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Message from the Curator

Now that we've gone into foreclosure, things are not looking good for the Bigfoot Riverside Retreat. We tried to renegotiate the loans, but the income from the museum is just not enough to cover the mortgage, based on last year's receipts. We tried to convince the lenders that the rentals of the Retreat would bring up the revenue stream substantially in 2009, but they need more than a promise, so we've been advised to put the place on the market and attempt what is called a "short sale." I'm told that does less damage to one's credit report.

So far none of this has any effect on the Bigfoot Discovery Museum. That property is separate, and we're doing everything necessary to make sure the museum is not in jeopardy. We're still struggling with the slowed economy, but things have started to pick up lately in the museum store, and we are confident that we'll be solvent again once the summer season kicks in. It would still be great if everyone could renew their subscriptions a little early, as the great majority of subscribers joined up in the month of May, and that's when their renewal is due. Thanks to those of you who have already done so; its been a great help in keeping things from getting completely out of control.

Last meeting we discussed Bigfoot Discovery Day III, and we need to make some decisions about that event pretty soon. But in light of the Bigfoot Roundup taking place in Yakima, Washington in the middle of May, we decided it would be best to push this year's event to the end of Summer, or even to the Fall. This is best for Paula and I as we'll need the next couple of months to relocate and get ready

for this year's season. We have decided to redesign many of the museum exhibits for the new season, which will officially kick in at the beginning of June. At that time (June 7), we intend to have an opening event featuring our new exhibits and honoring our partnership with Dave Paulides and his NABS group. The new exhibits will feature much more emphasis on evidentiary materials and less on popular culture. You'll know you're in a museum and study center the moment you enter the museum, as there will be a mission statement posted. The connection to conservation of wilderness and the endangered species act will also be made clear.



Matt holding the tooth and pointing to the spot where he found it (Ralph.Jack)

Nothing new to report about the possible bigfoot video from Aptos... we're waiting for the apple trees to regrow their foliage, and we'll return to the spot to investigate further the size of the figure on the video. In the meantime, Ralph, Bill and Matt went on an outing into the local sand hills where Matt first found the large tooth that I wrote about previously. We still have not heard back from MonsterQuest about the tooth. I sent them a couple of photos of it a



Matt Bento and Bill Tucker digging for shark teeth (Ralph Jack)

few weeks ago. While the guys were out they found a couple of shark teeth, but no additional primate teeth as yet, We intend to continue checking the area for teeth on an ongoing basis.

We had a recent visit from some folks who have been to our museum before. They once had a band called the Groovie Ghoulies. Here's the Wikipedia entry on them: "The Groovie Ghoulies were an American punk rock band formed in Sacramento, California. They released numerous albums, EPs, and singles, and toured internationally. Their music was generally structured around monster, horror, and science fiction themes. The band's name was taken from the 1970s animated television series Groovie Goolies, a spinoff of Sabrina, the Teenage Witch (itself a spinoff of The Archie Show)." They have a music video online called *Running with Bigfoot*. There has been talk of them doing a benefit concert for our museum later this year. During the recent visit Kepi donated a box full of his *Running with Bigfoot* CDs to sell.

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News from Museum Members – From Vancouver Island, B.C. to Portland, Oregon

by Tom Yamarone

News from our circle of friends in the bigfoot world begins with photographs submitted by Alex Solunac of Victoria, British Columbia. You might remember the information about the classic Albert Ostman 1924 “kidnapping” encounter that Alex submitted for the December 2008/January 2009 newsletter. He’s been interested and investigating the sasquatch phenomenon in his home province of British Columbia for over 15 years. Alex has networked with many researchers up his way including Dr. John Bindernagel



Dave Hill near strange tree formation photographed by Alex Solunac of British Columbia.



who also resides on Vancouver Island. He’s written an excellent and thorough article about the sasquatch on Vancouver Island that was published in the University of Victoria’s newspaper. Alex has also been out in ‘the bush’ on many occasions and has interviewed dozens of eyewitnesses.

So, when he mentioned that he and a partner had photographed a most unusual discovery, I took notice. They found a rather large tree inverted in the ground in the middle of some thick undergrowth. They were out in this area looking for sasquatch sign due to several encounter reports. A group of hikers had found themselves being harassed and stalked by what they concluded was a sasquatch. One of them did glimpse the creature as they were retreating several kilometers back to their vehicles.

Alex and Dave Hill, a friend and colleague in the sasquatch investigations, were directed to the encounter location by another researcher with the British Columbia Scientific Cryptozoology Club (BCSCC).

