

# Bigfoot, Other Monsters(?) Bug Scientists

by Boris Weintraub  
National Geographic News Service

The reports started coming in to officials in Truro, Mass., last fall. A large, cat-like animal was killing cats and pigs, running in front of cars, and generally alarming the populace of the Cape Cod community.

"It's been compared to Bigfoot, to the Loch Ness Monster, to everything," says Edward A. Oswald, the town's selectman-assessor and chairman of its board of health.

"We've had trackers out everywhere, and we've followed up on all leads. To this day, we haven't found anything conclusive to indicate there was such an animal in the area."

But the animal has been named "the Beast of Truro," and no one has explained it yet.

## Dinosaur Hunt

Mysterious creatures of this sort are reported nearly everywhere. Just last fall a University of Chicago

biologist went off to central Africa to search for Mokele-Mbembe, said to look like a dinosaur with a long, flexible neck and a muscular tail. So far he's had no luck; Mokele-Mbembe hasn't turned up.

The Loch Ness Monster has North American counterparts in "Champ" of Lake Champlain, and in "Ogopogo," the sea serpent of Okanagan Lake in British Columbia. Then there is the Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas, the Wildman of Hubei in China, Yowie of Australia, and the Soviet Union's Chochunaa and Wild Man of Dagestan.

But the most famous North American creature is Bigfoot, or sasquatch, as he was known to British Columbia Indians. Like many such creatures elsewhere, he is described as being at least 8 feet tall, covered with hair, and emitting a foul odor. Like creatures elsewhere, he goes back centuries in folklore and myth.

The number of Bigfoot sightings reported each year depends on who

is doing the counting. The creature has been reported in every region of the continental United States, through the Pacific Northwest, with its dense forests, is its most common "home."

Apart from sightings, the evidence in favor of its existence consists of footprints, some, hair samples, a little blood and some droppings, an occasional photograph, and a short film sequence shot in California in 1967.

But every piece of evidence has proven to be controversial, leading Grover Krantz, an anthropologist at Washington State University, to say that only a specimen or a skeleton would convince other scientists. Krantz himself is convinced already.

## Foot Not Human

"I've examined evidence that I can't explain any other way," he says. "I've analyzed the footprints, and I can deduce that it's not a gigantic human foot involved. It's been modified exactly the way you'd have to modify a foot for an

800-pound body in order to keep it walking correctly.

"There's a lot of pig-headedness about scientists. If science has missed an animal this big, science would look a little funny. So better not look for it."

No, that's not the problem, says Turhan Murad, a physical anthropologist at California State University at Chico. Murad teaches a course called "Bigfoot and Other Monsters: Myth or Reality?"

"It's not that scientists are unwilling to accept Bigfoot, but a matter of having to prove its existence, coming up with physical evidence of some type," says Murad, who uses the mystery as a lesson in how science works.

Krantz bases much of his case on more than 1,000 footprints found in a single area of California that suggest a giant creature with a clubfoot. Only someone with a detailed knowledge of anatomy could fake such a deformity, he says.

But Murad, who has examined the same prints, says a human foot can be deformed in many ways. Thus, he says, anybody could have faked the prints.

## No Bones About It

No skeletons, bones, or fossils have even turned up for a Bigfoot, a major reason most scientists are skeptical at best.

But the people who believe in its existence offer explanations, some admittedly bizarre. Take, for example, Robert Warth, president of the Society for the Investigation of the Unexplained.

Warth suggests that an aberration in the earth's electromagnetic field may have caused a time warp that enables the creature to appear and then disappear, baffling scientists.

And John Beckjord, a Seattle man who operates a "Bigfoot Hotline" and says he has seen the creature three times, offers this explanation of why people shoot at Bigfoot but don't kill it:

"It suggests something science isn't ready to face yet, and doesn't have the tools to study. It could be that Bigfoot isn't from this earth, that it's able to prevent us from seeing it. Now this is just speculation, but we need to have an open mind."

Beckjord has sent samples of purported Bigfoot hair to experts for analysis. The result, he says, is that the experts agree that the hairs were unique and didn't match that of other North American mammals including humans.

One of the experts, Ellis Kerley, a University of Maryland anthropology professor, puts the matter slightly differently.

"The hair resembled the Eastern black bear a good bit, it had components of gorilla hair, and some of human hair," he says. "That is, it was difficult to distinguish; you couldn't say it was one of the three. I keep an open mind, but if there is a Bigfoot, it's surprising it hasn't left any skeletal remains."

