

THE BENT TREE

CLAYTON STATE COLLEGE

? MONSTER! Unknown Creature Sighted On Clayton State Campus

Officials at Clayton State College are investigating a report filed by a student who claims to have seen a large unknown creature, resembling an alligator, sighted Monday morning near the campus' 12-acre lake. The College's Department of Public Safety is seriously investigating the report since five large footprints were discovered to support the student's claim.

"We're seriously looking into this reported sighting," said H. Scott Doner, Director of the Department of Public Safety at Clayton State. "Since footprints were found near the pump house, we have to check into this a little further."

According to Public Safety records, John A. Yates, Jr. of Hampton, filed a miscellaneous incident report Monday morning, April 18, after spotting "something like an alligator walking erect or on hind legs" near the man-made lake at approximately 7:10 a.m. Yates was taking a morning walk before class. Because of foggy conditions around the lake, he could only describe the creature as having a snout, a long tail and standing about six to ten feet tall.

The footprints were discovered by Clayton State officers when Yates accompanied them to the site, a stone pump house located next to the lake and adjacent to the College's Library. According to a Clayton State Public Safety supplemental report, the five footprints measured eighteen inches long, were six inches wide at the heel and eleven inches wide near the toes. Each print had three toes with claw marks and left impressions three inches deep and six feet between steps.

The report speculated the approximate size of the alleged

creature to stand twelve feet and weigh nearly five hundred pounds. Doner had photographs taken of the footprints for further review. No other evidence was found near the footprints nor did anyone else report seeing the creature.



Special Photo/CSC Public Information
CSC Chief of Police Scott Doner measures the stride of the "Monster." This allows him to approximate the height of the creature.

LOCH LEGEND REVEALED... PAGES 2-3

LEGEND OF LOCH THE LUCKY LAKER

In putting this special edition of *The Bent Tree* together, efforts were made to find out as much as possible about this unusual situation. Chief Scott Doner, of the Clayton State Department of Public Safety was interviewed regarding the results of his investigations into the sightings. Those results are reported on the front page of this issue.

But there is more to the story than just this recent report of a sighting and the discovery of footprints. Robert C. Bolander, Dean of Students, was also interviewed.

Dean Bolander, who has been at CSC since 1970, had knowledge of past sightings and was able to provide additional information for this issue. While he has heard rumors about an amphibious "monster" of some type, for more than two decades, he related a story told to him by a former reporter for this paper. That reporter, who subsequently moved to another state, had a chilling tale to tell. Dean Bolander tried to relate what he described as the 62nd version of stories he had heard in the words of that former reporter. Here is that story.

THE STORY STARTS...

It was a misty, cool Sunday afternoon - January 2, 1994. I was strolling around Clayton State College's big lake, trying to collect my thoughts for a final article for the first issue of Winter Quarter for *The Bent Tree*. Lost in thought, I was quickly called back to reality by a gentleman standing and gazing into the mist. He introduced himself as the new man on campus; that his first "official" day of work was tomorrow - January 3. Then he asked if I saw something moving in the mist. I said "yes"...and then began to explain what I thought it might be. After just a few words, he encouraged me to continue and give him the complete story. I indicated that I wasn't certain there was a

...AT THE BEGINNING...

complete story, but that I had pieced the "facts" together from a variety of sources. This was the story I told him.

It began in 1969. That summer a new, small junior college first opened its doors just south of Atlanta. As it rushed to complete buildings, walkways and the machinery to process and teach students, Clayton Junior College was overwhelmed by the response. Everything seemed incomplete. Yet the doors opened on time to the more than 900 enthusiastic, talented students.

The high academic expectations in the classroom were there from the beginning and the students enjoyed the challenges. But even the strenuous biology and chemistry labs could not totally satisfy the intellectual curiosity of those most talented and brightest. Those students soon began to take their experiments beyond the lab and out into the beautiful campus.

