

## Beasts of the deep

By BECKY CAIRNS  
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**M**ove over, Nessie, you've got company. The lakes of Utah boast a bevy of mysterious creatures akin to that legendary serpent residing in Scotland's Loch Ness. Did you know Utahns have seen with their very own eyes ...

- A long-necked, flipped creature with a serpent-shaped head swimming in Bear Lake?
- A crocodile-like beast with the head of a horse, emerging from the briny Great Salt Lake?
- A black-spotted yellow beast with a forked red tongue, splashing at the northern end of Utah Lake?

Lake monsters are regaled in stories the world over, from Champ in New York's Lake Champlain to Sharlie, our next-door neighbor in

Idaho's Payette Lake. When it comes to odd aquatic wonders, our fair state is not left wanting for fodder to talk about around the campfire.

**Where do we look?** All of the state's major bodies of water are fair game, from Bear Lake in the north to Utah Lake at midstate. Even smaller lakes, such as Fish Lake or Sevier Lake, have boasted a few monsters, says historian Robert Carter, of Springville. Only the state's man-made reservoirs seem to be off-limits when it comes to sea serpents and their ilk, he says.

Terrel Grimley, general manager of Pineview Water Systems, confirms there are no monsters in Pineview Reservoir, unless, he says, you count some monstrosity large tiger muskies.

**Our biggest celebrity:** Some modern folks call her "Isabelle," but she's better known as the Bear Lake Mon-

ster. Stories of her existence first surfaced among American Indians living near the lake, who feared a snake-like creature that dragged away swimmers.

Starting in 1868, pioneer settlers in the Bear Lake Valley spied the monster, too, usually in the water but sometimes crawling ashore.

Even modern glimpses of this monster have been publicized. One was a 2002 run-in Brian Hirschi, a local lake boat operator, reported — in his touristy monster-replica boat, no less — with a 65-foot slimy-green beast with "beet-red eyes, and sort of a mist coming out of its nose."

**Other A-listers:** Monsters were discovered in the Great Salt Lake and Utah Lake, too, shortly after tales of Bear Lake's monster surfaced in the 1860s.

Most of Utah's lake monster sightings

## Author believes there's something in the water

**H**ave you seen a lake monster? Tell Ben Radford — he won't scoff. A science-based paranormal investigator in Albuquerque, N.M., Radford has no doubt folks are seeing something in the water.

"I believe them," the author says, of those who report weird creatures in lakes. Most of these people aren't liars or hoaxsters — they have just seen something they can't explain.

"But just because you don't know what it is doesn't mean it's a monster," adds Radford, managing editor of Skeptical Inquirer science magazine and author of "Lake Monster Mysteries" (University Press of Kentucky, 2006).

Radford — who gives Utah's Bear Lake Monster a mention in his book — has investigated some of the world's best-known lake monsters, from Nessie in Loch Ness, to Ogopogo in Canada's Lake Okanagan.

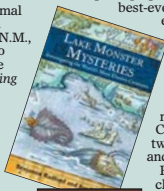
"There are dozens, if not hundreds, of lakes across the world reputed to contain mysterious unknown monsters," says Radford, who recently appeared in a "MonsterQuest" episode on The History Channel about chupacabras (a monster tale of another kind).

The investigator says he

likes to tackle those cases with the best evidence, which is why he spent nine months researching a 1977 photograph said to be the best-ever "proof" of the existence of lake monsters.

The picture supposedly shows long-necked Champ swimming in Lake Champlain, between New York and Vermont.

Radford's conclusion? "It was almost certainly a floating log," he says.



Radford

### Staying power

There are lots of unanswered questions about lake monsters, Radford says: Why hasn't one ever been caught? Why have we never found any skeletons? Why doesn't one die and wash up on shore? Descriptions of these monsters are wide-ranging, he adds. They may be 20 feet long or 150 feet long, they may be green with scales, or black with spikes down their backs.

