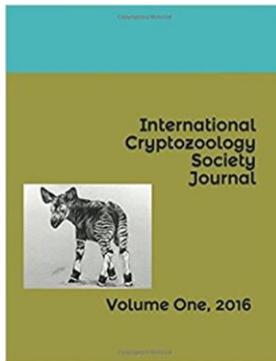




Book Review

International Cryptozoology Society Journal, Volume One, 2016. Edited by Loren Coleman and Jenny White Coleman. San Bernardino, California. ©2017. 112 pp. ISBN 978-1521837559. (paper).



Loren Coleman is the founder of the International Cryptozoology Museum located in Portland, Maine, the first museum of its kind. In January 2016, the Board of Directors of the museum announced the establishment of the International Cryptozoology Society (ICS). Its predecessor, The International Society of Cryptozoology (ISC), founded in 1982, at a special meeting hosted by the Department of Vertebrate Zoology of the U.S. National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., provided a much needed platform for the dissemination of serious scientific research directed at cryptids, i.e. animals not recognized by science. Marginalized and always struggling, the ISC was ultimately disbanded upon the death of its operating secretary Richard Greenwell. Coleman states it is the objective of the newly formed ICS to carry on that legacy, while founded on a permanent physical presence, i.e. the IC Museum, now at Thompson's Point in Portland, Maine. The successful realization of this effort will depend on achieving the cryptozoological

goals of the museum, the society, and this journal. Although there has been mention of plans for a scientific advisory board for the Museum/Society, no confirmation of such a body is mentioned. This is a critical element if the ICS hopes to achieve, maintain, or better yet, exceed the stature and level of recognition and consideration by the scientific community towards the former ISC.

The inaugural volume of the ICS Journal bears on its cover a charming piece of artwork by Justin Mark, reminiscent of the new ICS logo, which was inspired by the first photograph of a living okapi, a one-month-old calf (see below). In turn, it echoes the logo of the ISC that depicted an image of an adult okapi, which has served as a “poster-child” of sorts for cryptozoological species.

The journal opens with a pair of introductory sections to the ICS, the nature of cryptozoology, and the mission of the museum, written by Loren Coleman, its director, while also acknowledging Paul LeBlond as its president. Conditions and benefits of membership, including receipt of the journal, are presented (although we note that volume one of the ICSJ is currently available from Amazon for \$3.11). Observing that cryptozoology often serves as a “gateway science” for youth interested in the natural

sciences, educational outreach is commendably identified as an important element of that mission.

The remainder of the first volume of the ICS Journal is wholly comprised of the proceedings of the “International Cryptozoology Museum Conference,” as that section heading reads (although elsewhere the gathering is referred to as the first International Cryptozoology Conference). The conference was held in St. Augustine, Florida, near Anastasia Island, historically significant as the site where the St. Augustine “monster” octopus was discovered in 1896.



Also of note – the first Golden Yeti Award, commemorating contributions to the field of cryptozoology and to the IC Museum itself, was presented to philanthropists and ICM board member Jeremy Efroymson, whose generosity has made possible a number of cryptozoological projects.

The program was diverse, with four of the ten presentations addressing matters of relict hominoid inquiry. These included presentations by Lyle Blackburn on the Boggy Creek monster, Cliff Barackman on the study of footprints attributed to North America’s unknown hominoid, Robert Robinson on the skunk ape, and Kathy Strain on Bigfoot in Native American cultures. Brief summaries of their presentations were provided in the proceedings, sans illustrations.

Blackburn elaborated upon the continuing story of the Fouke monster, noting that not only were the events dramatized in the famous 1972 Bigfoot movie, *The Legend of Boggy*

Creek, based on actual eyewitness reports, but that encounters with a large hair-covered bipedal creature in the area of southern Arkansas are still being reported today. Barackman noted that reports of large human-like footprints in remote areas of North America extend back to the early 1800’s. These reports are often corroborated with photographs and sometimes even with plaster casts of the footprints. Clearly, something is making these footprints. He systematically enumerates a number of inferences about Sasquatch foot form and function. Robinson addressed Florida’s Bigfoot legend, the skunk ape, relating some of the earliest historical accounts, as well as contemporary reports from the state. He raised the possibility of two kinds of Bigfoot-like creatures, one presumably responsible for rather dubious four-toed footprints. Strain examined Bigfoot in Native American cultures, noting the presence of the notion of a large hairy bipedal creature in traditional native songs and dances, stories, rock art, basketry, totem poles and oral traditions of contemporary elders. She counters the notion that Bigfoot didn’t take hold in tribal culture until after the publicity of the 1958 Jerry Crew event at Bluff Creek, California, or even the 1967 Patterson-Gimlin film.

Other presentations reported in the journal include: the fabled Florida giant octopus, by David Goudsward; aquatic cryptids and animals of discovery, by Jerome Hamlin; discovering *Cadbarasaurus*, by Paul LeBlond; the Florida monster of 1896, by Michael Raynal; campfire tales from the Beast Hunter, by Pat Spain; and bears and cryptozoology, by Matt Bille.

Some technical criticisms of the volume

include a lack of biographical sketches for the individual contributors, even though space was certainly not an issue. There is glaring inconsistency in the style and formatting of the individual speakers' written contributions in terms of length, illustrations, bibliographic formatting, voice, etc. The quality and reproduction of conference photographs are unsatisfactory for a journal aspiring to be a vehicle of scientific reporting. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to see Coleman and the ICS produce a journal fostering serious discussion of cryptozoological topics, that joins the ranks

of Karl Shuker's *Journal of Cryptozoology*, and the *Relict Hominoid Inquiry*. The later two strive to adhere to the same high standards for publication as mainstream zoological and anthropological periodicals. We hopefully anticipate the same benchmarks for the ICSJ and look forward to Volume Two, 2017, expecting peer-reviewed content of high professional quality.

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Speakers from L to R: Kathy Strain, Robert Robinson, Matt Bille, Pat Spain, Paul LeBlond, Loren Coleman, Jerome Hamlin, Cliff Barackman, Lyle Blackburn, (not pictured, David Goudsward and Michel Raynal).