## Snowman, No; Bigfoot, Yes

John Napier, former director of the Smithsonian Institution's primate biology program and an authority on hand and foot anatomy, wrote a thorough study of the Abominable Snowman and Bigfoot in 1973. He concluded that the Snowman is not real, and that the 1967 Bigfoot film was not genuine. But, because of the number of unexplained footprints, he concluded that Bigfoot does exist.

Those who agree and venture a guess, such as Krantz, think the creature is a living Gigantopithecus, a big ape that lived 1 to 2 million years ago.

But there is no clear-cut evidence that would satisfy either side. Meanwhile, new sightings are reported frequently.

And what of the Beast of Truro? Most of the sightings have occurred on national parkland. Federal officials, who have jurisdiction over the land, have decided to call off the search, says Oswald, the town selectman.

But if there are any new sightings, he promises they will be investigated fully.



**PIONEER CAT** -- Whiski, held by his owner, Jack Letzgas, is the first animal to participate in the new low-price spaying and neutering program started in Hoke County the weeks of April 25 to help reduce the numbers of stray cats and dogs produced in the county. The neutering operation was performed Tuesday by Dr. Russell Tate (right) at Dr. Tate's Raeford Animal Clinic. Sandy Ramey, the clinic's veterinary technician, is at left. In the program, the national Friends of Animals pays the difference between what the pet owner pays and the fee the veterinarian customarily charges. The program is sponsored in Hoke by the Hoke County-Raeford Humane Society, of which Letzgas is a director. This picture was taken after Whiski had his operation and was ready to go back home.

# Literacy Council Fish Fry Friday

The Hoke Reading/Literacy Council will hold a Fish Fry on Friday, May 21, in the Edenborough Shopping Center from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Tickets are \$3. You may purchase your tickets from the literacy office, board members, or "Friends

of Literacy." The profits from this event will be used to combat illiteracy in Hoke County.

"As the Council becomes more stabilized our tasks become greater. More illiterates and functionally illiterates are asking for help. Almost daily someone comes in to register as a student. This is far

from true for volunteer tutors," said the project director, Barbara Buie.

She continues, "We are greatly encouraged by the student participation in this event. They are involved from planning to clean-up." There are many ways that you too can become involved in literacy. Please call 875-2145.

# Upchurch Chorus In 'Wizard Of Oz'

The Upchurch Chorus is as busy as little elves -- or in this case, Munchkins -- working on a gala production of "The Wizard of Oz or "The Wiz."

The Chorus will perform musical highlights from both shows in a production that promises to rival the best of Broadway.

It's scheduled for May 22 at 8

p.m. in the Upchurch auditorium.

Soloists for "The Wizard of Oz" include: Kelly Chalaire as Dorothy, Quy Tillman as Glinda, the good witch, Brett McDaniels, Randall Matthews, and Donnie Henderson as the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Cowardly Lion, Todd Odom as the Wizard, plus a host of tiny Munchkins in colorful costumes.

The cast for "The Wiz": Renee Bruton as Dorothy, Adriene Kemp cast in a double role as Dorothy's mother and as the Evil Witch, Bunkye Williams, Leonard Frier-son and Eric McLaughlin as the Scarecrow, Tin Man, and the Lion, and Rhonda Malloy as the good witch.

Admission price is \$1.

# Kennedy Playing In Disney World Concert

Tommy Kennedy, a 1975 graduate of Hoke County High School, will appear this weekend with the other members of the Birdie Higgins singing and musicians' group at Disney World in Florida.