"They vary impossibly," Radford says, so there are either several kinds of monsters out there or people are seeing things that aren't there.

Even when scientific investigations turn up no evidence of a monster in a lake, such as Loch Ness, the story doesn't die.

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## TELL US, HAVE YOU SEEN 'EM?

Inquiring minds want to know who's seen our Utah lake monsters. If you've gotten a glimpse of a graceful serpent cowering in the deep, now's your chance to tell the story. We're looking for firsthand experiences only — none of those friend-of-a-friend-of-a-friend stories. Tell us the specific details of what you saw, what the alleged monster looked like and where and when you saw it, all in a ready-to-publish format. If you have a photo, by all means share that, too.

Send your tales to Lake Monsters, c/o Life department, Standard-Examiner, P.O. Box 12790, Ogden UT 84412-2790 or e-mail bcairns@standard.net (with "lake monsters" in the subject line) — or fax 625-4299.

Please include a daytime phone number in case we need to contact you. Deadline is Aug. 18.

## Bear Lake witness saw 'humungous' creature

**F**or a man who's seen a lake monster, Brian Hirschi seems matter-of-fact. It's "only one story of dozens over the last hundred years," says Hirschi, who believes he saw the Bear Lake Monster in 2002.

Hirschi, who runs boat rentals on the lake, was alone and anchoring his tourist-toting Bear Lake Monster Boat when, as he tells in his own 2003 written account, he saw two humps in the water that quickly disappeared.

Next, he felt something bump against the bottom of the boat and then he saw "something humungous" splash out of the water, a creature about as long as the 65-foot pontoon. As the creature submerged, it made a sound like a roaring bull, he wrote, and then it resurfaced and swam quickly toward the middle of the lake.

Today, Hirschi stands by his story and says folks haven't questioned his



Brian Hirschi believes he saw the Bear Lake Monster in 2002 while anchoring his tourist-toting Bear Lake Monster Boat.

account, "not from what I've heard." What about skeptics who wonder if the story is a ploy to boost tourism? "I guess once you see it, there's no reason to think of other reasons," says the entrepreneur, who lives part of the year in Garden City and part of the

See HIRSCHI | Page 5D

## Final chapter in 'Twilight' series slightly less sanitized

**W**ho knew a book about vampires could be so, you know, creepy? From everything we'd learned about Stephenie Meyer's "Twilight" series, it seemed for all the world like a safe, light read for teens, tweens and other assorted female types. Really, when you thought about it, it was kind of cute, this storyline of a group of peace-loving "vegetarian" vampires living in — where else? — the Pacific Northwest.

Yeah, OK. So the good folks at PETA might dispute that "vegetarian" label, seeing as how it only means that these vampires have sworn off human blood; it's still open season on the cute, furry creatures of the forest.

Suit author Meyer — a Brigham Young University-educated Mormon mother of three — somehow managed to make the idea of vampires sanitizing for your protection.

The "Twilight" series follows Bella Swan, a clumsy teenage girl who moves to a small town in Washington state, where she promptly falls in love with hottie vampire Edward Cullen, a guy posing as a high-school student who turns out to be a LOT older than he tells all of these



Mark Saal  
Life at the Top

teen girls. Like, 90 years older. Talk about your candidates for the sex-offender registry.

It's all just good, clean, harmless vampire fun. That is, until last weekend, when Book 4 in the series, "Breaking Dawn at Dawn," was released.

We know this because we were home sick on Tuesday, the very same day our 18-year-old daughter received her copy of the new book from Amazon.com. No sooner had the 756-page tome arrived than she announced, "I'll be in my room reading for the next 24 hours." Which was fine with us, because we really needed some quiet convalescing time.

Silly us.

The squeals and shouts began almost immediately, as various plot twists and turns unveiled themselves to our daughter. Not to men-

tion the hourly updates, wherein she would burst into our room and excitedly exclaim: "Edward and Bella are getting married!" or "Jacob's gay!" or "Goodbye, Daddy. I've met a 40-year-old man with a Harley and tattoos over 80 percent of his body and I'm running away to live in sin."

