



Jeff and Mike at the museum

www.bigfootdiscoveryproject.com

July 22, 2007 Volume 3 Number 3

**Message from the Curator**

Now that we've had our first Bigfoot Discovery Day it's time to thank all the members who helped to make it happen. Local helpers include Mike Barrow and Dave D'Arpino who helped with hours of physical labor above and beyond what would be expected. Other local helpers include my family members Paula, Nate and Jessica, and friends Mellow Russell and Dan Norvelle. Lance McVay was the member who got the ball rolling on the event, and of course Tom Yamarone was right there every step of the way helping to make things happen. Further thanks go to other members from afar who came to lend support or contributed funds toward the cause such as Joyce Kearney and Darleen Clark, Scott McClean, Mark Stenberg, Cliff Barackman and Bart Cutino. Thanks also to other members who helped by coming to the event or posting flyers and/or taking video: Greg Rose, Tom Cousino, Ralph Jack, Jim Duffy and Bill Tucker. There are undoubtedly others whom I've neglected to mention and my thanks goes out to you as well.

The event was a resounding success. We sold out the house in Santa Cruz and we've never had so many folks at the museum at one time. Thanks to member donations, the barbecue and ticket sellout, we actually ended up with more money than we started with; expenses were covered and we profited with a few



more sales in the museum than would normally be the case! Now we can feel confident that we can do an event of this scope without losing money, so plans are underway for next year's Bigfoot Discovery Day.

The fact that bigfoot brings out strong reactions from many people is evidenced by two events that occurred in association with the big day. First, the toilet papering of the museum the morning before Jeff Meldrum arrived (the day the local front page newspaper article appeared), and second, the streaker who ran by in a homemade bigfoot suit while dozens of people were present at the museum. I have to comment on this, as it shows two things clearly: there is at least one local who apparently possesses a bigfoot suit; and Tom Yamarone, of all the bigfooters I know, is the one most likely to get a photo should a bigfoot show up (the photo he took proves that). Members take note, if you go out looking for bigfoot, have a camera ready at all times.

The toilet papering wasn't as harmless as it looks... besides toilet paper, there were

tampons dripping in ketchup, scattered about and sticking to the building. Yuk. The first time we got papered there was no ketchup (that was a couple of months ago.)

Now back to positive results. I sent email invitations and announcements to anthropologists from UCSC, San Jose State and Cabrillo College (the local community college). Three professors from Cabrillo actually came to both the museum and the lecture. I've had a couple of meetings with one of the professors since the event.

Dennis Etler has spent a great deal of time doing field work in China at both Homo erectus and Gigantopithecus sites. I went to his home in Boulder Creek and saw his great paleoanthropology library (half the books were written in Chinese). He has been in touch with some of the primary "wildman" researchers in Asia, and has worked with Li Tianyuan, who discovered a Homo erectus fossil skull that is very close in size to the Meganthropus reconstruction done by Grover Krantz. We'll be having Dr Etler as a guest speaker at the museum as part of our monthly gathering: Sunday, August 26. Jeff Meldrum also met with Dennis Etler before he returned to Idaho, as Etler's contacts in China might give Meldrum an opportunity to go there and study the Giganto material in person.

So besides educating people about bigfoot, and giving Jeff Meldrum a podium on which to publicize his work, we also made contact with local paleoanthropologists who are at least sympathetic to our cause. Bravo, gang!

-- Michael Rugg



This is the scene that greeted us Thursday morning



Big time help from Cliff, Mark and Mike B.

## Bigfoot Discovery Day 2007

### California Bigfooters Host Dr. Jeff Meldrum

by Tom Yamarone

Felton, CA – There was a buzz in the air in late June in the forests above Santa Cruz, CA – and it wasn't mosquitoes! No, it was the excitement generated by the first annual Bigfoot Discovery Day at our local bigfoot museum – featuring Dr. Jeff Meldrum. Bigfooting friends from throughout the state were coming together for a weekend event that would include a Friday dinner for museum members, a barbeque lunch on Saturday at the museum and a lecture event Saturday evening in Santa Cruz, CA. In summation, it couldn't have worked out better!

