

THE MEOW

THE STUDENT NEWS ORGANIZATION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA DULUTH

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

Happy April UMD!

I am Izabella Zadra, and I am your Editor in Chief here at The Meow. This month, we are announcing that we are changing the name of the UMD student newspaper to The Meow; dogs are so overrated these days! But just because we changed things up with our name doesn't mean that we have stopped producing serious and news-like content for our viewers. This issue includes, but is not limited, to a detailed review of all three Pinnochio movies that dropped in 2022, a deep dive into the life of Nessy the Loch Ness Monster and her lesser-known relative that thrives in Lake Superior and finally the big announcement that the yellow Champ is coming back! Don't believe me? That's probably good. We here at The Meow would like to thank you for continuing to read our stories and support your student-run news organization here at UMD even when we decided to let loose and have a goofy time!



The Bark produces this monthly news magazine in addition to publishing content online every day, providing local media to over 10,000 students at the University of Minnesota Duluth. To get involved or to share your voice please contact The Bark at thebarkumd.com/contact-us

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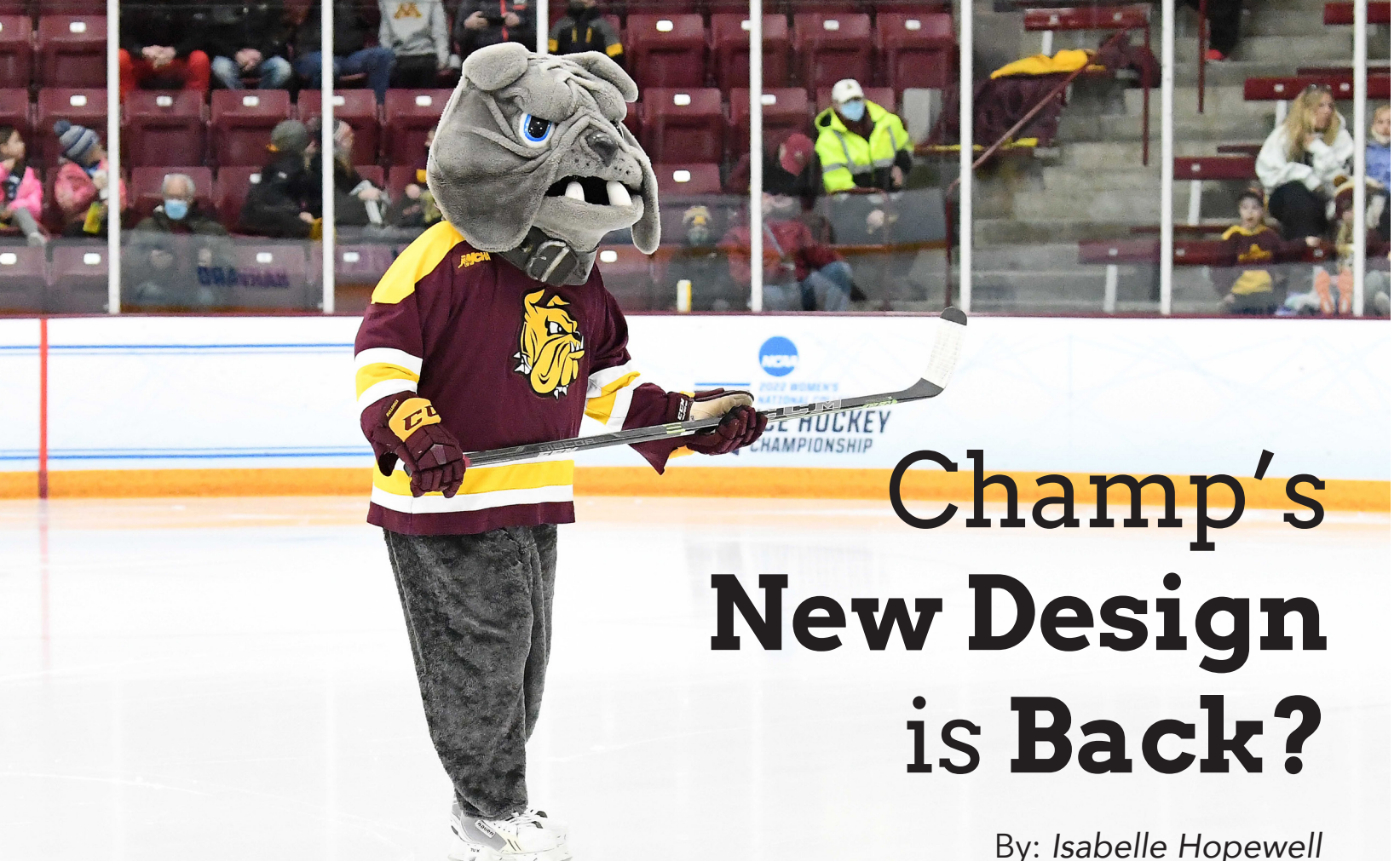
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Champ's New Design is Back?