OK, she didn't actually say that last one, but truthfully — even if this makes us a bad parent for admitting it — by about 4 p.m. we were really hoping those were going to be the next words out of her mouth. Anything to stop the continuing saga of Edward and Bella.

**ATTENTION: SPOILER ALERT!** If you are one of the six remaining teenage girls on the planet who has not yet read the new book, stop reading this column at once. Because we're about to give away a crucial piece of the plot with this next part of our story ...

So anyway, at dinnertime our daughter came into our room to triumphantly announce: "Bella's pregnant!"

The tramp. Isn't she still in high school?

"It's OK," our daughter reassured us. "Edward and Bella are married."

Oh, well, yes. That changes everything. Because we can certainly see how MARRYING AN UNDEAD CORPSE BEFORE CONSUMMATING THE RELATIONSHIP makes it so much better.

Although, actually, that is one of the nice things about the "Twilight" series. It's fairly refreshing to see a story about a couple of high-school teenagers — well, technically, one teen and one centenarian — who aren't having all sorts of premarital S-E-X.

But they do have the post-marital variety, at least once, and that results in the rabbit dying. (Those "veganpires" probably sucked all the blood out of the poor little bunny.)

And here's where the creepiness factor gets cranked up to 11. The fetus, being half-vampire, is literally sucking the lifeblood out of Bella. So human mommy starts drinking blood to satisfy the little nipper's cravings. Ewww.

And then, a few weeks later, at full term (OK, this would explain why a lot of grown mothers are so into this series — a one-month pregnancy probably sounds pretty darn sweet to a woman with three or four kids), the baby comes into the world

by CLAWING AND CHEWING ITS WAY OUT OF THE WOMB, a la those "Alien" movies with Sigourney Weaver. Double ewwww.

It's all very graphic, with flailing and screaming and ribs breaking and spines snapping and blood being vomited all over the place.

Also, once out of the womb, the brand new bundle of joy immediately jumps at a lifeless mommy, biting her on the breast, for which daddy immediately scolds her: "Baby vampire! Let mommy Rest in Peace."

It's all just a bit too darkly disturbing for our tastes, and we're a 48-year-old hardened print journalist. You parents out there might want to read the book yourselves before deciding whether to allow your younger teens to tackle this one.

Although, on the bright side, we can report that we did peek at the final chapter of the book. And the good news is, apparently, they all live happily ever after.

Well, OK, they're vampires. So while the "ever after" part is certainly accurate, you can't exactly call it "living."

Tell Saal he's "ignert" at 625-4272 or msaal@standard.net.

# Monsters

From 1D

ings date to this period, Carter says, and spotting these creatures became a sort of competition between the lakes and their neighboring communities.

"I think nobody wanted to be left out," he says.

The monster "look": The beasts are commonly described as resembling a serpent, snake or eel, says Linda Dunning of Salt Lake City, author of "Lost Landscapes" (Cedar Fort, Inc., 2007), but her book describes a wide variety of other appearances.

"Part dragon, part bear, part fish" is how two cowboys described the Bear Lake Monster in 1907, but a pair of brothers, in 1870, claimed the creature had a head like a walrus, "minus the tusks."

The Great Salt Lake has spawned serpents and the aforementioned crocodile-type monster, as detailed in Dunning's book, while Utah Lake's beasts included one with a mouth like an alligator and another snake-style beast with a greyhound head and "wicked-looking black eyes."

Colorations: Take your pick. Accounts from newspapers or books relate a creature ranging from cream-colored to brown to green in Bear Lake. Then there's that yellow creature in Utah Lake, with the black spots.

The monsters' skin is sometimes smooth and shiny, sometimes scaly or sometimes covered with fur, like an otter or seal.

