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ORIGINAL BOXER — Ancient Chinese bronze statue, mascot of Pacific University students, has been missing since 1969, but students want to replace it.

NEW MASCOT — Students at George Fox College have replaced their old mascot Bruin with a new leather Bruin to rev up college spirit and class unity.

Students revive old mascots

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Bruin's back and Boxer's on the way, causing a new surge of spirit at

college campuses in Washington County.

George Fox College has had its Bruin and Pacific University its Boxer, but in recent years, without either a Bruin or a Boxer, the traditions connected with the mascots waned.

The idea at both schools had been to toss their mascot into a crowd of students, who then struggled to carry him off, the winner hiding him until the next surprise appearance, or "flash."

But old Bruin (Junior or B.J., as he was called, made of bearskin, disintegrated. Boxer, the 400-year-old Chinese dragon dog of bronze, which had been the symbol of school spirit since 1896 at Pacific University, has been missing since 1969.

Now, however, George Fox College students have introduced a new Bruin, a rustic bear shape of leather stuffed with nylons, which they already have been flashing.

A group of students at Pacific is staging fund-raising events and seeking pledges from campus organizations to have a replica made of the missing Boxer and renew old college traditions.

And they want to start a new round of tales.

It is reported that when Margaret Hinman, class of 1891, saw Boxer appear in her sorority, tears streamed down her face and her hands just shook.

Fred Lemcke, class of 1942, told a Pacific University staff member in the past year that "a Boxer flash was more stimulating than winning the conference football championship. Boxer involved the entire campus."

More tales evolved regarding Boxer's whereabouts. He was found in the woodpile of old Marsh Hall many times. He traveled to France in World War I with a soldier and returned with him.

It was rumored that he was hanged from a gunny sack beneath the Golden Gate Bridge at one time.

In Forest Grove, he was stored in cupboards, flour bins, attics and secret places of local residents, who enjoyed participating in the mystery Boxer created.

One account in Pacific Today in 1968 reported that "nobody knew how Boxer would arrive — but when an automobile entered the main campus driveway, the crowd braced itself for the big moment."

"As it turned the corner into the Marsh Hall parking lot, the gathering broke into polite laughter. It was just Myrtle Smith, former dean of women and widow of Dr. D. Otis Smith, the longtime head of the department of history. With her was Mrs. Russell Roberts, wife of the department of English chairman. The two elderly ladies circled the lot in apparent confusion, to the

continued entertainment of the students.

"But suddenly the automobile stopped, and out of the trunk jumped Gamma Sigma President Pete Truax '69 with Boxer."

Boxer — minus a few appendages — became the official mascot of the athletic department in 1967 but disappeared two years later.

Three Pacific University students — Kim Smith, Janet Leasher and Linda Parker — decided if the real Boxer isn't going to show up, they would like to have a replica made and channel what Ms. Parker described as "a lot of rowdy spirit" in the freshman class into Boxermania.

"We don't want it to be exactly like the original in hopes that it might help in bringing the old one back," Ms. Smith added.

Ms. Leasher said she didn't feel there was the school spirit in small private schools that there is in state schools. The trio are hoping a new Boxer would be a tangible way of boosting the old college tie.

They have contacted all campus organizations for pledges, and they are planning a Boxer dance in late January and a Boxer week in February to raise money. They hope to have the project completed by the end of the school year.

At George Fox College, students struggled for and smuggled Bruin Junior for years on campus, but B.J. disappeared after one of the skirmishes in the mid-1970s, to the relief of some administrators who feared the consequences of the scuffles.

Steve Bury, student government campus activities chairman, has worked hard to revive B.J. and has included a set of rules and regulations for safety's sake.

"One reason (for reviving Bruin) was to bring back class unity," Bury said. "Lately, we've become just a number." Bury said the Bruin game also was a tension release, as well as a way of continuing old traditions.

The original Bruin mascot was the real McCoy. A small bear cub was captured in the Coast Range foothills after its mother was shot in 1887, just two years after Pacific Academy, the college's predecessor, was founded.

A student brought the cub to campus, where it lived with faculty members until it grew to adulthood. It was then kept in a pit now known as Hess Creek Canyon.

But Bruin wouldn't stay in the pit. After a disastrous skirmish in a chicken coop, Bruin turned into bear steaks and a bearskin, which was displayed in the campus museum. When it deteriorated and was taken down, students began the skirmishes over ownership.