

It's late <sup>in the</sup> 1880's , Mary Richardson Walker, early missionary to the Oregon Territory and long a resident of Forest Grove, receives a box from her son, Dr. J.E. Walker, Pacific class of 1867, who is a missionary in China, The box contains a figurine with triangle horns on its head, spikes above its spine, and a large bushy tail. ~~with xxxxxxxxxx~~ Her son also includes a note which calls the object "Boxer" and indicates that it is much more valuable than the \$5 he paid for it.

The note ends--"Take good care of him, for folk of this tribe are very rare. I have never seen another bronze unicorn of his size."

Mrs. Walker did just that until 1896 when she thought Boxer would make a nice gift for Pacific University. She was close to Pacific. ~~Her~~ After the Whitman Massacre in 1847 in Eastern Washington, she and her husband <sup>the Rev. Elkanah Walker,</sup> came to Forest Grove and stayed, in part, so that their children could be educated at Tualatin Academy and Pacific University. They donated land for the Pacific campus, and Elkanah was active ~~The Walker xxxxxxxxxx~~ in the early governance of the school.

Pacific gave Boxer a place of honor at the front of the chapel. One morning in 1900 a chapel speaker told of an eastern university which had a foreign idol as its mascot. That day Boxer was spirited away by Richard Faulkner, class of 1902. Thus began many adventures for both Boxer and Pacific.

Recently some alumni gathered to tell their stories of Boxer, and Pacific Today contacted others. <sup>(still)</sup> Others have written, and the Pacific Index, student newspaper, has editorialized. Some of the thoughts--

James Tumbleson '29 had a part in flashing Boxer from an airplane. He remembers that the late Mrs. Harry Giltner of Forest Grove allowed Boxer to be hidden many times in her home. At one time President Dobbs asked Tumbleson and his friends to loan Boxer to him for a faculty dinner at his home. The president guaranteed "the safety of the Dog at the door."

Tumbleson wrote his memories of Boxer and said, "It has been meaningful to have been a part of a great tradition that still lives on."

In the ~~mid~~<sup>mid</sup>-1930's Al Lemcke '36, now of Vancouver, Wash., was one of a group of Pacific students who obtained Boxer from an alumnus school teacher in Clatskanie ~~with~~ without the teacher knowing Boxer was gone. The group took Boxer to the Oregonian office in Portland where the late L.H. Gregory '10, long-time Oregonian sports editor, wrote a story and had a photo taken for the next day's Oregonian. The school teacher in Clatskanie was shocked when he read the Oregonian ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ that morning. He thought Boxer was still safely stored in his car.

In the late 1930's Boxer attended a Pacific banquet in Portland as an honored guest, reports Julia Tomlinson Cook '40 of Lincoln City. In those years when students would return to campus in the fall from summer vacation, the question often asked among friends was "Have you seen Boxer yet?"

Boxer did get around. A mystique developed ~~around~~<sup>about</sup> him. Even if he was not on campus, he was always here in spirit. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ He was hidden in any number of unusual places from a flour bin in a Forest Grove home to the wood pile in the basement of Marsh Hall. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~  
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Those who held him wanted to keep him safe from others, but still wanted others to know that they had him. The result was a "Flash.", Simply showing Boxer for all to see but still retaining his possession. When real excitement was desired, a "Toss" was held. Boxer was thrown out, ~~by~~<sup>as</sup> previously announced or by surprise, to a group of students who would struggle ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ to gain "The Dog" as he was often called. The Boxer tradition had moved from intrigue to fighting, but it was all still ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ mysterious and exciting.

Alice Hoskins '56 of Forest Grove and ~~a~~<sup>now</sup> Pacific staff member remembers the weekend in the ~~early~~<sup>early</sup> '50's when she went home to Vernonia and was so disappointed when she came back to campus to learn that she had missed a Boxer flash. Within a few minutes, however, she found that the ~~large~~<sup>large</sup> overstuffed chair she was sitting on

had Boxer stuffed under the big pillow.

In telephone conversations, Norm Weis '63 of Kent, Wash., said, "Boxer is a valuable tradition. Cuts and scratches from a Boxer toss were a badge of honor in my day. Getting your nose bloody was worth it if you would get Boxer."

Weis tried but was never a holder of Boxer during his student days. However, even before he was a Pacific student, he had Boxer in his home. A friend, Dalton LaRue '60, who was <sup>2</sup>than at Pacific, brought Boxer to the Weis home one day, so Norm had an early introduction to Boxer.