Sound effects: A lion-like roar rumbled forth from a strange animal swimming in Utah Lake in 1880, according to an article Carter wrote on the beasts for Provo's Daily Herald.

When boat operator Hirschi recalled his 2002 encounter with the Bear Lake Monster for the press in 2004, he explained: "At first it made low throaty rumbling snarls and then finally a terrible squeal like a roaring bull as it submerged back into the water."

Speed demons: Most accounts show that Utah's lake monsters don't dilly-dally; one man observing the Bear Lake Monster in the 1860s, said, as recounted in Dunning's book, that he "never saw a locomotive travel faster ... it made a mile a minute, easy."

Monster "highway": Rumors have abounded over the years

about underground sea canals that allowed monsters to move from one lake to another — in the state, or even the world, says Dunning.

That meant the Bear Lake Monster could pop up in the Great Salt Lake, or maybe, Dunning says, make a jaunt to visit her "cousins" in Lake Champlain or even Loch Ness.

Friend or foe?: Let's just say we haven't read any accounts of Isabelle eating raspberries out of the hands of Bear Lake picnickers. But there are stories blaming her for the disappearance of a horse or two, of 20 sheep — and a roll of barbed wire.

At Fish Lake, says Dunning's book, there's an American Indian tale about a lake monster snatching an infant while the child's mother gathered berries along the shore. Carter has written of two boys frightened by a Utah Lake monster, in 1880, which followed them to shore and made "savagely gestures."

Photo album: Sorry, folks, it's empty. Unlike Loch Ness, there are no blurry photos of any of Utah's lake monsters, Carter says, since most sightings occurred before cameras were readily available.

Besides, he quips, "When you're running for your life, it's hard to stop and take a photograph."

Trapping creatures: Sorry again, lake monsters are an elusive lot — not that folks haven't tried to catch them. Even pioneer leader Brigham Young volunteered the use of his own rope for an 1868 attempt at nabbing the Bear Lake Monster with a big hook and some mutton for bait, says historian Will Bagley of Salt Lake City. Alas, no luck.

Trapping tourists: Of all of Utah's monsters, the Bear Lake Monster has been capitalized on most as a tourist draw, Carter says.

The tourism bureau hands out fliers on the monster, there's a sign about her posted on a lake-shore walkway in Garden City and tourists can gobble up "Bear Lake Monster" bacon cheeseburgers at the Bear Lake Motor Lodge.

Even if you don't see the actual monster, you might at least spot the Bear Lake Monster Boat, a green monster-shaped pontoon sitting in a marina parking lot.

The craft hasn't taken tourists out in recent years, Hirschi says — turns out even lake monsters can't bear regulatory "red tape" and high operating costs.

## BELIEVE IT, OR NOT

Do you believe in lake monsters?

YES ... says Will Bagley, a Salt Lake City historian and author, who believes anything is possible. "Just because they can't find it doesn't mean it's not there," says Bagley, who claims that he and two other historians saw a "baby" lake monster in 2006 swimming in Enterprise Dam, in southwestern Utah.

NO ... says Richard Carter, a Springville historian, who calls lake monsters the stuff of folklore. "To me, they just seem impossible," he says.

MAYBE ... says Benjamin Radford, managing editor of Skeptical Inquirer magazine and a lake-monster investigator. "I'd love there to be something there," Radford says, but at the same time, "I need evidence, I need proof. Give me more than a fuzzy photo and 150 people who say they saw something in the lake."

## Something

From 1D

The key to understanding lake monsters is not in the lakes themselves, but in the people who see them," Radford says. "And there will always be a fresh supply of people who see them."

### Love a mystery

Lake monsters are legends and the interesting thing about legends is they straddle the border between fiction and nonfiction, says Lisa Gabbert, a Utah State University folklorist.

Tales of dragons or vampires are clearly recognized as fantasy, the folklorist and English professor says, but legends are different.

