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Message from the Curator

Now that our first fund-raising flea market has passed, I need to thank all of you who helped make it happen. That would include a few folks whose help was very substantial, like Dave D'Arpino, Mike Barrow, and Joyce Kearney. I also want to mention Mellow Russell, Anna Kay, Hillary Ferris and Dean Verheyen. Thanks, you guys really made it happen. And thanks to all the others who contributed in one way or another. We raised well over \$500.

Things are still a bit sketchy in the finance area, but we have confidence that we'll be able to keep everything intact and underway, even if it is not a 24/7 endeavor. Bigfooting gets slow in the winter anyway. I have interviewed for a job with a nearby computer software company as a Marcom Associate, but they are looking for an experienced HTML/Dreamweaver mavin, and I'm not there yet. I have been working at teaching myself how to make web pages and have made great progress in a fairly short time, but I don't think I'll be ready for this particular job in time. The best thing about this job possibility is that it gave me incentive to learn the ropes on web sites ASAP. So before too long you'll start to see some changes in the BDP web site as I learn the ropes myself. I mentioned in the last issue, we have some folks who already have the knowledge who have volunteered to help upgrade our site. But so far the project is still awaiting action. Once I learn the ropes, the site will become a lot more dynamic as we'll be able to make frequent postings, especially about our ongoing research of local sighting reports.

Our last couple of meetings have been fairly small groups. For a while we had an average of 18-22 people at the monthly meetings, but for various reasons the attendance has been declining. This is to be expected from time to time, as most people have lives that don't revolve around bigfoot studies. There are family events, school and other social events that can coincide with the meeting date and result in missed meetings. But we sometimes wonder if



Mike R, Joyce, Tom, Dean, Mike B, Dave, Hillary

the meetings are becoming too similar, with the same old same-o. At the last meeting we talked about working up a calendar for next year that would include more variety in the types of gatherings, including more time spent as a group out in the woods. We are also going to look into having more guest speakers whenever possible to share their insights and theories about bigfoot.

For example, I recently spoke with Thom Powell, author of *The Locals* and he seemed interested in our work here; should he be in the Bay area, we'll probably be able to talk him into an appearance at the museum (Thom does his bigfooting in Oregon.) I also spoke with Craig Woolheater, head of the Texas Bigfoot group and one of the bloggers on *Cryptomundo*. He said he plans to visit the Bay Area in January and will be coming by the museum to talk shop. He's putting together a bigfoot museum in Jefferson, Texas next year. Hopefully his visit can be set to coincide with our first meeting of 2007.

Sometimes I think the attendance problem has to do with the meeting date. Not everyone can get to Felton on a Sunday night because of the need to be at work early the next morning. Whatever day we choose, there will of course be conflicts for some folks, so we're considering having an occasional meeting on a different day of the week: Saturday, for example. Any feedback you guys can give me as to why you're no longer coming to the meetings would be helpful. By the way, some of our members are active bigfoot researchers but live out of the

immediate area. If any of you plan to be in our neck of the woods, please let me know in advance so we can promote a meeting with you as a guest speaker, to share some of your experiences or insights with other members. There's strength in numbers, and we hope to make this museum more dynamic in the coming year so everyone will be looking forward to each meeting. Hopefully our membership will continue to grow, and remember, a group like this can survive only if the individual members are willing to participate from time to time and not just sit back and read the newsletter each month. Write an essay on your best guess as to what bigfoot is; share your own bigfoot encounter or event; tell us about your last bigfoot outing; recommend a new book, movie or documentary. Be an active member. (No meeting this December. Our next is Jan 21, 2007)



Another issue for the museum is the recruiting of genuine scientists, academics and other types of consultants to serve as advisors to the BDP. Just yesterday we had a visit from a man who says he's a Nez Percé Medicine Man. This guy was about 6'11 and said his Native American name is "Talks with Owls." I asked him if he might be available to accompany us on some of our outings next year and he said yes. I also had a recent visit from an Archeologist from UC Berkeley who was willing to share some insights on local Native American history as it might relate to bigfoot.