By: *Isabelle Hopewell*

Photo provided by University of Minnesota Duluth Marketing and Public Relations

Back in early September, the University of Minnesota Duluth announced a complete redesign of their mascot, Champ the Bulldog. Trading the classic gray fur for a new yellow look, the change was met with intense online vitriol. Taking to Twitter, many Champ fans likened the new design to “Winnie the Pooh”.

Within the month, UMD Athletics succumbed to public pressure and decided to switch the new design back to the trademark gray mascot. However, inside sources told the Meow that

perhaps the UMD community may not have seen the last of yellow Champ.

UMD Athletics may have let on that with the wear and tear of Champ’s design, they realized that the best plan for mascot longevity was to return to the original plan and update the design. In fact, sources claim that UMD Athletics were displeased by the lack of support for the new design. Over the past few months, leaders in the UMD community gathered together to discuss UMD’s relationship with public pressure.

"It's become clear that we need to take a stronger position against student feedback," an anonymous source said. "As much as we care about student feedback, there comes a point where we need to stand up for ourselves and recognize the importance of change for our community."

While UMD leaders hoped to keep the news under wraps, the Meow investigative reporting team spent the past year uncovering a secret UMD was planning on releasing in the Fall of 2023. However, due to the Meow's commitment to the truth, our staff decided it was time to reveal the plan for UMD: A complete rebranding for the University of Minnesota Duluth.

"Alright, y'all made it pretty crystal clear that yellow Champ was not well-received," an anonymous source said. "Like, seriously, you really don't need to list every reason as to why an idea is bad. Message received."

Or was it?

UMD did indeed hold true to the promise that UMD will not be returning to yellow Champ. Instead, just like the Bark's rebranding to the Meow, UMD will be changing their mascot to a cat.

UMD's new mascot, the cat, will retain the same name as Champ. Community leaders also declared that if any student

has any problems with the change, they can take it up with... absolutely no one. Because UMD doesn't care.

"Despite the ridiculous amount of feedback forms, UMD does not look at any answers on those forms," UMD elites said. "And UMD will not be paying any attention to your responses for this either. Sorry."

But it sounds like UMD is not sorry about their distition because, well, if you haven't guessed, they have absolutely nothing to do with this switch and this is absolutely an April Fools joke! Boom! Roasted!

Photo taken from the University of Minnesota: Duluth Facebook page



Duluth in Crisis after Flannel Shortage

By: *Seth Roeser*

The city of Duluth is reeling from a severe flannel shortage. City council announced last Friday that the shortage may last “for some time.”

Residents from Duluth and the surrounding communities haven’t taken the news well. Among the hardest hit was the city’s hipster and microbrewery sectors.

“It’s terrible, bad even,” craft beer connoisseur Richard Lobaum said. “I’ve made wearing flannel an integral part of my life since I moved here in 2009. Now all I have is drinking and hating the Packers.”

Some people expected the flannel shortage and prepared. Hermantown resident Ben Dover has been stockpiling flannels for years.