"They bring up essentially an irrational idea and purport it to be true," says Gabbert, who's researched stories of lake monster Sharlie, said to live in Idaho's Payette Lake, north of Boise.

Legends are also rooted in mystery, Gabbert says, and, "People like the idea that life contains a little bit of mystery."

## Hirschi

From 1D

year in Logan.

As for scientists failing to find any actual lake monster, Hirschi says Bear Lake is a big lake — 100 square miles — and more than 200 feet deep in places.

Even if folks were searching with sonar, they can only see a small part of the



Gabbert

If lake monsters seem scary, it's not because they're violent — they rarely kill or eat people, Gabbert says — but because

they elude science. Scientists can find tiny brine shrimp in the Great Salt Lake "so you would think they could detect a lake monster," she says. "It challenges our belief that science can know everything."

The lakes these monsters live in share similarities, she says. They tend to be cold or dark and may be rumored to be "bottomless" or house underground caves, which would explain why we can't find the monsters, Gabbert says.

As a scientist, Radford says, he must approach lake monsters with an open mind.

If they do exist, we need to know that, he says. If they don't, then why are people seeing things that don't exist?

"To my mind, it's fascinating either way," he says.

— Becky Cairns

lake at one time, he says. Hirschi bought the Bear Lake Monster Boat from the late Conrad Nebeker, a Ogden physician who created the craft in 1997. Hirschi wrote that perhaps the monster appeared because it saw the boat and was perhaps "confusing it for another of its species."

Although he hasn't seen the monster again, Hirschi says he's "always looking, scanning the water."

— Becky Cairns

# Jet packs getting closer to reality

Lots of people fall asleep at night, and in their dreams they are able to fly like Superman. If you've ever had a dream like that, you know it feels great. The freedom is amazing.

So it's not hard to understand why the idea of a jet pack is so appealing. Imagine being able to put on some kind of backpack and being able to fly wherever you want. We see it in lots of movies. It's easy to imagine. Unfortunately, it has been very hard to turn this concept into reality.

But the attempts have been fascinating. The first and most famous attempt is called the Bell Rocket

Bell. It and its descendants do allow a person to put on a backpack and fly.

The way it works is simple. On your back are three tanks. One is filled with pressurized nitrogen. The other two hold highly concentrated hydrogen peroxide. This is not the stuff you buy at the drug store. Drugstore hydrogen peroxide is almost all water. Purified hydrogen peroxide is powerful stuff, and it makes a very good fuel.

The pressurized nitrogen is there to push the hydrogen peroxide out of the other tanks. The hydrogen peroxide runs through a pipe and hits a silver mesh catalyst. When it hits the silver, the hydrogen peroxide immediately turns into oxygen and water. The water flashes into high pressure steam because of the reaction's heat. The steam is then directed out two nozzles to create thrust. The pilot controls the thrust with a hand grip, and controls the direction of the thrust by moving his or her body. An experienced pilot makes flying with a rocket belt look incredibly easy.

This system works great. People have flown it in James Bond movies and Super Bowl appearances. The only problem is that every flight lasts less than a minute, because the backpack runs out of fuel. You just can't put enough hydrogen peroxide on your back to fly for very long.

How do you get more range from the same amount of fuel? You have to use some kind of engine to move a whole lot of air, rather than using direct rocket-like thrust. There are two ways to move a lot of air: propellers and jet engines. If you think about it, you can see why. To create thrust, you use that classic law of motion: "to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." So if you use a propeller or a fan to move air, you can take advantage of the reaction to that air's motion. Instead of carrying all of the "action" in your backpack, you take advantage of the air around you and move it with the propeller.

Now we are seeing people trying to fit propellers and jets into backpacks. There have been several attempts at this, the latest premiering at the 2008 Oshkosh air show. It's called the Martin Jetpack.

The Jetpack is a completely different animal. Instead of a lightweight backpack, this machine weighs 250 pounds. It has a 200-horsepower engine powering two propellers. To understand how big this engine is,

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