Often they could be seen at the College lakes taking water samples. They discovered a research lab in the community to continue their work in the late evening and early morning hours. The lake samples were great environmental experiments. Even more exciting for them were the genetic experiments. Soon their experiments spilled over--both figuratively and literally--onto the campus. Increasingly they could be seen daily, wearing their lab coats, filled with test tubes of strange mixtures.

...TALENTED AND BRIGHT...

GREAT... EXPERIMENTS...

THE EVENT

...ASTRIDE THE ANCHOVIES...

It was in December of 1969 that THE event occurred. After an evening of celebrating their final exams, several of those students gathered for moonlight pizza by the great pond at Clayton State College. The farthest thing from the young revelers' minds was their experimental research projects. Unfortunately, it was not far from the pizza. In fact, some of the mysterious concoction spilled from a tube in one of their lab coats, producing a soft green-blue-orange glow astride the anchovies.

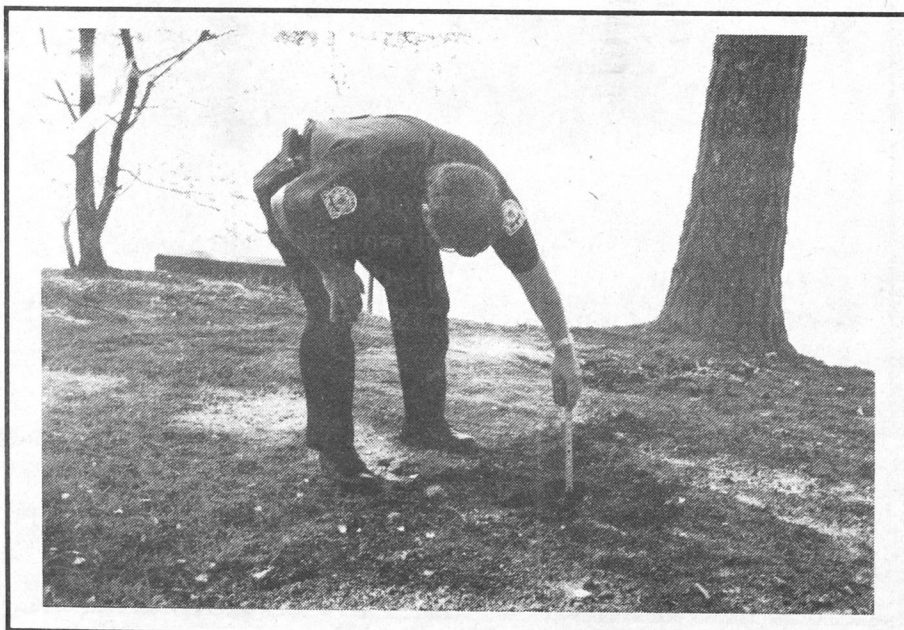
Realizing their mistake, they tossed the pizza, frisbee-like, across the pond. The glowing disk sank slowly into the area rumored to be bottomless, finally coming to rest over a deep crevice. Fed by pure alluvial waters from the planet's core, bathed in the perfect mix of nucleic acids, carbohydrates, the remnants of an old farm pond and the pepperoni, the mixture took on a new form.

...AT BIRTH...