“Well, this whole situation is only surprising if you haven’t been paying attention,” Dover said. “I’ve been saying it for years: when the you-know-what hits the fan, I’m going to be ready... and I am.”

Dover has nearly three storage units full of flannel shirts and jackets, a collection that cost him the bulk of his life savings.

“It’s worth it though,” Dover said. “Flannels are the default of my wardrobe. If I didn’t have them, I would’ve had to start putting effort



Photo from Wikimedia Commons

into what I wore. Everyone else has to deal with that now, but not me.”

Supply analysts say stockpilers like Dover are likely exacerbating the shortage and advise against hoarding. Stay tuned to The Meow for more updates as the story continues.

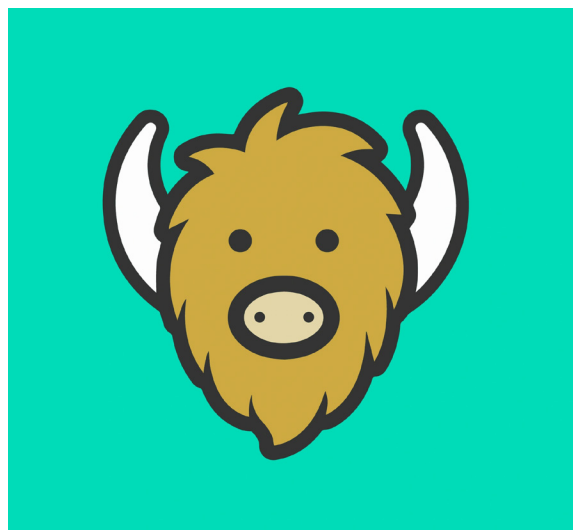
UMD Unveils plan to hold Classes

Entirely on YikYak:

Physical Attendance still Mandatory

By: Seth Roeser

The University of Minnesota Duluth recently announced its plan to hold classes entirely through the social media platform YikYak for the upcoming 2023-2024 school year. Professors and students alike have responded negatively to the planned change.

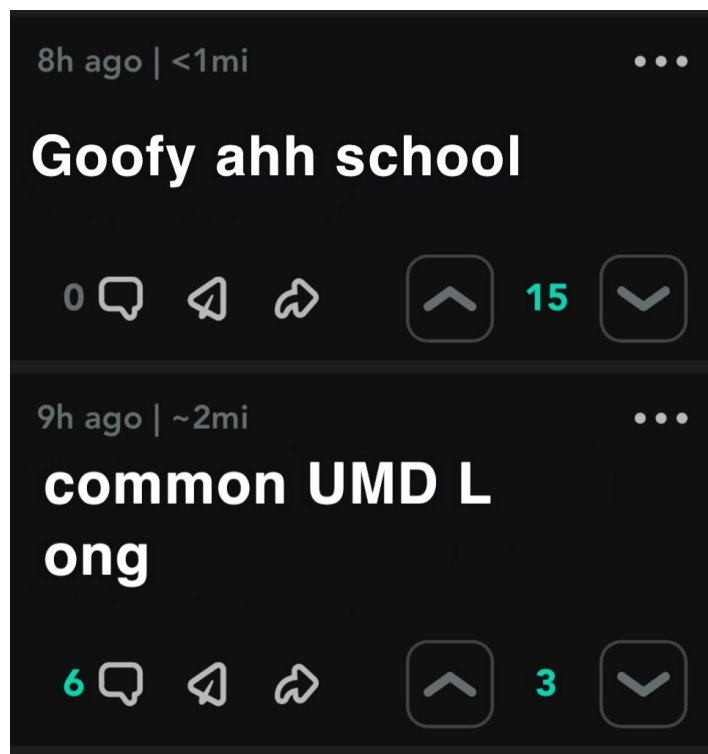


YikYak is a social media platform launched in 2013. Users can only see posts from within a 5-mile radius and it is entirely anonymous.

