

draft for pacific today by Charlotte Filer

BOXER--that 400 year old ugly but loveable Chinese dog, unicorn, idol, whatever--but most certainly the mascot and symbol of spirit of Pacific University.

Boxer made it into the news again this winter. Working with the Pacific Public Information Office, Channel 8 television and both major Portland dailies had stories on Boxer who has been missing since 1969.

This renewed the interest of both students and alumni to find Boxer. Student curiosity was heightened when notices relative to Boxer started appearing in Boxer Briefs, the appropriately named daily news bulletin for the campus. The notices were signed, C.B.S. (Concerned Black Students).

The Index started investigating. In its Feb. 29, 1980, issue the Index quoted Lonnie Winbush, president of CBS, as saying, "We might have Boxer and we might not. We're waiting to see what kind of reward is being offered by the Alumni." The CBS advisor, Harry LeGrande, told the Index, "Nobody has it to my knowledge, but we haven't had a meeting in a long time."

In that same Index issue Dr. Byron Steiger, sociology professor since 1974, wrote an article headlined, "Is it time to drop Boxer?" He questioned keeping Boxer as the university mascot in part because ".... as a physical entity, Boxer may no longer exist" and because Boxer is associated with violence on campus and in the Boxer Rebellion.

In the next issue of the Index, March 14, 1980, a letter to the editor was printed from Dr. Steve Prince, an English professor for 12 years, now in semi-retirement at Arch Cape, Ore. Some quotes from this letter include:

".....that Boxer is no longer with us, I don't see that as a valid objection. He never was 'at' Pacific even before he disappeared, except for those few hours when he was being fought over."

Dr. Prince, as have many others in conversation, said that a Boxer toss or flash was not any more violent than a football game and drew more participation and was more fun to watch. Dr. Prince concluded his letter:

"But does Boxer really connote violence? Not in himself, he doesn't. That he came out of the Boxer Rebellion is not his fault. He had nothing to do with it. His roots go back centuries before that time .....I think he is a kind of dragon-dog, very common in Chinese iconography. His duty was to stand guard at temples, to ward off evil spirits. What's wrong with that as a symbolic mascot for this temple of learning?"

It was in 1967 that Pacific students and alumni decided to make Boxer, which had been the university's symbol of spirit since 1896, the official mascot and name for athletic teams. There are now on campus the above mentioned Boxer Briefs, Boxer Books (the book store), and Boxer Pause (part of the University Center). Boxer's profile appears on everything from car stickers and parents' day name tags to athletic letters and donors' neck ties. Thus, Boxer, although not physically present, is prominent in drawing, photo, and spirit.

What is the feeling on campus today about Boxer? Steiger is not alone in thinking that Boxer should be replaced. Many students don't care. Today's student, for the most part, is serious about his studies and spends his time hitting the books rather than wondering about Boxer. Yet, there are many students who would like to have him back or at least to keep him as a symbol. Last year the Index attempted to spark a drive to bring Boxer or a replica to campus. It was unsuccessful.

Most students are not interested in toss outs and fights over Boxer. The fraternity system no longer creates this type of campus rivalry. The students seem to think that Boxer should be returned and put on display securely on campus where he could be seen by all and not fought over. However, alumni close to the campus think that this would be impossible because the alumni if not the students, would find a way to get him and spirit him away again.

The alumni want to know where Boxer is and to retain his personality as a part of their alma mater. Since the publicity this winter and mention of Boxer in an alumni letter from Virginia Caine Cooper '59, Alumni Association president, the Alumni Office has received many, many comments in correspondence and conversations from alumni saying that Boxer should be returned to campus and to the tradition he represents.

Boxer is so often associated with the men on campus, but he has meaning to women, also. For example, recently Kay Powell Harris '71 of California returned to the campus for the first time since leaving 12 years ago. At lunch with the alumni director and managing editor of Pacific Today, she spoke mainly of Boxer.

She had seen him twice. "If you see him, you know how special he is." Then she added, "There's tradition even if students haven't seen him. The story and the myth stay alive."

She recounted how everyone can remember where they were and what they were doing when they heard that President Kennedy had been assassinated. And then said, "If you see Boxer, you remember all about that event, too."

"It was not masochistic, but a rivalry, a contest.....it was good," she trailed off.