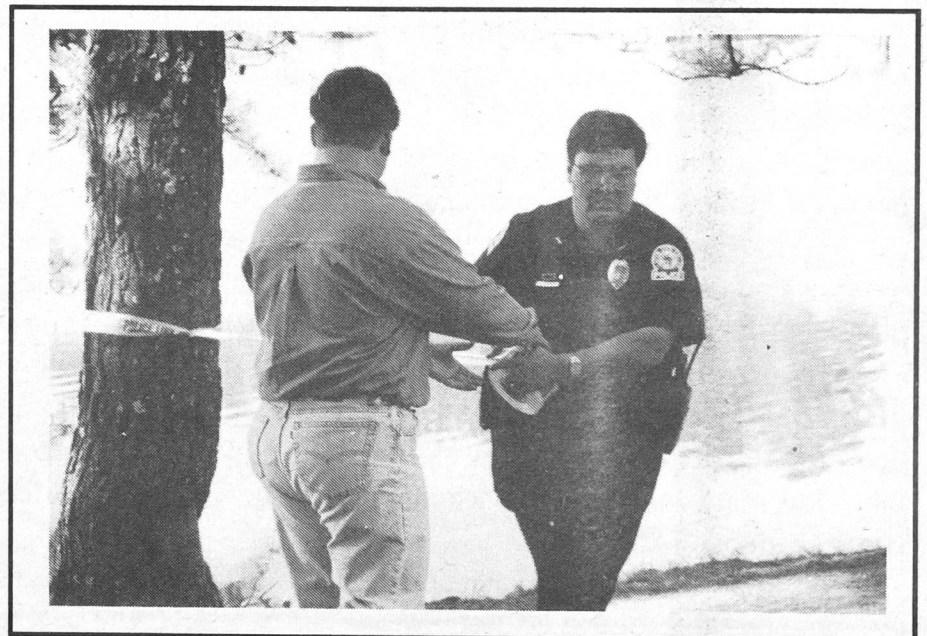
Exploding onto the horizon, the form appeared to take on a life of its own. Afterwards, the amazed students confided to each other that each was certain the form had spoken to them. But none believed the haunting voice promising them good grades until their report cards arrived. Each of the "best and brightest" had received all "A's".

...STRAIGHT A'S...

Curious and excited, they returned to the sight of the explosion the next evening. The darkness was lighted by a blue and orange glow, surrounded by a silvery green haze.



Special Photo/CSC Public Information
Chief Doner, after measuring the depth of the footprint impression, concluded that the unknown entity must weigh in excess of 600 pounds.



Special Photo/CSC Public Information
John A. Yates, Jr., (l) the witness to the sighting and Chief Doner (r) cordoned off the area with crime scene tape to preserve the evidence.

LEGEND OF LOCH THE LUCKY LAKER

...LOCH SPEAKS...

From the glow came a voice, clearly audible to all. It said: "Hi! Welcome back. My name is LOCH. Thanks for setting me free. This looks like a beautiful place to call home. It's much nicer than the swamp of my earlier life. The swamp was rowdy. Here I feel safe. I think I'll stay for a while; but don't tell anyone. Good-bye for now. Just call when you need help." And before the students could respond, the voice and the glow vanished, and the lake was again dark and silent.

...THE SWAMP... WAS ROWDY...

...A SECRET TO BE KEPT...

...THE LUCKY...

Stunned, the students stared at each other in the quiet aftermath. Finally, one spoke... confused... bemused... "whatever I just saw and heard, whether it's real or not, I know one thing, I'll be coming back whenever I need just a little extra help; whatever that was, I think it's Lucky. And I can always use a little extra luck." No more was said. The others merely shook their heads in agreement and quietly disbursed into the night, each with their private thoughts.

Legend has it that each of these students returned many times that academic year. Facts show that each continued to get straight A's the remainder of their career at Clayton. Increasingly, LOCH became affectionately known, among those few students who knew, as LOCH THE LUCKY.

...THE LEGEND GROWS...

...SCOTLAND...?

...BLUE-TAILED MOLE SKINK?...

...CAPTURED ON FILM...

In the next few years, the LEGEND of LOCH THE LUCKY grew ... slowly ... very slowly. The emotions of those "in the know" were torn between "will I be believed if I tell about LOCH" and "do I really want others to know about the good fortune associated with LOCH THE LUCKY".

As the Luck of the Laker became more widespread, even more fascinating stories of Loch's origins emerged. Some suggest that it is really the original Loch Ness monster, smuggled home from a Scottish golf trip by a few College alumni in 1972. Others suggest it is the rare blue-tailed mole skink transplanted from its south Florida habitat by a few students returning from their spring break in 1971. Still others suggest such implausible tales that this reporter hesitates to record them without further supportive verification.