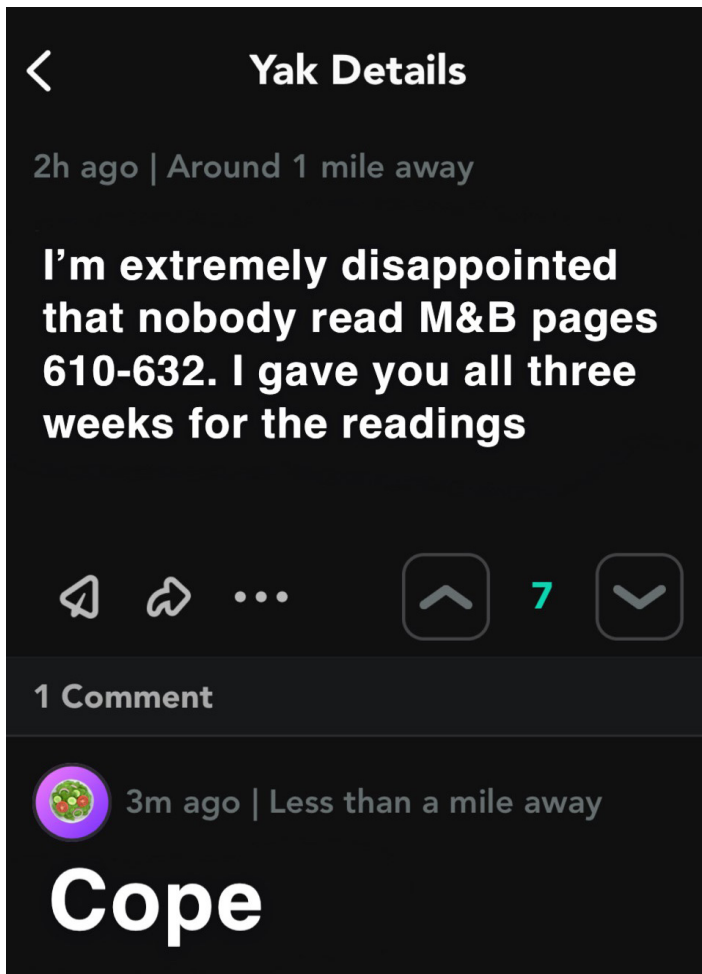
Students have expressed confusion about UMD's decision, mainly stemming from the reasoning behind the switch. In particular, the choice to require students to still attend classes in person left many scratching their heads.

"What is YikYak?" said University for Seniors member Edith Barlowe, 67.

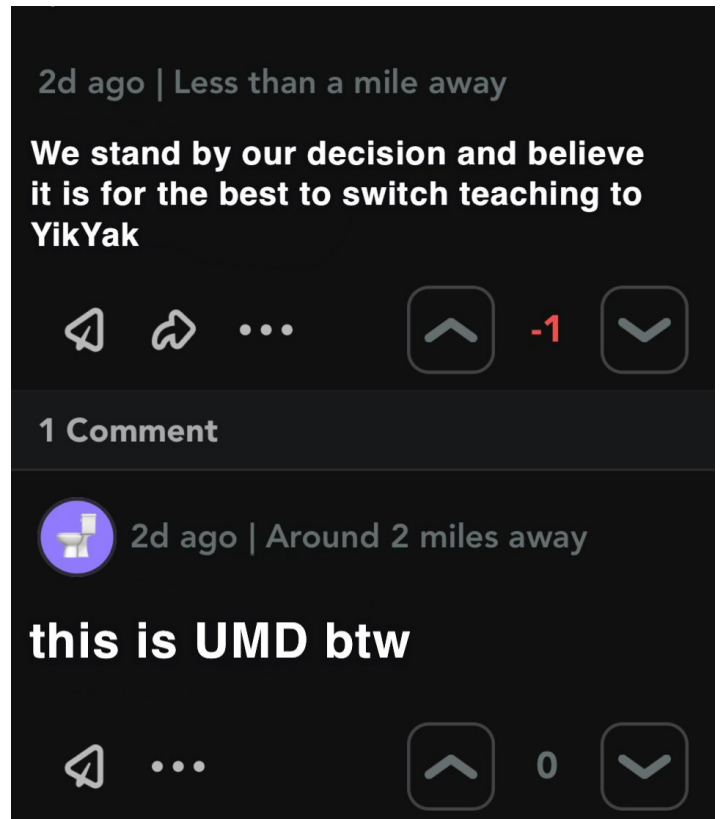
"UMD is clowning fr if they think we need to show up to classes," said junior Eugene Cruggs. "They already teaching on YikYak, why should we pull up? Duluth really thinking they Nathaniel B for this and that's on my mama."