We had planned for this to be an event that would draw attention to the Bigfoot Discovery Museum and also be an event that the general public could embrace. We were thrilled when Dr. Meldrum agreed to participate, for obvious reasons. He's a recent author on the subject, has appeared in many documentaries and is well known for his studies on the subject of bipedal locomotion. His resume is excellent, but what made for such a successful event was his friendly, approachable, down-to-earth demeanor. Much of the time was spent in social discussions of the subject at the museum on Saturday, at the dinner on Friday evening and after his talk as well.

Michael Rugg worked tirelessly to get things ready for the event and it would be appropriate here to profusely thank the individuals who gave readily of their time to help him. Museum members Mike Barrow and Dave D'Arpino did the yeoman's share of the work at the museum and



Many museum members arrived Friday evening for the dinner at Mike and Paula's house with Jeff Meldrum.

elsewhere, Lance McVay and I helped organize the event, Mellow Russell ably assisted at the museum during the weekend and Greg Rose kept the website current with the promotional information. Many other museum members contributed as well throughout the weekend and for all who helped out we say "THANK YOU!"

Where to start? Friday afternoon was the unofficial start to the weekend. Friends from Southern California arrived at the museum shortly after Dr. Meldrum was greeted by Mike and Lance. We joined the group and enjoyed an hour or so relaxing and conversing out in the shade of the oak trees. That

evening a group of 20 or so enjoyed a scrumptious dinner at Michael and Paula's home nearby in Felton where the conversations were casual and the interaction most pleasant. We were there well into the night and reluctantly bid farewell to all and returned to our campsite.

Things began early Saturday morning and Mark Stenberg came through with some vital assistance to move food and materials to the museum for the lunch-time barbeque. If you happened to enjoy the victuals at either event, you can thank family chef Jessica who kept her cool over a hot grill all day. We arrived to find



Dave Osborne, David Roddy, Scott McClean and Bart Cutino near the barbeque.

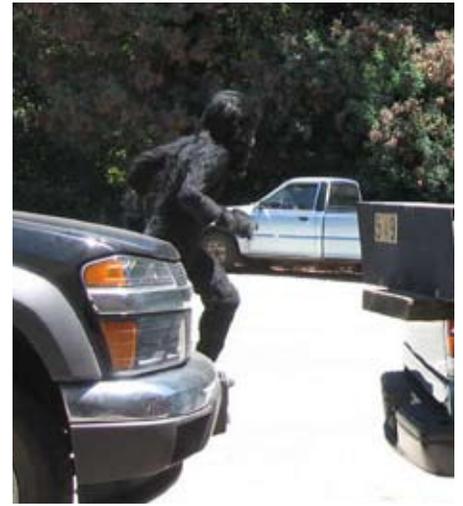


a packed museum with cars parked all around the location on Highway 9. The people who were attending the evening lecture were there as well as the general public who were alerted to the event by a front page article in the Santa Cruz Sentinel on Thursday.

This was a gathering that most anyone would enjoy. In any given nook and cranny of the museum property you could enjoy the company of bigfoot enthusiasts from around the state. We spent the better part of 4 hours socializing and enjoying lunch while Jeff Meldrum tirelessly entertained questions, signed copies of his book and posed for photographs. We were happy to have long-time bigfooter and author Daniel Perez join us at the museum and other very notable “squatchers” like John Freitas and Kathy Moskowitz Strain. Yeah, I should list all of the people I have ever gone bigfooting with here – as all but 2 of them were present – but we’ll just let the pictures do the talking. It was an afternoon to remember and one with many highlights. One was the appearance of some local



Bigfoot Times editor Daniel Perez paid us a visit.



unknown dressed in a gorilla costume who ran by the conversing throngs on both sides of the museum. One photo was obtained in much the same lucky manner as other bigfoot photos... right place, right time – lucky camera functioning properly!

A quick change at the campground and we were off to Santa Cruz. Getting the room ready was no small task as this was our first time. That’s where the friends pitched in and we opened the doors to our 130 capacity room with only 17 tickets to sell. It took awhile to get everyone in and seated but the event started right on time with a musical tribute to Roger Patterson and Bob Gimlin. I played my song and had put together a slide show to go with it. It seemed like a nice way to kick off the evening.





