

6/19/2006

Eugene Yap
South Point Safaris, Ltd.
P.O. Box 844
Kealahou, HI 96750

Dear Mr. Yap,

My name is Elias Gilman. I am a sophomore at Pacific University, and I write to you as the student assistant in the Pacific University Archives. I have, over the past year or so, embarked upon a quest that many a student at Pacific before me has as well, one that might be likened to the Holy Grail of our school. I set out to locate the original Boxer.

As you may know, Pacific University just this last year opened its new nine million dollar library facility. This library includes, for the first time in University history, a space specifically built for a formal University Archives. This includes rooms for archival storage and a space open for researchers, with internet access, reference materials such as old copies of catalogs and issues of the Index and above all, space in which we may display items for visitors to the Archives. Current items include old Pacific University memorabilia such as commemorative china plates and steins, diploma cases, and a wooden statuette of Boxer that was carved by a student some decades ago. As the Archives expand into our new space at the library, we are looking for more opportunities to showcase items of historical importance to our school. By far, our largest biographical file is on the Boxer itself.

Estimated to be 426 years old, the Boxer has been dangled from a helicopter over the heads of adoring fans, resided in the battlefields of France during the First World War, been cradled in the hands of public figures such as Richard Nixon, and upstaged men of such renown as William Jennings Bryan. This names only a few of the incidents in which Boxer has been important throughout the history of Pacific University. Alumni have teared at the sight of it, and many a student has risked bodily harm to have the chance to grasp it during one of the legendary tosses.

Sadly, the original Boxer was, as you know, lost to the school following a 1969 toss. The pictures you sent the school were taken over a 1976 Pacific Today article that

covered the search for Boxer to that point. Since that article, however, much has transpired. In the early 1980s students managed to raise the several thousand dollars necessary to have a new Boxer cast. Yet searches continued for the original, and though students embraced the new version, many tried to solve the mystery. The Archives contain a record of the more than a quarter century of searches conducted by amateur historians, students, and school faculty and administration. Concerted efforts have been made over and over again, with documented suggestions ranging from sending a tape to Unsolved Mysteries and trying to incite national interest in solving the mystery, to arranging for an FBI raid on the home of the student last known to have the Boxer. Theories of its resting place put it everywhere from being recast into medals, to the bottom of San Francisco Bay, to the state of Tennessee or a military hospital in Germany.

Despite the original Boxer being gone, its spirit and image remain strong at Pacific. This is evidenced by the willingness of alumni and students to donate money to cast a new Boxer in the early 1980s. Twenty five years later, that spirit can still be seen, in the teams that sign up each year to compete for possession of the Boxer and the silhouette of the Boxer at the traditional College Way entrance to the University. Most recently, its importance has been shown in the seven foot high, one ton statue of Boxer commissioned by the Pacific Undergraduate Community Council and students from the Residence Hall Association. Its looming presence reminds all those who pass it of the spirit of Pacific University, embodied by our ancient mascot.

I suspect you know the reason why I write to you today. After almost four decades of searching, no remnant of the Boxer has been found. None, that is, except one. That is the portion of the foot and leg displayed in the photographs you took and sent to the University thirty years ago. I am writing today to confirm that that piece is still in your possession, and to ask if you would be willing to return it to the Pacific University Archives so that it can be displayed to all students and visitors to the school. The Archives can display it in the context of the history which surrounds it. It would be placed with a timeline of the major events in the Boxer's life, and pictures relating to its history of and its most famous exploits, from the original family that safeguarded Boxer for generations up to the point when it disappeared. The Archives would consider it an honor to display and care for this piece of Pacific University history, and to ensure that it

may continue to be an important part of Pacific for generations to come. We have not only the experience and materials needed to safely preserve the last known piece of the original Boxer in existence, but also the facilities to display it in the most beneficial way to all who come to see it, as well as securing it from any further attempts to separate it from the school.

I would be most gratified if you would be willing to contact the Archives to discuss the possibility of returning the last known piece of Boxer to the University, or, at the very least, to tell us exactly under what circumstances you obtained the piece, so that your part of the story may be added to the history of the Boxer's life, accessible to all who come to the Archives seeking information about our beloved mascot. I look forward to the opportunity of talking to you at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Elias Gilman

Archives Student Assistant
Pacific University Library
2043 College Way
Forest Grove, OR 97116
503.352.1415
gilm6105@pacificu.edu