Many professors attempted test runs in preparation for next year but say YikYak's anonymous nature as well as "high level trolling" from students make teaching on the app extremely difficult.



Facing opposition from all sides, the university started posting Yaks of their own defending the change, though it's unclear which, if any, of the posts are legitimate.



UMD administration has since sent out a campus wide email saying they appreciate the feedback from the community and will reconsider their decision in the coming weeks but said it's "very likely" they won't change their minds.



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A Review of Pinocchio (2022) And Company

By: *Davis Ruppert-Kan*



Photo from IMDb

Pinocchio, directed by Robert Zemeckis

“Pinocchio” (2022) is a product produced by the Disney corporation as the latest entry into their slew of pseudo-live-action remakes of classic animated films. Ironically soulless and almost a scene-for-scene remake, this new movie shares many similarities to its titular character, namely how wooden and lifeless it appears. The one noteworthy change between this film and its superior predecessor is that by the time this one was made, Disney executives have begun to think that saying “minors shouldn’t drink alcohol” is too extreme a lesson to include, replacing any mention of alcohol from the famous alcoholic-donkey-allegory scene with ROOT beer. That, and Tom Hanks’ dishearteningly bad performance as Pinocchio’s father, Geppetto, except for those who ironically enjoyed his inconsistent, cartoonish recent performance in Elvis. Lastly, of all of the “live-action” remakes with CGI protagonists to come out lately from Disney, why did they choose to animate a literal puppet? Overall, I give it two out of five stars.



Photo from IMDb

Pinocchio: A True Story - directed by Vasiliy Rovenskiy

“Pinocchio: A True Story” (2022) - and yes, that’s the name they went with - is a Russian CGI movie loosely based on the original Pinocchio story. Mainly focusing on the carnival sequence of the story, this film subverts audience expectations by apparently doing everything in its power to be unenjoyable. Pauly Shore and Tom Kenny, of all people, play Pinocchio and Geppetto respectively in the English dub, delivering some of the most unintentionally annoying performances of this year’s triptych of Pinocchio movie adaptations. Its art direction and animation keep consistent with the Disney corporation’s recent adaptation in that it too is wooden, lifeless, and uninspired. Another similarity it shares with the aforementioned other film is that I can only see myself enjoying this movie if I were seeing it with the level of critical thought or artistic engagement as a drunken minor. Underage drinking, coincidentally, is not condemned in this movie, either. At least I don’t think it was, I didn’t bother finishing it. One half of a star out of five, if only because I don’t believe in giving any work of art made by people an outright zero.



Pinocchio, directed by Guillermo del Toro

Alright, all jokes aside, this one's the good one. "Pinocchio" (2022) is a stop-motion film created by Guillermo del Toro on Netflix which very much loosely adapts Carlo Collodi's original 1883 story, and the best Pinocchio adaptation since the original Disney animated film, if not since the story's inception.

For starters, this one's a clear-cut del Toro film. Having an art direction straight from his middle period, with all of the visual flare of the Hellboy movies and morbid stylistic charm of "Cronos" and "The Devil's Backbone," not to mention the Hellboy-esque character design and del Toro's usual suspects when it comes to themes and story beats. This has the most unique, cohesive artistic character of any Pinocchio film to have come out this past year. Granted, that doesn't sound like a lot. For context, read my prior two Pinocchio (2022) reviews.