Only one photograph of LOCH THE LUCKY is known to exist. Captured by lens in 1973, the picture was printed in the 1973-1974 College yearbook. Some argued that it failed to capture the real essence of LOCH. Even then, however, students disputed the sighting, questioned the legend, and discounted the photograph with more worldly explanations. Those who knew it was a LOCH sighting tried to downplay the event.

...THE LAKER MASCOT...

...THE STORY TOLD...

The closest public unveiling of LUCKY came in the late 1980s. As Clayton State College entered the intercollegiate athletic area, the College polled the student body for MASCOT recommendations. A group of LOCH THE LUCKY friends decided LOCH needed to become the MASCOT. Hiding Loch's real identity, the students ran LOCH under the LAKERS label. True to all that LOCH THE LUCKY has been associated with on this campus, the LAKERS won. It became the MASCOT. Those in the know debated whether or not to make it known that the LAKER MASCOT was really LOCH THE LUCKY Laker. Even so, perhaps not merely coincidentally, the most active supporters at the early games found themselves known as the Rowdy Crowd. Most supporters continued to insist on public secrecy but I knew LOCH was real and that was what was moving in the mist.

As I finished telling the story, the gentleman looked at me with interest. His first words were "Gee, they didn't tell me, when I interviewed for the Presidency, about the legends of LOCH THE LUCKY". My stumbling next words were that I suspected only a few current students and alumni had witnessed actual LOCH sightings. And all of us, I was sure, had not mentioned it to others for fear of being branded in the same fashion as those who reported UFO sightings. He was kind in calming my concerns.

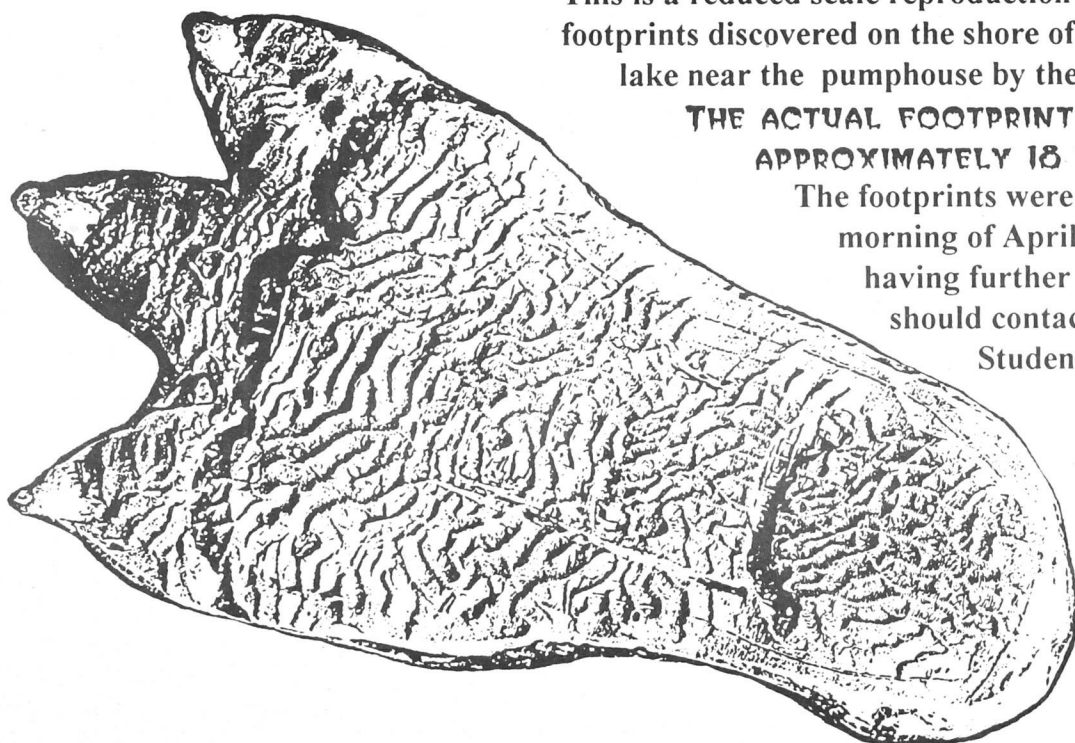
Now that I had bared my soul and told all to the new President ... the President of all people ... and enjoyed both his initial reaction and his soothing and humorous responses, I decided to put the story to print and to ask for your help. Please share your stories, your sightings, your solutions to help explain this remarkable mascot... LOCH "THE LUCKY" LAKER. Send them to me:

c/o Loch Sightings
The Bent Tree
Dean of Students Office
Clayton State College
P.O. Box 285
Morrow, GA 30260

This is a reduced scale reproduction of one of the footprints discovered on the shore of the big lake near the pumphouse by the library.

THE ACTUAL FOOTPRINTS MEASURED APPROXIMATELY 18 INCHES LONG.

The footprints were reported on the morning of April 17. Anyone having further information should contact the Dean of Students in D-217.

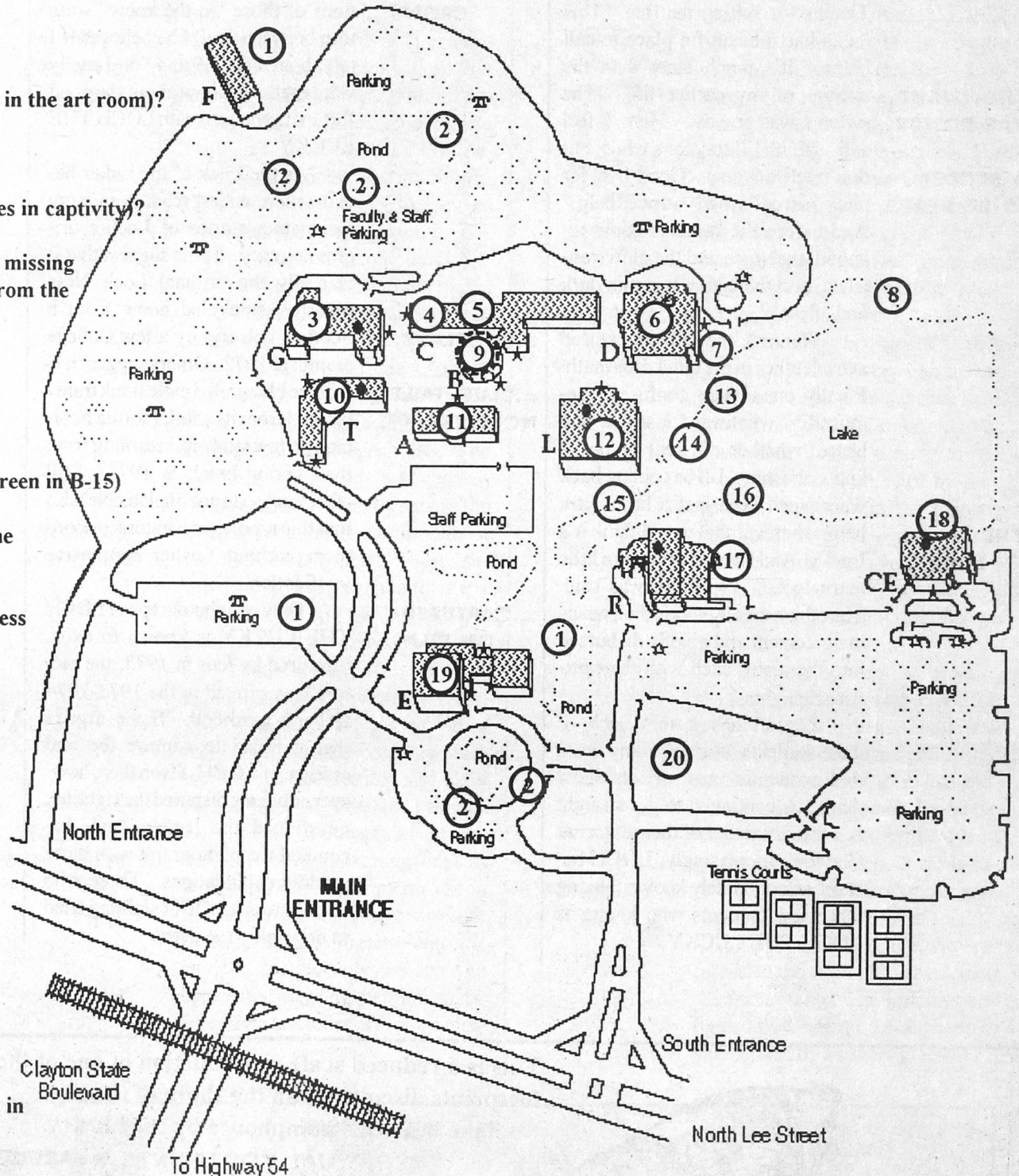


"SIGHTINGS" OF LOCH THE LUCKY LAKER

KEY TO MAP

- 1 Rumored feeding areas
- 2 Footprints discovered
- 3 Creative center sightings (fingerpainting in the art room)?
- 4 Getting down to business sightings
- 5 Biology lab (checking on possible relatives in captivity)?
- 6 Strange comings & goings sighted (food missing from the cafeteria and T-shirts missing from the bookstore)
- 7 Patio (dozing in the new patio furniture)
- 8 Rumored sunbathing area
- 9 Second floor retreat? (shadows on the screen in B-15)
- 10 Technical sightings (cryptic writing on the drafting boards in T-118)
- 11 A Bldg - Lost in Admissions (In the process or in the computer system)?
- 12 Library - Video - lost in stacks - making copies - Librarian told him to leave because he was making too much noise
- 13 Pumphouse "Home"?
- 14 April '94 sighting reported
- 15 January '94 sighting reported
- 16 Only known picture of actual sighting (1974 College annual)
- 17 A modern day phantom at Spivey Hall
- 18 Spotted riding the glass walled Elevators in the Continuing Education building
- 19 Nicknamed the swamp--a rowdy rough place for visiting teams to try to survive
- 20 Prehistoric mounds -birthplace of ancestors?