They went to have a look around and see if there wasn't any spoor or other sign to be found. While exploring the area, they followed a game trail through the bush from the encounter location and came up a trail that led down to a river. There they found a possible footprint impression.

Upon further exploration, they came upon a large tree inverted in the undergrowth on a hillside. Here is an excerpt from his January 2009 email:

Dave and a co-worker of mine went up about a month later to look around again and we came upon a upturned tree. My guess is that this is from a logger on a skidder and a slow day in the woods, but it is interesting that were no cable, or strap marks on the tree, and it has been in the ground for some time as the wood is sun bleached. I add this as it made me think of two photos in Robert Alley's book "Raincoast Sasquatch" where he tells of two trees that are upturned on an island in Alaska. I am not one for taking any of the bent trees and branch signs very serious, I add this not as a bigfoot related topic, but just as a strange thing found in the woods. ;-) Take care Tom, Alex

I looked in my copy of J. Robert Alley's book *Raincoast Sasquatch* (Hancock House, 2003) and found the photographs of the inverted trees to be remarkably similar to Alex's photographs. You'll find them in section 2, chapter 14 "Possible Sasquatch Nests and Other Sign," Robert Alley published two photographs of large, inverted cedar trees he investigated in Alaska.

"A most unusual arrangement of inverted trees, jammed thirty yards apart, into a muskeg (editor's note: muskeg is a boggy soil type defined as "a usually thick deposit of partially decayed vegetable matter of wet boreal regions.") in perfectly vertical fashion, was found above Klawock Lake, Prince of Wales Island, in the early nineties. As reported to me in 1996 by Klawock forest workers, the trees were located thirty feet off a logging spur, several miles up from the Klawock-Hollis Highway. ... According to researcher Al Jackson, Prince of Wales



native elders had stated that fifty years ago the trees had been jammed into the soft muskeg by huge two-legged creatures as markers." (p. 248, *Raincoast Sasquatch*)

Certainly one of the most unusual occurrences I've seen with an old tree snag the forest! Thank you for sharing this, Alex. Who knows what left those trees in that position? A freak force of nature (cyclonic wind, etc) or what the elders witnessed fifty years ago in Alaska?

As a side note, *Raincoast Sasquatch* is an excellent book on the subject with the focus on investigations in southeastern Alaska and coastal British Columbia. It is full of outstanding eyewitness reports – many illustrated by the author in a most informative fashion – and a fine summary of the sasquatch lore from that region.

New Bigfoot Research Website

Cliff Barackman, a museum member and good friend, has been working the last few months on his new website, www.northamericanbigfoot.com. Cliff has been searching for evidence for over 15 years spending many summer nights in the remote forests of northern California. In the last 2 years, he has devoted more time to the search on a year-round basis and is equipped with thermal imaging technology, as well as audio recorders and cameras. We enjoyed a presentation from Cliff at the February 2008 museum monthly meeting where he displayed and explained the equipment he uses in his field work.

Cliff and I met in 2004 at Operation Odyssey, a field forensics workshop given by Kathy and Bob Strain along with

Montra Freitas. In 2005, we camped in the Sierra Nevada Mountains above Sonora, CA and experienced wood-knocking at a remote meadow near Pinecrest Lake. Since then, we have made it out several times a year with friends and on expeditions. He's now living in Portland, Oregon and is situated near many likely habitat locales. With the advent of his independent research and this new website, Cliff will be investigating bigfoot reports and doing fieldwork regularly.

When you visit www.NorthAmericanBigfoot.com, you see the fruits of this field work and experiences. He's an avid collector of footprint casts, accumulating over 60 of them and is working towards documenting these key pieces of evidence in a footprint cast database. The website – like most on the net – is a work "in progress" and you'll notice additions there frequently. He's also started a very interesting and well-written blog – be sure to check that out.



Cliff Barackman standing next to the Bigfoot Statue by Michael Porter of Metalworx Creations.



During the last month we had a visit from another celebrity. I got a call from a man who produces the CBS TV show *Eye on the Bay*. They did a treatment on our museum a couple of years ago. This time he was working with folks who produce video shows for Tivo. They have their own spokeswoman, known as Tivo Shanan, who goes to various events and places and does short video segments for their website and so forth. Below is a photo of me and Tivo Shanan. She was very pleasant and their whole approach was respectful. I have not seen the final video, but it should be on YouTube pretty soon. She had a pith helmet and a tiny pair of binoculars they brought as props, so after they taped at the museum they went off to shoot some tongue-in-cheek stuff in the nearby woods. I hope it doesn't get too silly in the final version.