Del Toro has said in interviews just how personal a project this film has been for him. While the stop-motion animation took about 940 days to capture, the writing and drafting of the film has taken up roughly 15 years, the bulk of his career- and it certainly shows. The film tackles themes he's handled throughout his filmography: grief, destiny (or rather, the lack thereof), found family, mortality, time, and fascism, to name a few.

And that last theme of fascism is especially interesting here. Typically not a topic covered in most Pinocchio iterations, the theme feels inseparable from this particular film's narrative and thematic purpose. Set explicitly during Mussolini's reign over Italy, every recognizable story beat and character is recontextualized within this setting. Gepetto's human son didn't just die ambiguously here, he was firebombed in a church while Mussolini's forces were absentmindedly dropping excess munitions over their town. The circus ringmaster who enslaves Pinocchio isn't doing so simply out of surface-level greed, he needs to impress the Great Leader to save his skin as an artist operating under fascism. Mussolini himself makes an appearance toward the end, but I'm not about to stretch too far into spoiler territory here.

Del Toro presents fascists and bigots in this film as he typically does; as lunatics and misguided madmen, but he does not shy away from depicting the malicious danger these types pose to humanity for the sake of comedy or emasculating villains on a pure surface level. Fascists and bigots are not just clowns, but clowns with guns. He depicts them with their due sense of gravity and severity, but with no respect given to their ideology. Townsfolk in Pinocchio have different views on Italy's government and rulers, humanizing people across the spectrum in a matter, not unlike "Disco Elysium's" depiction of fascists, capitalists, and communists, primarily through the three protagonists of Pinocchio, Gepetto, and Sebastian J. Cricket (Pinocchio's conscience) and the antagonists, Podesta the policeman and Count Volpe the circus ringmaster.

Themes aside, this movie's just spectacular artistically, too. Characters are redesigned to better communicate the setting and thematic purposes of their arcs, the titular character looks completely different from nearly every past interpretation in particular. A disheveled, Groot-inspired boy-thing, clearly built by a drunkenly manic, grieving, rusty woodworker, and not some professionally constructed doll designed to sell toys of himself. The casting is fantastic, too, ranging from a few of del Toro's usual collaborators to Hollywood newcomers and A24 favorites. Their voices are lent to characters in such a way that their unique vocal mannerisms and tonal ranges are utilized without being immediately recognizable as simply a cameo. Heck, I'll let you figure out who's who: Ron Perlman, Tilda Swinton, Cate Blanchett, Ewan McGregor and Christoph Waltz, to name a few. Tom Kenny even appears in this film too, funny enough, only in this one he gives an impassioned, GOOD performance. The host of new characters introduced in this retelling work so well in this world and bring so much to it narratively and thematically, especially the supernatural/metaphysical characters, a staple of del Toro's work. Lastly, stop motion is utilized so well that it baffles me that this story hasn't been told in this medium before, and every future incarnation that tries to top it practically ought to justify using another animation style.

There is not enough that can be said about this movie, not by me alone. Watch it for yourself, it's just on Netflix, have your own experience with it, that'll be enough. A metric ton has been written on just about every aspect of the film I haven't touched on if you still need convincing. This is the only Pinocchio movie in recent memory worth your - or anyone's - time, and it pains me how much it was snubbed from Oscar awards, though the Academy's disregard for animation as an art form has been written about to death already, you've already heard the spiel by now. Watch with someone you'd wanna hear their opinion or interpretation of this movie with after. While it goes without saying, I give this film five out of five stars.





The first and most well known photo taken of Nessie by Robert Kenneth Wilson in 1934. Photo from History.com

CADAVER COLUMN

By: **IZABELLA ZADRA**

Welcome back, UMD boys and ghouls, to The Cadaver Column. Every month we will discuss different devilish topics ranging from historical Halloween events to mythical beasts and their whereabouts to bone-chilling experiences submitted by the Bulldog community. This month, I am happy to announce that we are going to take a deep dive into the lives and times of the one and only Nessie... aka the Loch Ness Monster. I have been really looking forward to writing a few pieces on cryptids so I think this is a good place to start!

