

LETTERS

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Might the 'Werewolf' be the 'Waumpus'?

Editor's note: We couldn't resist this particular "letter" submitted by Dale W. Mueller, under the pen name of "Baron von Mueller."

I've been watching with great glee, the reporting on the "Bray Road Monster" of Elkhorn, or "Elkhorn Werewolf," whichever you prefer, and the concern caused by the sightings.

This is made all the more confusing, because you'll note that none of the folks who've reported seeing it are woodsmen or hunters.

Back when I was a wee tad, there was an old fellow in Eagle, name of Martin Breidenbach, who not only knew of these beasts, but actually caught one!

He told me he'd studied the matter some and even found that the scientific name is "Waum-

pus," "Waumpus," "Waumpus."

The way he described them to me, was that, "They be of average height, with two long arms and clenched fists, having jist one leg and a round foot. They bounce themselves through field, woods and swamp, by bounding along, not unlike a kangaroo, but not as fast. They be covered by short black hair, 'ceptin' the head be bald. Bein' slow, their only pre-tiction when near cornered is, they stands on the one round foot and spins, arms out-stuck."

Martin said that he came across one out in the woods at night while coon hunting, where the rascal got itself completely wrapped up in some grapevines, bringing it to a squealing stop. Martin, afraid no one would believe him, dragged the beast home, grapevines and all. He said, "T'weren't much of a job; theys only of average height, you know."

After he got it home and untangled, he tied a swivel to the top of its head with a rope and tied

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People Martin Breidenbach

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that to a barn rafter so it couldn't get away. I asked him what it ate and he told me, "Most anathin' that din't eat it fust," though it was particularly fond of ice cream, but he mostly fed it dog food. "Ah'd push a dish close up with a stick, so's not to get hit with the arms as he'd spin there on the con-crete floor," Martin said.

After the novelty wore off, he got to thinking that perhaps it could start earning its keep, so he fastened an auger to its single foot. As many of the older folks around Eagle will remember, Martin built fences around the county and people would marvel at the speed he could get his posts holes dug, never suspecting his use of the Waumpus.

It was an easy matter for Martin, for he'd just tie the arms down on the Waumpus, hang onto the rope, and away the Waumpus would go, Martin yanking him out at the right moment.

I questioned him to some degree about the animal and he said the thing came by its name by what would happen to you if you got too close and I couldn't hardly argue with that.

I asked him whatever happened to the animal; if he still had it. "No, ain't got the critter and it all come because o' greed," he said. "Yep, plain ol' fashioned greed. I wer tryin' to set a post hole record that day, goin' crost a dang swamp, skeeters big as robins they wer, and I fergets ta' il; the swivel Rone broke an't was the last I seed o' the thing; screwed his self plumb out a' sight."

Now I'll grant you I was only in the eighth grade at the time, but I could hardly believe this and when I tactfully asked him how he could prove such a thing, he went out to the barn and showed me the rope, all splayed out on one end. With this proof, I think the reader can rest more secure nights and, Oh yes—the rope was of average length.

Baron von Mueller
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Palmyra