--Michael Rugg



A Lesson in Skepticism

Scientific skepticism (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

Scientific skepticism or rational skepticism (British English spelling: scepticism), sometimes referred to as skeptical inquiry, is a scientific or practical, epistemological position in which one questions the veracity of claims lacking empirical evidence. In practice, the term is most commonly applied to the examination of claims and theories which appear to be beyond mainstream science, rather than to the routine discussions and challenges among scientists. Scientific skepticism is different from philosophical

skepticism, which questions our right to claim knowledge about the nature of the world and how we perceive it. Scientific skepticism utilizes critical thinking and attempts to oppose claims made which lack suitable evidential basis.

Characteristics of scientific skeptics

Like a scientist, a scientific skeptic attempts to evaluate claims based on verifiability and falsifiability rather than accepting claims on faith, anecdotes, or relying on unfalsifiable categories. Skeptics often focus their criticism on claims they consider to be implausible, dubious or clearly contradictory to generally accepted science. This distinguishes the scientific skeptic from the professional scientist, who often concentrates their inquiry on verifying or falsifying hypotheses created by those within their particular field of science. Scientific skeptics do not assert that unusual claims should be automatically rejected out of hand on a priori grounds - rather they argue that claims of paranormal or anomalous phenomena should be critically examined and that such claims would require extraordinary evidence in their favour before they could be accepted as having validity.

Pseudoskepticism (from Wikipedia)

The term pseudoskepticism (or pseudo-skepticism) denotes thinking that appears to be skeptical but is not. The term is most commonly encountered in the form popularised by Marcello Truzzi, through his *Journal of Scientific Exploration*, where he defined pseudoskeptics as those who take "the negative rather than an agnostic position but still call themselves 'skeptics'"

Characteristics of pseudoskeptics

While a Professor of Sociology at Eastern Michigan University in 1987, Truzzi gave the following description of pseudoskeptics: In science, the burden of proof falls upon the claimant; and the more extraordinary a claim, the heavier is the burden of proof demanded. The true skeptic takes an agnostic position, one that says the claim is not proved rather than disproved. He asserts that the claimant has not borne the burden of proof and that science must continue to build its cognitive map of reality without incorporating the extraordinary claim as a new "fact." Since the true skeptic does not assert a claim, he has no burden to prove anything. He just goes on using the established theories of "conventional science" as usual. But if a critic asserts that there is evidence for disproof, that he has a negative hypothesis --saying, for instance, that a seeming psi result was

actually due to an artifact--he is making a claim and therefore also has to bear a burden of proof.

Truzzi attributed the following characteristics to pseudoskeptics:

The tendency to deny, rather than doubt; Double standards in the application of criticism; The making of judgments without full inquiry; Tendency to discredit, rather than investigate; Use of ridicule or ad hominem attacks in lieu of arguments; Pejorative labeling of proponents as 'promoters', 'pseudoscientists' or practitioners of 'pathological science.'; Presenting insufficient evidence or proof; Assuming criticism requires no burden of proof; Making unsubstantiated counter-claims; Counter-claims based on plausibility rather than empirical evidence; Suggesting that unconvincing evidence is grounds for dismissing it.

Pseudo-skepticism and scientific method

It is normal scientific practice to posit alternate explanations (or theories) for observed phenomenon, to experiment, and to adopt the theory that best predicts the behaviour. Scientific evidence is often indicative rather than overwhelming, and many theories are based not on any single piece of evidence, but on accumulated weight of evidence, or simply on accumulated lack of evidence to the contrary.

For example, if a test is performed that shows apparent evidence for ESP, most scientists will suspect a flaw in the test. Scientific practice does not require every scientist to fully vet every experiment performed by every other scientist. Rather, scientific reports are reviewed by a number of peers, and where an experiment has produced interesting results, other scientists will try to reproduce it. If their results match, the evidence is accepted. If not, the original result is agreed to be an anomaly and it does not affect the acceptance of the dominant theory.

However, it is common for protoscientists to apply the label pseudoskeptical to anyone who is not prepared to either investigate the test or accept its conclusion. This is a misunderstanding of scientific method. To actually state that ESP does not exist and therefore there must be a flaw in the test is pseudoskepticism; taking a position on the validity on the test requires accepting a burden of proof. Simply choosing to ignore the test is not pseudoskepticism, however frustrating it can be to those who welcome the apparent result of a test.