Recent acquisitions for the Reference Library:

DVD Documentary: *OREGON BIGFOOT Search for a Living Legend*

Autumn Williams, Kelly Berdahl, Michael Nave and videographer Jeff Johnson.

Cryptozoology: Out of Time Place Scale Catalog of an exhibit of art organized by the Bates College Museum of Art and the H&R Block Artspace at the Kansas City Art Institute

---Michael Rugg

5 Days Out in the Redwoods – What Could Be Better Than That?

by Tom Yamarone

The day had finally arrived – we were getting back out into the woods, albeit November 2nd there were no regrets. All those glorious, sunny days of September and October had passed and into the open storm door we drove. Scott McClean had made the drive up from the Los Angeles area the night before and we were off at the break of dawn on Thursday morning.

Our destination was the BFRO Redwoods Expedition, a 4-day outing that we had attended last March as well. The forests of the Redwoods National and State Park encompass the coastal range from Orick, CA to Crescent City, CA, along a 35 mile stretch of Highway 101. It's no secret that this area boasts some prime bigfoot habitat. Del Norte and Humboldt Counties have been historically active areas with many reports of sightings and footprint discoveries – including the Patterson-Gimlin film in 1967 and Jerry Crew's footprint cast in 1958. Without disclosing exact locations (as this is one of the tenets of participation in these expeditions), we were focusing our time and efforts in the hills outside of Crescent City and along the Smith River and its tributaries. That's a lot of ground to cover!



Smith River at Hiouchi, CA

As I mentioned in a previous newsletter article, I have been excited to return to this area since speaking with a local witness on the phone. Jay Rommel and his family have lived in the area for many years and have multiple bigfoot experiences to report. We were in contact with them and hoping to interview the Rommels regarding the sightings that the son and daughter had

near their home in 2003 and 2004. As we were to discover, the little towns along the Smith River are the site of many bigfoot encounters. The Six Rivers National Forest is the “backyard” for many of these areas and large tracts of land are owned by lumber companies. Add in a couple of salmon runs a year in the Smith River and you have a formula for bigfoot and the local residents crossing paths every now and then.

Expedition Begins – Meeting up with the Group

We had left early to avoid traffic in Marin and Sonoma Counties and this allowed us to stop at a couple of locations in the Humboldt Redwoods State Park. It's always a treat to drive the Avenue of the Giants and make a perfunctory stop at the Legend of Bigfoot gift shop. I like to take the Miranda exit and drive north along the Avenue into Myers Flat. On this day, we



Albee Creek Campground

opted to exit at the Founders Grove and drive Mattole Road through the Rockefeller Forest. We went to visit Albee Creek campground and have a look around. It's an old homestead that was given to the park and made into a campground. A good sized orchard still exists in the clearing near the campground kiosk. It was a nice stop and a great walk through the big trees as the rain had ceased for the moment.

We hit the steady rain north of Eureka and stopped to have a look at another location south of Orick near Stone Lagoon. We didn't stop very long and were soon driving over the Klamath River and by the Trees of Mystery in a total downpour. We arrived at our destination in the Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park to find that

our camping companion – and museum member – Mark Stenberg had moved to more secure shelter in town and we followed suit. I'm sure the readers in British Columbia and Washington are giggling at our aversion to squatching in the rain, but it's mostly the risk and inconvenience of using our electronics in these conditions that brings about this mind set – plus the fact that you just can't hear a whole lot in the forest while it's raining.



Mark, Tom and Bart showing their Bigfoot Discovery Museum ID Cards.

We met up with the group and soon discovered that we had a bunch of Bigfoot Discovery Museum members in attendance: Bart Cutino, Mark Stenberg, Bobo Fay, Scott McClean and me. Overall, there were over 20 people participating in this endeavor and we were joined by eight local residents. It's great to have local people participating and advising us on places to check out. The group was given first-hand accounts of the sightings the Rommel family had experienced. We then went to visit another family that has been hearing strange vocalizations in the early morning hours – one event taking place just two nights prior to our arrival. As is common in these large group outings, we then split into smaller groups to go explore.