Clayton State College Campus



SGA SPONSORS SEARCH FOR LOCH DURING ANNUAL SPRING FLING

On Tuesday and Wednesday, May 17 and 18, the Clayton State College Student Government Association (SGA) will be sponsoring a "Loch Search" as a part of their 1994 Spring Fling. The sightings of footprints and a supposed monster, that was reported to the Clayton State Public Safety Office on Monday, April 18, 1994, has the SGA determined to be at the fore-

front of the search for additional footprints which may be at various locations around the campus.

SGA members decided to focus their attention, during this popular, annual event, on the recent sightings. In order to maintain a sense of security during the Spring Fling, SGA will be hosting four searches for footprints. The search for additional footprints

will take place from Noon-1:00 p.m. and from 5:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 17, and again on Wednesday, May 18. All students who stumble across a footprint will be awarded an exclusive Spring Fling '94 T-shirt. For more information about how to participate in the search please contact an SGA member.

The Spring Fling is an annual event which also offers members of the College community a great lunch

at a bargain price. The meal (which will be prepared by many of the most popular senior faculty and staff members of the College) will consist of a grilled hamburger or hot-dog with chips and a limited edition squeeze bottle filled with either iced tea or lemonade. The price is \$1.50 per meal. The SGA welcomes invites all members of the College community and their families to join in the search for Loch at this year's Spring Fling.