Nessie is best known for being the permanent tenant of Loch Ness in the Scotting Highlands. Although she is currently winning the cryptids game of hide-and-seek, everyone slips up sometimes and she has been spotted and reported a time or two.

The first mentions of the Loch Ness Monster date all the way back to the Stone Age when historians observed cave drawings of a large beast with flippers. It was then brought up again in 565 A.D. in the biography of St. Columba, an Irish abbot and missionary. He claimed to have been bitten by a mysterious creature in the waters of Loch Ness.

Things stayed pretty quiet for a while after that, but in 1933 a couple reported a large being run in front of their car and then into the Scottish waters; they described it as a "dragon or prehistoric monster." This was the first of TONS of sightings that were reported that year which caused the town to go and hire Marmaduke Wetherall; a large game hunter who agreed to track and kill the mysterious beast.

Nothing came from Wetherall's visit and nothing of importance was found other than a few 'large footprints' which were later said to be imprinted from an umbrella stand. But in 1934, Robert Kenneth Wilson was able to snap the picture that made Nessie as famous as she is.

After the town's paper agreed to put the picture in print, people started coming forward with their stories and encounters with the beast. It was described as a large aquatic being with a long neck and flippers — many said that it looked identical to plesiosaurs which were marine reptiles that went extinct 65.5 million years ago.

In final efforts to find the truth, throughout the 60s there were tons of sonar expeditions taking place in the lake. Nothing conclusive came from these either but there were a few things to note. In every separate test done on the water, all of the sonar expeditions detected some sort of an oddly large mass moving throughout the water. Also, a photo was taken underwater that showed something vaguely resembling a fin.

Nessie might have pioneered being an independent, female aqua cryptic, but there are many others that have followed in her flipper prints such as Bessie from Lake Erie and the one and only Pressie that lives right here in Lake Superior.