Michael Rugg then took to the podium and gave a personal recounting of the events that led him and his wife, Paula Yarr, to found the Bigfoot Discovery Project. It began with Mike's life-long interest in mystery primates after a brief encounter in Humboldt County when he was just a child. An avid interest in the subject led him to collect everything he could get his hands on. While at Stanford University, he attempted legitimate study of the subject and even authored a term paper about the evidence for hairy bipedal hominoids, but was soundly rebuked by his anthropology professor. The years passed and he was still keeping tabs with the bigfoot community. He attended the conference hosted by Grover Krantz at Washington State University in 1989 and ultimately, had the idea for the museum when he and Paula attended the International Bigfoot Symposium in Willow Creek, CA in 2003. He also had produced a coloring/activity book about bigfoot as well and was distributing copies at the symposium.

Based upon other roadside attractions, the museum took shape in the winter of 2004 and was opened that April.

Due to some red-tape and other delays, the official grand opening did not occur until 2006, but in the meantime, the museum had become a clearinghouse for bigfoot reports both in the county and throughout the U.S. Visitors to the museum realize this is the place they can recount their stories without fear of ridicule and Mike has collected over a hundred reports in this manner. He detailed two of those for the audience and one other unusual structure found

nearby and ended his presentation in just under 20 minutes.

Jeff Meldrum was introduced as the keynote speaker at the event and he approached his presentation in a very similar manner as his book approaches the subject of sasquatch. The chuckling is over when we discuss bigfoot these days – or at least it should be! Just ask the person chuckling about it whether or not they have read “Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science.” Yes, there are evidentiary based answers to this mystery and they're found within the covers of that book. For us, on this special evening, we were treated to a journey through the best evidence with Jeff Meldrum as our guide.

He prefaced his talk by saying that “some of you are very immersed in the literature, the history and all that goes with this subject; some of you may be here just to explore and initiate yourself – so there's a little bit of everything mixed in here.” He based his lecture on a series of frequently asked questions – you know, the questions he is faced with on a daily basis as the most prominent academic involved in the subject. He started





with a statement that it has been a gratifying experience to see the reception the book has received. “It’s opened doors and minds; it’s created opportunities. I’ve given presentations on the subject at Department of Fish and Wildlife offices.” When faced with 50 minutes to explain the evidence, he stated that it is “difficult to distill easy answers to very complex questions,” but that’s just what he did.

He took us through his introduction to the subject by none other than Roger Patterson in Spokane, WA in 1968. He attended one of the famous public showings of the Patterson-Gimlin film documentary and this galvanized his nascent interest in human evolution. He told us how he subsequently met Grover Krantz in 1996 and stopped by to see Paul Freeman on the way back to Idaho. This is all covered in a wonderful account in his book. He showed us what impressed him about those first tracks he saw in the field – how the toes were extremely long and had prehensile capabilities “equal to my hand.”

The next question he tackled was the controversial Ray Wallace fiasco...or as he put it, “FAQ: Didn’t somebody

confess on their deathbed that they hoaxed all the bigfoot tracks with carved wooden feet?” After explaining how they even twisted this story to include Roger Patterson confessing on his deathbed (which he certainly didn’t do), Dr. Meldrum stated, “No tracks have been convincingly demonstrated to have originated from carved wooden feet we have been allowed to examine.” He then showed us a series

of footprint photos next to the Wallace carved wooden foot. One was a footprint photo from the Humboldt Times that he considered a better example than the Jerry Crew footprint cast because it exhibited more “toe movement and variability in the shape of the foot.” Ah, the appreciative words of a true connoisseur!

Jeff then excitedly took on us on a tour of his most recent project – creating an archive of 3-D virtualization of footprint evidence. He said he had recently presented on this subject to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Boise, ID. Wow! Utilizing state of the art scanning equipment, he is creating a virtual database of the footprint evidence he has in his laboratory and any other he can access. He was granted permission by the Willow Creek, CA museum to scan their collection including the Bob Titmus casts. He stated some of them are thin and brittle but now they’re permanently archived. With the virtual scans, one can easily determine the contours of the casts and also highlight certain specific areas.