Mrs. Harris also told about nights in the dormitory when the girls would talk about what they would do if they had Boxer, where they could hide him, different plots for obtaining him, and speculation on where he might be then.

She then tossed out a new idea and possible challenge to alumni. Someone in the vast numbers of Pacific alumni must be a private investigator--detective. "Get him to seek out Boxer." Is there a volunteer out there?

History shows that Boxer seemingly can perform many feats. Let's look at what Boxer has done:

Arouse emotion--In the early 1950's or late 1940's Boxer was a guest at a Philo sorority May Day breakfast. "Miss Margaret Hinman, class of 1891, just screamed when she saw Boxer come in, and tears streamed down her face and her hands just shook! Boxer was put on the table in front of her, and the tears just streamed, and soon everyone else was getting tearful. All of us were allowed to go over and touch the dog." --from Pacific Today, Winter, 1976.

Bridge a generation gap--"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 Mrs. Myrtle Smith, former dean of women and widow of Dr. D. Otis Smith, the long-time 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."--From Pacific Today, July, 1968.

"A Boxer flash was more stimulating than winning the conference football championship. Bind the campus together--Boxer involved the entire campus."--Fred Lemcke '42 in a January, 1980, telephone conversation.

Been a friend to the community--Boxer was hidden in many homes in the Forest Grove area at many different times. The community enjoyed Boxer and participated with the students in the mystery and mystic which Boxer creates. Many times students would select a childless home or a home without Pacific alumni. Others would not think of looking for Boxer there, they reasoned. These families cooperated. Boxer has seen the basements, attics, cupboards, flour bins, and secret places of the best homes in Forest Grove.

Turns up in interesting places--Such as, the wood pile of old Marsh Hall many times. An oven in an unused stove in the basement of Knight Hall when it was a fraternity house, and the fraternity didn't know he was there. He has been checked into the old Multhomah Hotel in Portland. He went to Europe with an alumnus doughboy during World War I. The Lewis and Clark College football team is said to have had him at one time. But, most importantly he can be found in the memories of alumni and in the campus spirit of today, thus, binding alumni and undergraduates.

Mrs. Mary Ruddick, alumni director, knows the location of two of Boxer's appendages and has promised two alumni that these appendages will be returned to the campus when the body of Boxer returns, also. The Alumni Office and Alumni Association will see that the welding job is done to make Boxer whole again.

Mrs. Ruddick and the Alumni Council will accept any information there is on Boxer's whereabouts. He was last seen at an Oct. 16, 1969, toss out. He is believed to have left the campus in the hands of Dennis "Moses" Williams '72. Williams was a member of the Black Student Union (now Concerned Black Students), but it is not positively known whether Williams held Boxer on behalf of the Union or as an individual. The Alumni Office has no current address for Williams and has been unable to locate him.

Another happening of this winter was the mysterious return to campus after an absence of some 12 years of a large oil painting of Boxer by Wanda Williams Haskell '70 of Seattle. Mrs. Haskell's family

has indicated that she wishes to reclaim the painting. Another alumnus has volunteered to paint a new portrait of Boxer for the campus.

In the meanwhile Alumni President Ginny Cooper expressed it well when she wrote in her alumni letter:

"If you have 'Boxer', for goodness sakes, get it to the Alumni Office!"

While Information Office, Charol & television and both major Portland dailies had stories on Boxer who has been missing since 1899.

This received the interest of both students and alumni in fine Boxer. Student curiosity was heightened when notices relating to Boxer started appearing in Boxer articles, the appropriate ones daily after bulletin for the campus. The notices were signed, S.S.S. (Continued Next Journal).

The Index started investigation. In the Feb. 17, 1960, issue the Index quoted Louis Wickham, president of OSU, as saying, "We might have Boxer and we might not. We're working to see what kind of reward is being offered by the Alumni." The OSU visitor, Harry Ingraham, told the Index, "Nobody has it to my knowledge, but we haven't had a hearing in a long time."

In that same issue Dr. Byron Swiger, sociology professor since 1934, wrote an article headlined, "Is it time to drop Boxer?" He questioned keeping Boxer on the university campus in part because "Boxer as a physical entity, Boxer may no longer exist" and because Boxer is associated with violence on campus and in the Boxer rebellion.