

## GRAB BAG

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## Wild Side

Genus: *Lepus americanus*  
Snowshoe hare

By LYNETTE RAE MCADAMS

humans.

Found throughout Canada and the northern United States, as well as at high elevations in all three primary American mountain ranges (the Appalachians, the Rockies, and the Sierra Nevadas), the snowshoe hare is a true lover of a cold winter climate.

Named for its large hind feet, which allow it to hop atop deep snow without sinking, this handsome hare can grow to be 16 inches tall and weigh up to 4 pounds. Though it clearly favors habitats marked by extreme-low temperatures, it makes exceptions for the Washington and Oregon coastlines, illustrating a fact well-known to all the best creatures of the animal kingdom: life is simply better at the beach.

Lightning quick and very nimble, *L. americanus* can leap up to 10 feet and run (or hop quickly) at speeds approaching 30 mph — a useful skill when just about everything wants to have you for dinner. The predator list for this small, furry herbivore is a lengthy one, and includes coyotes, eagles, hawks, owls, wolves, foxes, mountain lions, weasels, domestic dogs and, of course,

As a defense, hares have the uncanny ability to hold as still as a statue, the only visible motion being the rapid twitching of the nose. Additionally, the Snowshoe's unique coat gives it the advantage of camouflage — the dense, insulating fur turns white in the winter, masking against a snowy backdrop, then switches to a ruddy brown for spring and summer.

Here in the Columbia-Pacific region, where it seldom snows, the hare's fur remains russet — a nice match for the year-round temperate climate.

Like rabbits, hares are incredible breeders, with females bearing up to three litters per year, each one with as many as eight young, called leverets.

Having twin uteri, a mother hare is able to become pregnant with a second litter even before giving birth to the first. Unlike rabbits, which are born blind and furless, hares can hop within a day of their arrival, and survive on their own in as little as a month.

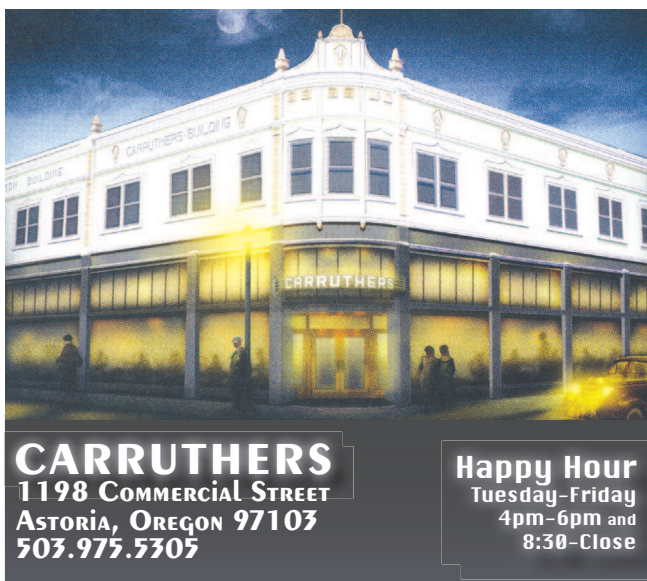
The phrase, "mad as a March hare," was coined in English literature dating from the 16th century and further popularized by works like Lewis Carroll's, "Alice in Wonder-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

*Lepus americanus*, the Snowshoe hare, is a common sight throughout the forests and grasslands of the Columbia-Pacific region. In snowy environments, its signature fur coat turns a brilliant white; but here along the coast, it remains brown year-round.

land." It was derived from observation of a hare's bizarre behavior during the month of March, when breeding season is in full force.



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BOOKMONGER

## Trilogy wraps up just in time

By BARBARA LLOYD  
MCMICHAEL

Fans of Randy Henderson's brand of urban fantasy need wait no longer — the third volume of his Familia Arcana trilogy has just arrived in bookstores. Readers who became acquainted with necromancer Finn Gramaraye in the previous books, "Finn Fancy Necromancy" and "Bigfootloose and Finn Fancy Free," can get their final dose of Henderson's unique mash-up of action-oriented fantasy, puns and family dysfunction in "Smells Like Finn Spirit."

In the first two installments of this series, after getting framed for a crime he didn't commit and being exiled to the Fey Realms for a quarter century, Finn returns to his family and hopes to pick up normal life where he left off. That means learning how to navigate the internet, bingeing on 25 years of missed pop culture, and eating his fill of pizza. But there are a few complications that get in the way

**Smells Like Finn Spirit**  
— Randy Henderson  
Tor Books — 448 pp  
— \$29.99

of his readjustment to life in the "mundie" (human) world.

Finn's own family is arcana, each member endowed with some sort of supernatural power. But they've been going through a rough patch lately: his father is insane, his younger brother has just become a werewolf, his other siblings are emotional basket cases, and his grandfather turns out to be evil.

To top it off — literally — the disembodied consciousness of a fey prince is trapped inside Finn's head through an unfortunate stroke of dark magic.

This, understandably, intrudes upon Finn's budding romance with Dawn, the mundie girl-next-door from his childhood who has grown up to become a free-spirited musician.

Now, in "Smells Like Teen Spirit," Finn realizes that his grandfather is plotting once again to use him as a conduit for a devastating brand of magic that will trigger a war between worlds — unless Finn can patch together an alliance of dryads, druids, Sasquatches, gnomes, family members, and the obnoxious fellow in his head — and figure out a way to ward off Armageddon.

Henderson sets this story in a Cascadia brushed with a bit of enchanted dust. Not unlike pinballs, his characters carom around real-life landmarks: the Seattle Center and Seattle Public Library, Maryhill's Stonehenge, The Dalles Dam and the Elwha River serve as rendezvous points and portals to other worlds.

Even for those of us who have read the previous books, the madcap pace of this one is unforgiving — there are too many names and shifting relationships to be able to follow along coherently. Individual scenes are talky, violent and complex.