He then explained the mid-tarsal break – that characteristic of the sasquatch foot that produces the pressure ridge in the middle of some of the footprints. He showed examples of how the front of the foot grasps (with those prehensile toes) and the heel lifts independently – unlike our feet which act like a lever bending near the front. It was easy to follow this explanation and it is explained in detail in his book.

He showed examples from the anthropological record – namely the Laetoli fossil print that has a mid-tarsal pressure ridge (that’s in the book) and a Homo Erectus print photo from France that also has similar characteristics to the sasquatch print.

It was time then to take on the people who think the Patterson-Gimlin film is a man (or woman) in a fur suit - to quote Charlie Brown, “Good grief!” It’s got to be done and Jeff took it on with aplomb. His slide of frame 352 from the P-G film next to a photo of a Phillip Morris gorilla costume drew laughs from the audience. He then showed a costume they took 8 months

to “reverse engineer” into a sasquatch costume based on “Patty” and it was preposterous. Somewhat similar in appearance, Jeff asked us to “look at the limb proportions and the lack of muscle mass and detail.” He then showed us a slide showing a clown from Yakima that claims he was the guy in the suit with a still frame from the film next to his walking silhouette. Enough wasted time here... Jeff explained it very well and it’s my



sentiment that those who know what they’re looking at in that film certainly enjoy this subject much more than those who don’t.

He then told us of his experience filming a Discovery Channel documentary entitled, “Best Evidence.” In the show they had an actor don a bigfoot costume and try to duplicate the creature’s walk in the Patterson-Gimlin film. They concluded that, indeed, it could be done. According to Jeff, it took 2 days of strenuous practice on the actor’s part and he didn’t actually get the walk right until he let his arms swing loosely from the shoulders – much like people do when imitating an ape. In the end, he concluded that the gait of the bigfoot in the film was very “un-self-conscious” – or should we say “natural”?

“Is there only one? Where did they come from?” – these were the next questions to answer. And as he does in his book, he made a strong case for the creatures coming to North America across the Bering land bridge. He clarified that it was most likely a range expansion as opposed to a migration and that it wasn’t the barren, snow covered image we have of that region today, but rather a contiguous forest habitat for much of the time that land bridge existed. He also made his case for the sasquatch being a descendant of Gigantopithecus.

The next question he presented was “Are they merely apes or are they human?” He didn’t so much as answer this directly, but gave examples of why people thought they were human. “I saw one and it turned and grinned at me.” Or “I locked eyes with it and it was a sentient being.” In both these examples, he explained how the primates exhibit these tendencies and so neither are truly good reasons why the sasquatch would be more human than ape-like.



He mentioned George Carlin’s comedy routine on “stuff” and how humans are characterized as having “stuff” from the very first Homo species. He also mentioned how chimpanzees utilize tools and may even keep them around, but it’s not much “stuff.” He concluded that “everything we see with sasquatch indicates they’re devoid of that material culture other than opportunistic tool use. The anatomy and behaviors have their direct correlates with the great apes.”

He showed a slide of his next book project entitled “Giganto: the Real King Kong” that would further elaborate on his theory that sasquatch is a descendant of this ancient ape. He mentioned how sasquatch doesn’t just “show up in Manhattan, but is seen in appropriate habitats.” He then covered the question of “Where are the bones?” much as he does in his book pointing out that only last year were the first bones of a fossil chimpanzee discovered and that there have only been two discoveries of ancient bear bones...so, he asked, “Where are the bear bones?” What about hair? He mentioned that Dr. Henner Fahrenbach is taking the lead in this

area and has 16 samples of possible sasquatch hair.

