

schools

Boxer spirit revived at Pacific

By R. D. McKINNEY
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FOREST GROVE—An Argus news item in the April 18, 1968, edition read: A five-hour battle took place Wednesday (April 17) morning and afternoon before Alpha Zetas finally gained possession. A member of Phi Beta Tau made a break with Boxer in a 1947 auto, but after a high-speed chase on country roads the car broke down on Sunset Highway and six Alpha Zetas gained possession from a battered Phi Beta.

During the rugged struggle eight students were treated at the infirmary, one went to the hospital for X-rays and an ambulance stood by. Temporary possession was held by an unidentified student being assailed from nearly all sides. In hiding for five years, Pacific's prized mascot was thrown out Wednesday by Gamma Sigma fraternity and the battle was on.

The toss that took place in 1968 may have been the last time Boxer was seen again on the campus of Pacific University. Yet, in only a few days, the tradition that began in 1902 will be revived. Boxer has returned.

RUMORS ALREADY are circulating around campus as to when

original," Parker added.

Boxer first came to Pacific in 1896. From 1902 until its disappearance, it was much sought after by classes, organizations and individuals. The original mascot was a 400-plus-year-old Chinese idol, often called a unicorn, from the Ming dynasty.

An early Pacific alumnus, Dr. Joseph E. Walker, class of 1867, brought the idol home from his Chinese missionary days. In 1896 his mother, Mary Richardson Walker, gave it to Pacific.

It sat on a place of honor in old Brighton Chapel in March Hall, until one day a chapel speaker told of an Eastern university which had a foreign idol as its mascot and a strange tradition.

So a long tradition began at Pacific as groups would flash Boxer at various campus gatherings, or throw it out in an announced or surprise toss and the campus was involved in a struggle over its possession.

Boxer reportedly found its way to France with a World War I doughboy, to the University of Michigan Medical School, and was buried in a cemetery.

Leasher and Parker said the story they most often hear is that Boxer ended up in Vietnam and may have been destroyed.



A quick flash of the new Boxer.

REVIEWED: Boxer was returned.
RUMORS ALREADY are circulating around campus as to when Boxer will be officially reincarnated by being flashed, or thrown out. And that is expected to happen before spring break begins next week.

Two of the most eager students awaiting the rebirth of a Pacific tradition are Janet Leasher and Linda Parker. They are two of the three students most responsible for what has been described as the reincarnation of Boxer.

The three students raised some \$1,000 by planning various activities (the third student, Kim Smith, graduated last year) in an effort to cast a mold for a new Boxer. Making a new Boxer was expected to cost almost twice that much, Leasher said.

"We hadn't even commissioned anyone to do the mold when a graduate from the University of Oregon heard about the project and wanted to do it," she said. John Bunkey, a Pacific alumnus living in Eugene, was the one who had found someone interested in doing the job, Mark Costello, for \$1,000.

"The wax mold already had been cast by the time he (Bunkey) called and told us about the deal," Leasher said. "It was a surprise, but it was a great deal."

Boxer ran into a few problems before it finally reached Pacific. The rubber mold for the mascot broke while drying in the oven and had to undergo some repairs.

LEASHER, a first-year optometry student from Morrison, Colo., said the new Boxer stands about 18 inches high and weighs about 60 pounds.

"It looks pretty much like the

any more so that it should have ended up in Vietnam and may have been destroyed.

THE NEW BOXER was given to an alumnus living in Hillsboro for safekeeping. But the worry over what might happen to it has caused some problems.

"Boxer is for the students," Parker said. "We wanted to have it flashed around campus before spring break so the students can see what Boxer is all about."

"But," Leasher added, "the guy who has it is afraid someone will take it off campus. But we're not the same students that were here in 1969. I don't think students won't wait these days in anticipation for a toss like they used to."

Parker explained students in the 1960s would skip classes, sometimes for days, if a rumor was circulating about a throw-out.

"Students now are more worried about grades and careers. But we can't seem to convince him (the alumnus) that Boxer is for the students and the university and that's where it should be," Parker, a senior in prephysical therapy from Littleton, Colo., said.

To aid in keeping the mascot around, the women devised a Boxer Code of Ethics. It states Boxer belongs to current students, faculty and staff and that it must be handled in "a positive way and must never be used for a vengeful, or otherwise negative, purpose."

The code also states, "Boxer shall not be taken from the state of Oregon."

"We wrote the code to prevent chaos as much as possible," Parker



Janet Leasher (left) and Linda Parker leaf through memorabilia

said. "Any damage during a toss-out or flash will be the responsibility of whoever is involved."

But last week Leasher and Parker were concerned the alumnus may be overly concerned about Boxer's welfare.

"I don't see any reason for anyone but the students to have it," Parker said. "It belongs to the community of Pacific University. They raised the money for it, and they should have it."

"It's been gone about 15 years,"

Leasher said. "The students at Pacific now don't know much about it, or what it stands for."

And what it stands for, the women said, is a symbol of loyalty, respect and pride in the university. When the three students first decided to bring back Boxer, Leasher said, it was for one reason—it's called that special relationship of spirit students have for their university.

It's called Boxer spirit at Pacific. And it's back...