



Bigfoot Comes To Hardy Falls

by Mathilda Gregory, Editor-in-Chief

Some out-of-town campers at Hardy Falls Campground, located on Lake Road near the Hardy Falls Lake, had a surprise visitor early Saturday morning.

Bigfoot

Or, to be more precise, they had a visitor they believe to have been Bigfoot.

“I know what I saw, and what I saw can’t be explained,” insisted Mr. Cyrus Ryder of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He, his wife, Eloise Ryder, and their two children, Abby and Peter, were set up in one of the campground sites used for tent camping. The family was startled “out of a sound sleep” at approximately 1:30 am on Saturday, by “loud noises, like someone was going through the garbage.” The disruption was made even more alarming by the fact that part of the campground is relatively empty at this time of year, so the family was alone

“It was really scary,” said Abby, age 13. “This is the first year I had my own tent, and I was totally freaked out. Plus, we don’t get cell service here, so I couldn’t even tell anybody about it.

“It was nothing,” insisted her brother, Peter, age 15. “Mom and Dad were yelling and all, but I didn’t even see anything. It was probably a stupid raccoon.

“He’s the one who’s stupid,” said Abby, when told of her brother’s comment. “He was asleep anyway, and if Pete’s asleep, mom says even Armageddon wouldn’t wake him up. Whatever Armageddon is.

“We saw something, and it wasn’t a raccoon or a bear,” insisted Mr. Ryder. “It had long hair and ran away quick on two legs. That’s what I told the police chief. It had two legs, not four! And I heard it yelling. You know, like what you hear on that TV show where those guys go looking for Bigfoot? And the trash was dumped,” he added.

The Ryders immediately notified the campground’s night-time manager, who, in turn, called Chief Jacqueline Kline, of the Hardy Falls police force, to report the sighting.

“I’m sure Mr. And Mrs. Ryder saw something,” said Chief Kline. When asked if she thought it could be Bigfoot, she declined to comment.

Morton Schlemmer, the owner of Hardy Falls Campground, is confident he knows who the intruder was

“Yup, they’re right. It was a Bigfoot. Maybe a juvenile. They’re the playful ones.

When asked if he had seen a Bigfoot before, he grinned and stroked his full, salt-and-pepper beard.

“Sure! They come around all the time. I used to report it whenever we had an incident, but nobody ever believed me.

This reporter asked Mr. Schlemmer if he thought rumors of Bigfoot would scare off his customers, and he shook his head.

“No way. Fact is, I’m trying to get the word out there. Bigfoot would be a huge draw. We’d get a lot more visitors during the winter if people thought they’d have a chance of seeing the ‘Foot. I even have a little museum I set up to, you know, document things. Mr. And Mrs. Ryder agreed to let me keep a wrench they found bent like a pretzel a few feet from their trash receptacle.

I had not heard about the museum, so I asked Mr. Schlemmer if I could take a tour. He led me to a small trailer situated near the park office. A wooden sign staked in the ground at the door read, “Official Hardy Falls Bigfoot Museum.” Inside were various exhibits, including some large rocks that had reportedly “mysteriously appeared around one of the campfires last year,” a few bones and branches labeled as “tools,” and a pile of earth in a wooden box that is supposedly “desiccated Bigfoot droppings.

When asked for comment on the “museum,” Mayor Ruffio denied all knowledge of its existence. Doris Amato of the zoning board said that the trailer is grandfathered in as part of the campground, and as long as Mr. Schlemmer doesn’t promote the contents as an actual museum in the media, they’re not going to charge him with a violation.

“It’s like someone having a Bigfoot altar in their basement,” explained Ms. Amato. “Disturbing, but if they want to let people look at it, there’s nothing we can do. If he starts to promote it, we’ll have a conversation.

“Personally, I think Hardy Falls is missing a big opportunity,” argued Mr. Schlemmer. “Bigfoot are around all the time, and we should take advantage of it. Heck, we should bill ourselves as the Bigfoot Capital of Pennsylvania! We should have Bigfoot festivals! I mean, lookit. Right now we’re in the off-season for the campgrounds, except for foliage watchers. But if we put it out that Bigfoot comes and dances by the light of the moon in October, and maybe have a parade or something, I’ll bet we’d be packed all the way through November. Maybe even December.

“We’ve already booked a few more days, and we’re setting up a camera,” Mr. Ryder reported. “Can you imagine how much money we would get for a picture of Bigfoot? Maybe we’d even get on that show!

“We have to jump on this before Beaver Run gets its act together and starts something,” Mr. Schlemmer insisted. “If the ‘Foot is making contact and going through the trash, we might as well get the benefit.

“We have no plans on promoting Bigfoot at this time,” said Mabel Truelove, head of the Hardy Falls Chamber of Commerce. “Although,” she added with a certain gleam in her eye, “it might not be such a bad idea.

Watch out, Hardy Falls. There may be a Bigfoot parade in your future after all.