In another telephone conversation, Tom Stearns '70 of Beaverton, expressed a liking for the Boxer spirit but not for the fighting which became more rough in the 1960's. Struggles after a toss would last for hours, move across campus, and sometimes stop traffic on Pacific Avenue.

Stearns reported that faculty members such as Dr. Miles Shishido, professor of religion and philosophy, the late Dean Charles Trombley '52, and Coaches Frank Buckiewicz '53 and Dan French '56, MS'64 would be referees for a Boxer toss and would "keep things from getting out of hand."

Shishido was asked about this and remembered clearly that he was a referee for several Boxer tosses. He said that the group who was doing the tossing would notify him and the other referees in advance as to when and where, and the faculty referees would be there to keep order and cool things down. "There probably should be referees now, and I would do it again," Shishido declared.

In 1967-68 Boxer became more than a figurine and the spirit of Pacific. He was made Pacific's mascot, and athletic teams took his name. We became Boxers rather than Badgers.

<sup>Boxer</sup> He also became more controversial in <sup>the</sup> period of <sup>the Vietnam War</sup> when people longed for peace. "Why fight over an idol?", some asked.

After a 1969 ~~knux~~ toss, Boxer left the campus never to return. The original Ming Dynasty Boxer, that is.

~~Index~~ 1980x

What about ~~Boxer~~ Boxer's spirit whipping around campus ~~without~~ without his bronze body? In the early spring of 1976, 4 by 6 index cards were found in various sites on campus telling of a coming Boxer toss. Very few students on campus then had ever seen Boxer or a flash or a toss because Boxer had been missing for seven years.

But, when the designated Saturday morning came, a good crowd, including students and some alumni and townspeople, was on the University Center porch waiting for Boxer. And waiting, and waiting, They did not give up until more than an hour has passed. It was a false Boxer toss, but the mystery and the spirit were there. Students, alumni, and townspeople were brought together.

Everyone wondered who had put out the announcement cards. It was another mystery. Some said that Charlie Trombley had engineered it to try to flesh out Boxer and to create campus spirit, but he never admitted it. No person or group confessed to the hoax.

MORE

By 1983 more than three generations of Pacific students had never seen Boxer. Remember, he disappeared, permanently, in 1969. But, he was still talked of and desired by students. With the help of alumni, the students had a new Boxer cast, apparently bearing a very close likeness to the real thing.

By then Alice Hoskins '56 was a Pacific staff member and ready for another thrill over Boxer. It was one of her sons, Bruce Fleskes '87, who cut the new Boxer from a tree on campus where he had been mysteriously chained. This was the first general appearance on campus of the "new Boxer."

Now its 1986. Boxer was tossed at homecoming by the wrestlers, and after a struggle retained by the wrestlers. After homecoming, the Pacific Index editorial suggested some alternatives to a Boxer toss and fight. John Rodgers '75 of Forest Grove saw Boxer and the Boxer fight for the first time at homecoming. He was not impressed by it all and later wrote, "I was happy to get inside the University Center and remember better times with my contemporaries. "

~~N~~In order to avoid injuries and to seek the highest campus spirit from the Boxer tradition a campus task force has been formed to study the situation. The wrestling team is developing plans for the task force. Members would like to have flags at different sections of the campus, stipulating that during a Boxer toss, the group that moves Boxer to the designated flag first is the winner and keeper of Boxer until the next toss, or until there is a treasure hunt approach to finding Boxer.

MORE

Boxer does have a mystique. Traditions of "flashes and tosses" and group strategies to obtain Boxer stem from ~~this~~ his mysterious nature. Traditions can change, grow, be forgotten, turn up again, be minimized or maximized, even ~~forgotten~~, but mystique remains to feed the spirit.

Boxer is a part of Pacific. Pacific people today will have to decide how their generation will keep the Boxer faith and preserve the spirit. Alumni are invited to send Pacific Today their helpful ideas and views.

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Editor's Note: Space limitations make it difficult to print all Boxer tales in this one article. For example, Art Brachmann '34 of Forest Grove and Gary Mueller '57 of Hillsboro and now a Pacific professor, were among those talking ~~shaking~~ at a pre-homecoming gathering to share Boxer <sup>(data)</sup> with current students. This was videotaped, and copies will be available to alumni. Watch Pacific Today for details. Incidentally, Boxer himself came to this meeting!