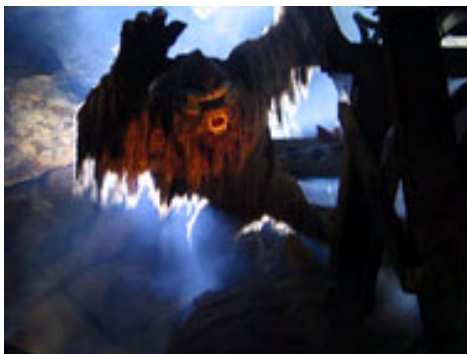
March 19, 2006 – Footprint Documentation and Casting Workshop

We held our first Bigfoot Discovery Museum workshop on Sunday, March 19, 2006 on the museum premises. It was a hands-on activity using casts provided by Cliff Barackman of Long Beach, California. We impressed a series of these into boxes filled with moist sand and arrayed them to represent what an alleged sasquatch track line might look like. Museum members then took turns measuring the tracks, the step between two tracks and the stride between both right



foot impressions. We practiced taking multiple photographs using a tape measure for scale. Once this exercise was completed, we mixed plaster and cast the prints. Over the course of the afternoon, each member was able to cast a print and take that home with them. We plan to schedule this event again in the coming months as it is good practice getting to go through the motions of casting. It is indeed the case where practice makes perfect or at least, for better chances at getting a good cast!





Disney features Yeti with new ride called Expedition Everest

Disney imagineers were traveling for weeks in the Himalayas doing research for their new exhibit. Now they're back and recently aired a series of four special programs on TV culminating with a show called "In the Realm of the Yeti." The program featured Jeff Corwin and a team of biologists looking to find and document new species of animals in the area thought to be the yeti's realm.

During the course of the show Corwin gave little hints as to his theory to explain the "legend" of the yeti—it's a misidentified sloth bear. This falls back on the previous work by Reinhold Messner, a mountaineer who claims the yeti is actually a bear. It seems like mountaineers feel obligated to debunk the yeti once they've failed to see or capture one themselves. Hillary and Shipton did it years ago as well, claiming the tracks were caused by "stringing" foxes. They also proclaimed the "yeti scalp" in the Pangboche Monastery a "hoax," and actually made from a serow antelope scalp.

So Corwin's debunking of the yeti as a misidentified bear is nothing new. What was new was the scientist who suggested the "legend" may have begun thousands of years ago when there were a few Gigantopithecus still roaming the alpine forests. He thinks that the ethnic memory of the now extinct giant ape could explain the persistence of the yeti legend, as travelers ascribe the name to any unexpected beast tramping through the snowfields above the stomping grounds of known animals.

Throughout the show there were special commercials about the new Disney ride in Orlando. Thanks to the comments of some of the guests, they left the possibility that Giganto "could" still be wandering through the high altitude snow fields from time to time. Just enough wonderment was allowed so as not to stifle our interest in the yeti altogether, even though the host essentially debunked it.

Penn and Teller claim they hoaxed the "Sonoma Video"

Back in February it was The MythBusters using BF in promo ads. Now it's Penn & Teller. The two "showmen", who have a TV series called "Bull Shit" on Showtime, claim they were responsible for the video posted on the Internet last November and credited to a man named Mark Nelson. He claimed to have made the video while shooting scenery on a wildlife trail just 15 minutes from the Visitor's Center at Lake Sonoma, CA. The show, dealing with "Cryptozoology," is scheduled to air on Showtime April 24; by then this newsletter will be done and printed so we'll have to wait and see exactly how

badly they portray people seriously involved in the study of hidden animals. In the preview trailer on the web site they use the term "CrAptozoologist" so I can guess what they're up to.

As a matter of fact a few months back I received a call from one of their producers, who told me they were trying to find Cryptozoologists to interview for this upcoming show. At least the producer was candid with me as he explained they would want me to make some statements about my search for bigfoot on camera, and that P & T would then criticize or otherwise comment on what I said, after the fact. I told the producer that sounded like a setup for ridicule, and he admitted they were having trouble finding people to do the show (Loren Coleman was also approached and also declined). I told them I'd be happy to debate them live, on camera, but would not be the fall guy for this kind of "dissing" setup.



On the web site promo for the show they claim to have been responsible for the Sonoma video—evidently they want to make people who accepted the reality of the video look foolish; perhaps they want to hoax the hoaxing of the hoax, or some such scheme. The BFRO responded with a statement that suggests **they (P&T)** are hoaxing the hoax, and that Mark Nelson did not give them the right to the film so they've opted for this approach. In the words of Matt Moneymaker (quoted on Cryptomundo.com):

Regarding the stupid claim by Penn & Teller that they faked the Sonoma footage:
Their claim is false. They didn't have anything to do with the footage. They are just trying to get a buzz going about their show. They are trying to trick people into tuning into the program. It's a ploy, don't fall for it.
They were trying desperately to license the Sonoma footage. Mark Nelson agreed that it wasn't a good idea to let them have it. He would have OK'd it, and even encouraged it, if he would have been involved with them. He's a real person, yet they say it was only a front on a web site.
A clever route they are taking now ... by claiming they shot it themselves in the Valley... They don't live in the Valley. They live in Las Vegas, and work six nights per week there. They only have time to do voice-overs for their Showtime shows.
Notice how they only showed the web version of the footage on their promo. That's the best clue that they are full of crap. They would have showed the guy in the costume holding the mask in his arms.

They would have shown clips of how they set up the footage. They would have shown Mark Nelson ... the person that a few us spoke with ... but they can only show what is available on the web, because that's all they have.

Keep in mind, as P&T see it, they are breaking no laws by perpetrating this hoax. The hoax is not the Sonoma footage itself, but rather their claim that they faked the Sonoma footage.

They won't go to jail for that, or get sued for that, but they will probably increase their ratings by making that claim.

It's a nicely clever ploy when you think about it ... They know it will be difficult to show that they are lying. And any attempts to discredit their claims will only bring them attention as pranksters and help their ratings.

So they are pranksters if they faked the footage, and they are pranksters if they did not fake the footage.

It should be noted here that the BFRO already "authenticated" the Sonoma video, and referred to it as Gigantopithecus as well. John Freitas, on the other hand, feels sure that the story being told by the owner of the original web site is full of contradictions, and his experience as an investigator tells him this is a hoax. We've been told by a man who has worked for the Army Corp of Engineers in the Sonoma Lake region many years, that the peak in the video is not recognizable as from the area in which the man claims to have shot the video. Others have said the same thing. We're on the fence... can't say for sure either way just yet. Perhaps the P&T show will help to solve the mystery... I doubt it.

Penn and Teller are following in the footsteps of the [Not So] Amazing Randi and other intellectual professionals, using skepticism as a tool for personal promotion. They sit back in front of their computers, never going into the field nor speaking to anyone who has seen these things, and are not satisfied to just agree to disagree with this field of study. No, they are compelled to ridicule those who do choose to look into the phenomenon seriously, and resort to ad hominem attacks, name calling and other devious and vilifying methodologies. I edited my college humor magazine and enjoy good satire as much as—maybe even more than—the next guy. Is the P&T approach good satire...I doubt it. On the other hand it could be just sour grapes 'cause they tried to do it to me!

--Michael Rugg.

BIGFOOTER'S DATES

April 29 **Ohio Bigfoot Conference**
Salt Fork State Park Lodge

May 7-14 **2nd Annual Sasquatch Symposium**

Alaskan Mystery Cruise

Sponsored by Seattle's Mystery Museum

June 16-17-18 **Bigfoot Rendezvous**
Pocatello, ID 1-877-325-5765