Pressie gets her name from The Presque Isle River which is located in Michigan



A restored Plesiosaurus skelton located in Japan. Photo from Wikimedia commons

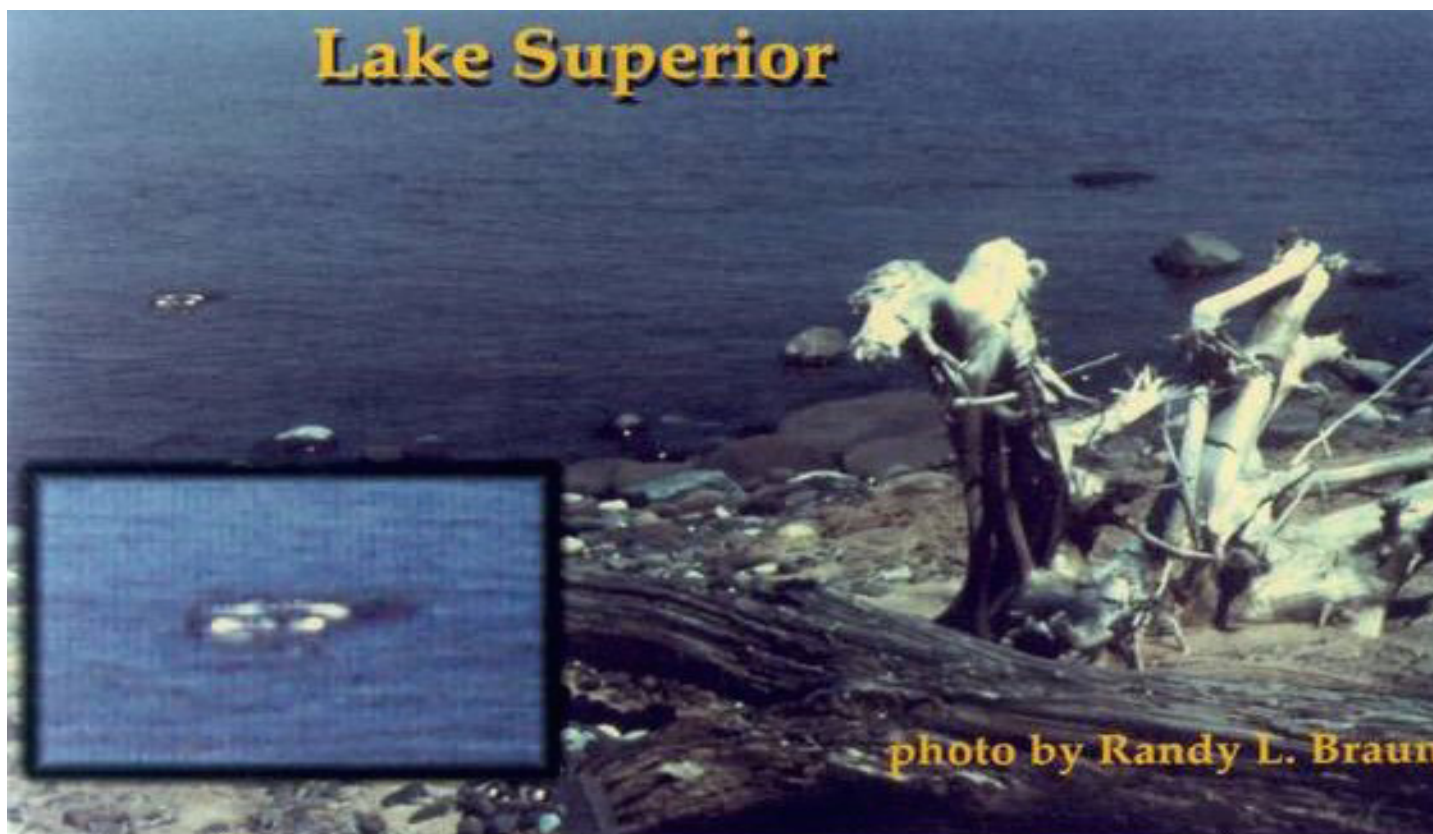
and empties into Lake Superior. Reports say that Pressie has a lot of the same features as Nessie but what sets her apart is her blackish-green color, her speed and most importantly the multiple large humps on her back that have been known to stick out of the water.

Pressie's depute was reported on two different occasions back in 1894. Two separate steamer crews traveling between Whitefish Point and Copper Harbor Michigan reported a large monster with an arched back sticking up out of the water. A year later, another report was made by another steamer crew coming from Whitefish Point claiming they saw "something hideous" with a 15-foot neck that kept pace with the ship as it was chasing them. Finally, in 1897, a man fell into the waters of Lake Superior right here in Duluth and said that something grabbed him and tried to strangle him; he was with three witnesses who told the same story.

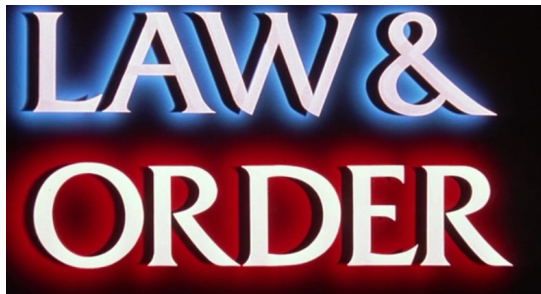
Pressie went radio silent for a while but in 1977 Randy Braun was out here trying to enjoy his Labor Day weekend when he saw a beast in the waters near Presque Isle. "[It] resembled an anaconda with the girth of a Volkswagon," Braun said. Braun snapped the only photo of Pressie we have in his moment of panic and confusion.

Make sure to keep your eyes out for Pressie next time you are out by the lake. I'm sure she would love to have a visitor or two! Have a hauntingly good topic or another cryptic you want us to discuss?

Email zadra012@d.umn.edu with your ideas. Until next time Bulldogs, stay strange and keep it creepy!



Here is the photograph taken by Randy L. Braun of Pressie in Presque Isle. Unfortunately, the photo is hard to see and blurry so Braun also provided a sketch of what he saw that day in the water. Photo from mysteriousuniverse.org



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