We spent the first night checking out a couple of isolated roads in the park. The rain was steady so we headed back to base camp just prior to midnight. Mark and I got up at 4 a.m. and drove out to meet some other expedition members who were sleeping in their cars in the woods. We joined them at 4:30 a.m. and weren't able to do much as the rain was still coming down. At 5:30 we took a drive on a back road through the redwoods and tried some call blasting just before dawn. Nothing responded so we took to the trails and walked for about an hour as the gray light crept through the forest canopy. We tried



Call blasting over the Smith River

wood knocking and calling as we walked, but whoever was sharing the forest with us kept to themselves.

After a quick morning nap, we resumed our exploration of the backcountry. Most of the land in the hills above the Smith River is privately owned to the ridgeline. We still explored some logging company roads by foot and determined to return there that night. We were out at this location for two hours on Friday night when a local man stopped by our vehicles to ask if we needed help. We told him what we were looking for and he told us of a sighting he had the previous week while driving home on this mountain road. Just after 9 p.m. on Thursday, October 26, 2006 this local resident was driving up the road when he spotted a large, grey bigfoot in the road ahead of him. As his headlights illuminated the creature, it stepped off the road into the forest. He estimated that it was 8 feet tall. We had checked this location earlier in the day as it is at a mountain pass that connects a creek watershed leading to the Smith River with the backcountry to the Northeast. This was exciting news and we spoke with this man for more than a half hour.

Later that night, we drove out of the hills and down to the Smith River. From there we walked a dirt road along this feeder creek. We were in two groups of 3 persons and as my group began to head back to the vehicles, a loud wood knock emanated from the creek habitat to our left. It sounded very close and was quite distinct. We stopped and got our cameras out to record any other sounds but none occurred. (You see, if it's actively drizzling, the cameras are kept dry under the

rain gear. That was the case here.) After 5 minutes or so we continued on our way out. Nothing else was reported by the other group and we returned to base camp just after midnight.

Interviewing Eyewitnesses at the Location of Their Sighting



Scott and I paid a visit to the RV Park in Hiouchi, CA along Hwy 199 where the Rommel children had an encounter with two bigfoot in September 2003. The sighting was well documented by BFRO investigator Jim Hooper at that time and also was the subject of a newspaper article in the Crescent City Triplicate. The story goes as follows: Alex, age 12, was riding bikes with a friend when they stopped near the edge of the forest, not far from the park office. Thirty yards up on the forested



Alex shows the spot where he first saw the bigfoot

hillside stood a large bigfoot who was observing them. Both parties stood still in shock and surprise as they observed each other. Alex described the creature as leaning out from behind a tree with its arms poised as if ready to run. He stated that they seemed to stare at each other for close to 5 minutes before the boys broke and rode home to tell their families. The Rommels were just sitting down to dinner so his attempt to get his family to come see what he had seen was delayed by dinner... a very quick meal according to Alex and his sister, Sara. She got a friend and returned to the nearby hillside with Alex and his friend. As Sara, age 13 at that time, was looking at the hillside with a small pair of binoculars, she spotted a gorilla-like face staring at her friend. At the moment she told her friend and looked back, it was staring at her. Just then, both girls observed a second bigfoot bolt from the bushes and run away from them down the hillside to their right – about 100 feet away from them. They all returned home to tell their parents. The next day, they



The hillside where the second bigfoot ran down

returned to the hillside and found large footprint impressions at the spot where the creature stood watching them.

Scott and I videotaped the family recounting these events at the site. We photographed the hillside from both vantage points – the children's and that of the bigfoot. It's been three years and the vegetation has changed slightly, but the locations are easily recalled. Scott and Alex climbed up to where the bigfoot was and where one of them ran, while I taped Sara, her mother and father recounting the day's events.