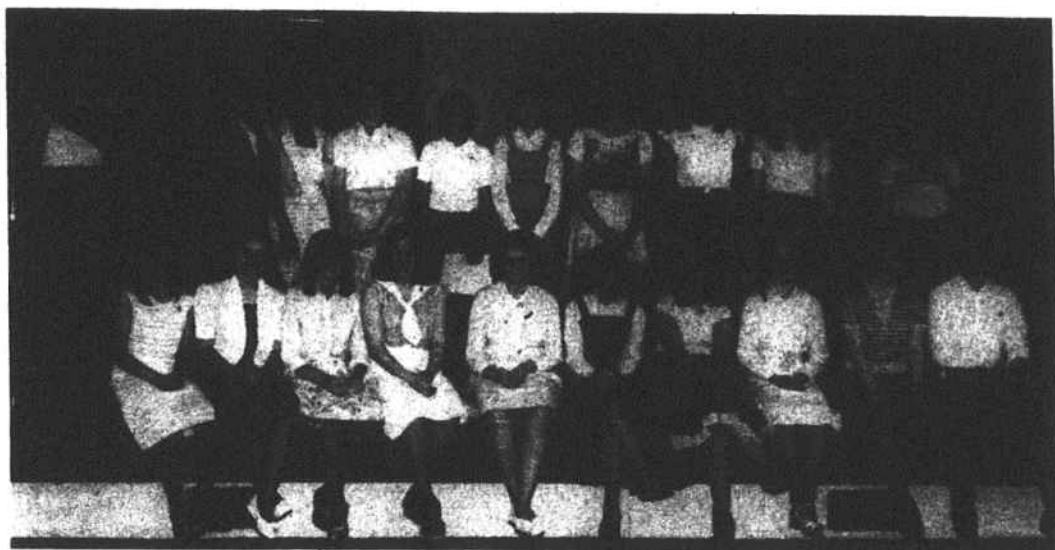
Kennedy is a drummer and has

been with the group the past four years. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. J.R. Kennedy of 812 E. Donaldson Ave.

Another Raeford man who is with the Higgins group is Ronnie Huff, son of Mr. and Mrs. D.R.

Huff. Ronnie Huff is a pianist but will not play in the Disney World program.

Tommy Kennedy and Ronnie Huff have been musicians since their junior high school days in Raeford.



**UPCHURCH BETAS** -- The new members and some of the senior members of the Upchurch Junior High School chapter of the Beta Club, a national academic honor society, are shown here. In the rear, L-R, are newly inducted members Laurie Byrd, Karen Troublefield, Lenita Easterling, Debbie Baker, Scott Houston, Mary Lynn Buoyer, Teresa Ramsey, Carla Oxendine, Tonya Hornsby, and Tim Ward. Front, L-R -- new members Christie Batton and Amy Black, and senior members Jill Schuchard, secretary-treasurer of the club; Michele Musselwhite, president, and Shawn Brock, vice president, new members Melinda Riley, Susan Miller, Karen Campbell and Susan Osborne, and senior member Tripp Simpson. The picture was taken May 4. [Staff photo].

## PARKTON PINBALL PALACE

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On All Games If Yours Is  
The High Score By 9:00 p.m. Sat.

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Fri.-Sat. 10:00-12:00  
Sun. 1:00-8:00

Wanda Brown - Homer Sadler  
OWNERS & OPERATORS

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AS A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH WE

1. Exalt Jesus Christ as Savior, Baptizer, Healer and Soon-Coming King.
2. Emphasize the ministry of the Holy Spirit, Whose objective is to glorify Jesus.
3. Hold The Word of God to be the standard of all truth.
4. Believe true worship is the basis of the daily activities of the Spirit-filled Christian.

SUNDAY SCHOOL	9:45 A.M.
MORNING WORSHIP	11:00 A.M.
EVENING WORSHIP	7:00 P.M.
WED. BIBLE STUDY	7:00 P.M.

We invite you to join us in worship  
where lives are changed and needs are met.



**NURSES WEEK** -- Mrs. Ruth McNair of Raeford, director of nursing services at McCain Hospital, is standing by the specially made sign announcing Nurses Week in North Carolina, which was held May 2 through Saturday.



**AT RECEPTION** -- Some of the McCain Hospital nurses, and other members of the hospital staff are shown at a reception held the afternoon of May 5 in honor of the hospital's nurses. The occasion was the observance of National Recognition Day for Nurses and Nurse's Week in North Carolina May 2-8.



**IN SPRING CONCERT** -- These "Oklahoma" dancers will perform in the Hoke County High School Chorus and Chorale Spring Concert, "A Night on Broadway," May 20 in MacDonald Gym at the high school. The program will start at 7:30 p.m. L-R -- Lydia McGirt, Stacey Miller, Robert Capps, Donna Pittman, Sampson Quick, Bob Weaver, and Denise Jude. Angela Conoly, not in the picture, also is one of the dancers who will be in the concert.

## Summer Youth Employment CETA Program

Hoke County Board of Education  
Ages: 14-21

Applications may be picked up at the following locations:

1. Hoke County Board of Education
2. Hoke County High School
3. Upchurch Junior High School
4. Job Service
5. Hoke County Parks & Recreation
6. Hoke County Public Library

Please place all information in a SEALED envelope and return to:

Miss Audrey Long  
Hoke County High School  
YOS Office  
Raeford, N.C. 28376

Last day of application is May 21, 1982 at 3:00 p.m.