

# THE GEO-SAMPLER

He's big. He's hairy. And he promotes one tasty beef jerky. He's Bigfoot—part of American lore for centuries and a mainstay at monster truck rallies for decades. And this issue of *The GeoSampler* pays tribute to the man, the myth, the legend (okay, half-man). We'll trace a bit of his family tree and rise to fame. Then we'll take a look at his star power throughout the years. Yes, he's been called many things over the years. "Yeti," "Yowie," "Meh-Teh" and "Raksha." From "The Great Bear" and the "Himalayan Beast" to "Mo-mo" in Missouri and "The Skunk Ape" in Florida. But there's one you can never call him, or it, or whatever—uninteresting.

## ONE HAIRY HISTORY THE LEGEND GROWS (AND GROWS AND GROWS)

Let's first gain a little perspective on the big fella by tracing a bit of his history (and her history—after all, logic says that to be around this long, there would've had to have been more than one "Mrs. Bigfoot" along the line). Oddly enough, Bigfoot's family tree starts not in folklore, but in fossils. Living for about a million years before going extinct approximately 100,000 years ago, there existed a hominoid called *Gigantopithecus blacki*. Or as he was known by his stage name, G. blacki. Residing in Asia, G. blacki is thought to have stood nearly 10 feet tall and weigh as much as 1,200 pounds. Being so large, he had few or no enemies (and would've been the perfect left tackle on the O-line.)



Fast forward a few dozen millennia, the story of Bigfoot begins to take shape with the indigenous people of the America's Pacific Northwest. These tales existed prior to the single name for the great beast, and they differed in details between regions, sometime even between families within the same community. For members of the Lummi, they tell tales of "Ts'emekwes," and, like you, we're not sure of the pronunciation, either.

About 200 years ago, none other than frontiersman Daniel Boone, himself, reported having shot and killed a ten-foot, hairy giant he called a "Yahoo" (thus earn-

ing Mr. Boone the nickname "Google"). But it wasn't until the 1920's when the local legends were compiled by J. W. Burns in a series of Canadian newspapers articles that the name "Sasquatch" first appeared. And let's just be thankful he didn't go with another popular Canadian name like "Doug."

Then in 1958, people finally put the name "Bigfoot" to the mysterious being. That's the year when large footprints were found in Del Norte County, California by bulldozer operator, Gerald Crew, around a road construction site in Bluff Creek. The story made the *Humbolt Times* along with a photo of Crew holding a cast of one of the footprints. Locals were calling the alleged maker of the tracks "Big Foot," which was later shortened to "Bigfoot" by *Humbolt Times* columnist Andrew Genzoli, obviously because one word is sexier than two, and it's all about selling newspapers, people. 1958 was also the year when Bigfoot hunters appeared on the scene. Within a year, Tom Slick (yeah, that's his name), who had funded searches for Yeti in the Himalayas earlier in the decade, organized searches for Bigfoot in and around Bluff Creek. Then as the phenomenon grew, sightings spread throughout North America, with more numerous sightings in the Great Lakes region, Texas and Florida. So, apparently, he's cool with the whole "Skunk Ape" label.

*Sometimes you're the pigeon and sometimes you're the statue.*



### Wright writes:

Borrow money from pessimists -- they don't expect it back.

Half the people you know are below average.

99% of lawyers give the rest a bad name.

I almost had a psychic girlfriend... but she left me before we met.

OK, so what's the speed of dark?

How do you tell when you're out of invisible ink?

If everything seems to be going well, you have obviously overlooked something.

Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.

When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

Hard work pays off in the future, laziness pays off now.

If Barbie is so popular, why do you have to buy her friends?

What happens if you get scared half to death twice?

My mechanic told me, "I couldn't repair your brakes, so I made your horn louder."



# POP GOES THE HOMINOID

For something to be claimed as a “missing link,” our friend sure shows up in a lot of places. Whether he’s stopping evil-doers with the help of a bionic man and woman, representing Vancouver during the 2010 Winter Olympics, or pushing a popular burger joint chain, Sasquatch sure does have a busy schedule. So, just where does he stand with pop culture in the land that’s perfected it?

For starters, since 1970, he’s been a part of 44 movies, including 19 that have featured either name “Sasquatch” or “Bigfoot” as part of the title. Clearly the hardest working half-man/half-beast in Hollywood, think of him as the Michael Caine of woodland creatures. He’s also made guest appearances or has been referenced in 10 television series and specials. One series, *Finding Bigfoot*, was based entirely on, well, finding Bigfoot. Add it all up and, as far as his royalties go – “CHA-CHING!”

And what does a star do in between gigs? You hitch your name to a few goods and services. You know, for the good of the economy. In 2007, a game camera manufacturer partnered with a well known hunting & fishing magazine and offered a one million dollar reward for a verifiable photo of Bigfoot taken on a game camera.

Great, just what every celebrity wants – more hounding from the paparazzi.

Well, like all celebrities, there comes the need for a little bit extra protection, and Bigfoot has plenty of that, too. In 1969, as his fame was growing, Skamania County, Washing-

ton, passed a law declaring that “any willful, wanton slaying of such creatures shall be deemed a felony” subject to substantial fine and/or imprisonment.” Imagine that “What are you in for?” conversation in the clink. Not to be outdone, Whatcom County, Washington, passed a resolution declaring the county a “Sasquatch Protection and Refuge Area.” Not that a creature that has never been close to being captured needs an area of refuge, but I guess it must be nice for the big guy to have that added peace-of-mind.

Simply put, he’s had a major influence on our culture. Why, he’s even inspired “The Bigfoot Field Researcher Organization,” which touts itself as “the only scientific research organization exploring the bigfoot/sasquatch mystery.” For realies. You can

see for yourself at [bfro.net](http://bfro.net). Yes, from film and television to sports and advertising—and so much more—this elusive icon sure has been in big demand for quite some time. (Hmmm, wonder if he has representation.)



## ASHES, ASHES

*What do you get when you burn coal? Ashes, of course. And here at Geotechnics, we test a lot of Coal Combustion Products during the course of a week. Fly ash. Gypsum. Bottom Ash. And we're happy to help our clients determine the unique qualities of each variety. To learn more about testing CCP's or ask a question to stump the expert, give Randy O'Rourke a shout at (412) 823-7600.*



Our two facilities serve projects across the country.

Pittsburgh – 544 Braddock Avenue • East Pittsburgh, PA 15112 • Phone (412) 823-7600 • [dbackstrom@geotechnics.net](mailto:dbackstrom@geotechnics.net) or [jpkline@geotechnics.net](mailto:jpkline@geotechnics.net)

Raleigh – 2200 Westinghouse Boulevard • Raleigh, NC 27604 • Phone (919) 876-0405 • [msmith@geotechnics.net](mailto:msmith@geotechnics.net)