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FIELDWORK

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The view from the bigfoot point of view

We then returned to their home to see the site of Alex's brief encounter in October 2004. As he stepped out into the backyard to play, he noticed the torso and arms of a large, brown bigfoot in a gap in the trees on the hillside. As he turned to flee, he saw the bigfoot turn and walk away, striding easily over a 4 foot high barbed wire fence. He fled to a neighbor's trailer and was returning with that neighbor when his parents arrived home. Again, they found where something had stood just above their backyard – this time only 40 feet or so from the boy.



Alex shows the fence the bigfoot stepped over

Both events occurred at dusk and the hillside in question is the boundary with the Six Rivers National Forest. Scott and I were impressed with the sincerity and consistent accounts by both Alex and Sara and indeed, one might conclude that this creature was merely observing the children at play. At no time during either event was any aggressive behavior observed. The family has become very interested in bigfoot and many local residents have encountered these creatures. This is a great area where habitat comes right down to the edge of

a small city and right into the backyards of many forest dwellings. We were grateful to make acquaintances in this area and look forward to visiting here again. You could not do much better if you're looking for a location to search for bigfoot.

Expedition Comes to an End

Saturday night included some group call blasting in two remote locations and a caravan to a spot near the California/Oregon border. While in transit to this location, the skies opened up and we found ourselves seeking shelter and sustenance at the Lucky 7 Casino at the Smith River Indian Reservation. Fate has a funny way of making the best of a bad situation. While waiting outside the casino's restaurant, we were approached by a member of the Tolowa tribe. She was very supportive of our efforts and told us some of their stories about bigfoot. We exchanged contact information and called it a night feeling very good.

Sunday was a day of exploring some back roads and even finding time to catch a game or two during the storm. Bobo arrived to join us for the last 2 nights and we made a plan to be out starting at 2 a.m. We converged along the Smith River at that late hour and spent the next 4 hours walking roads and trails nearby. Some strange calls were heard and a wild cacophony of sounds erupted from across the river as dogs were going crazy, a whoop was heard and then a large tree came crashing down along with a big boulder tumbling into the river. Who knows what happened? It sure was an eye opener at 4:15 a.m. We got a few hours sleep and were back at it on Monday morning.

Our last day was spent saying "thanks" and "good-bye" to our local friends. Mark Stenberg got up early determined to cook a camp breakfast – and cook he did! Scott and I arrived at Mark's make-shift breakfast camp just after a few others had eaten and departed. You can't say enough about a hearty, camp-cooked breakfast... so I broke out the guitar for the first time on this trip and ran through the "unreleased bigfoot songs" – *Jerry Crew (He Knew What to Do)*, *John Green & He's a Big*



Mark and Tom

Ol' Man. I packed it up after playing *Roger and Bob (Rode Out That Day)* and we got ready to ride out ourselves.

We checked on the few locations where we had left fruit out, but it was still intact. Scott and I ended up on our favorite one-lane dirt road through the old growth forest as night fell. We were trying to hook up with Bart and Bobo, but it was not to be. A short radio "good-bye" was all we got in and then the forest bid us "good-bye" with a shrieking call from out of the Mill Creek watershed. It was 5:55 p.m. and we changed out of our boots and back into tennis shoes for the long ride home. An hour south of Crescent City, the clouds parted and the moon and stars shone brightly. It was a great time in the forests of that northwest corner of the state. I imagine we'll be back there early next year...it sure is one of the best areas I've been for bigfooting.



IN THE NEWS

Recently there was a big hubbub about Jeff Meldrum's new book, *Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science*. The A.P. put out a story about a jealous colleague or two of Meldrum's who were complaining that his bigfoot research was detrimental to the reputation of the university. In response to those critics we offer the following quote:

"There must be no barriers for freedom of inquiry. There is no place for dogma in science. The scientist is free, and must be free to ask any question, to doubt any assertion, to seek for any evidence, to correct any errors."

--- J. Robert Oppenheimer