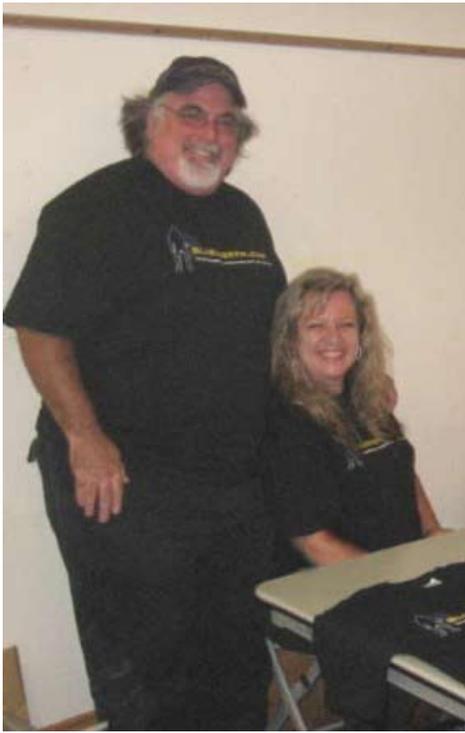
He then answered the question “What do other scientists think about your book and your research?” and cited endorsements by Dr. George Schaller, Russ Mittermeier and Jane Goodall. Finally, he posed the questions “What is new? What is the future of sasquatch research?” He took this opportunity to

publicly announce the start up of the Relict Hominoid Inquiry – an on-line “e-journal” that would provide a venue for “serious scholarly, academic publications on this subject.” It will be hosted by Idaho State University and he will be the executive editor. He said he already assembled an editorial board of 16 individuals with backgrounds in Anthropology, Archaeology, Molecular Biology and Journalism to name a few. “We’ll have peer review, scholarly research articles, commentary and response, essays on historical issues, book reviews and a less formal bi-annual newsletter.” This is very exciting news, indeed, to see where Jeff is taking the next step to involve the academic community in this subject. And that was it for his presentation.

Dr. Meldrum answered questions for 20 minutes after his presentation and was confronted with a wide array of topics from the large size of the sasquatch to the reason why they seem to have a sagittal crest. He was even asked about disappearing footprint trails and the UFO connection.



Jeff Meldrum spent a good deal of time talking with attendees, and posed for pictures as well.



Museum Associates John & Montra Freitas

He has not seen any credible connections between these creatures and UFOs and said, “So far, it has to be demonstrated that these creatures exhibit something other than the null hypothesis of a great ape and so far I haven’t seen that.”

Daniel Perez asked about his population estimate of 500 for the Pacific Northwest and also about the controversy sparked with recent Bigfoot Times newsletters on the Memorial Day footage and the



Cliff watching over the plaster cast silent auction

Skookum cast. Jeff said his population estimate was based upon the expertise of wildlife biologist John Mionczynski and based upon the footprint evidence. Namely, that footprints found in certain areas, like Bluff Creek, had indicated the presence of a dominant male, a couple of females and offspring. They concluded that this solitary arrangement would require a vast home range and that there were possibly no more than 25 individuals in Northern California during that time of the track discoveries from 1958 until 1967.

He had elaborate answers for both of the other topics. He stated that he had seen a better resolution version of the Memorial Day footage and it does seem to be clutching a smaller subject to its back in the early frames and later on its shoulders. He also said “gyrating breasts” could be seen on the subject especially when you view a “reverse image with the shadows and highlights reversed.” He then stated that the Skookum cast and several of its features (including the heel imprint with the evident Achilles tendon) were compared with elk anatomy and it didn’t match.

After the event, there was plenty of time for more photographs and books to be signed and then we retired back to Mike and Paula’s home in Felton. There we enjoyed a short evening discussing various topics among friends and even dealt graciously with an unwelcome gate crasher. Yes, this event brought the famous and the infamous to the Bigfoot Discovery Museum and for a day and a half, we enjoyed the subject much more than one could ever imagine. Events like this are certainly a way to charge your bigfoot battery and renew the search with a satisfied mind.

Bigfoot Discovery Day 2007 is in the books and will be appreciated as the first big event at the awesome museum we call “home” in our little bigfoot world.

Notes after the fact: Certainly there were other things discussed at the event that I couldn’t cover in this extensive article. Perhaps we’ll look back on this day in the months ahead and delve further into what we heard and discussed. Scott McClean provided a wall-sized enlargement of Frame 352 that always enhances the ambiance and we collaborated on an incredible shirt to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Patterson-Gimlin film You might notice this in some of the photos. Great work, Scott! Again, it wouldn’t have been the same without you! And to all my friends who attended, it was great having you there! I heard somebody exclaim, “It’s GREAT to be HERE!” Indeed it was!



Museum members Hillary & Dean



Scott & Tom model their commemorative t-shirt

