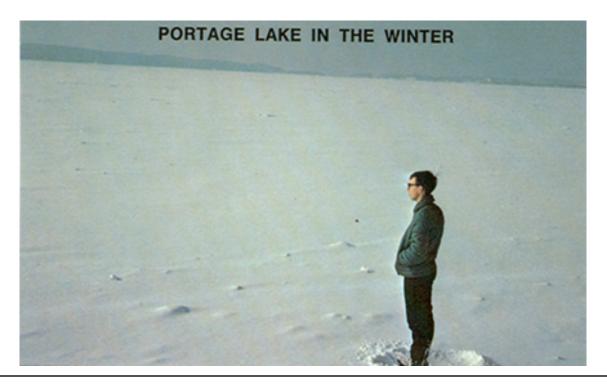
Lake Portage



Buddy walked out onto the frozen surface until he reached the point where he had spotted the Lake Portage monster last summer. Oh sure, everyone in town had ridiculed him when he reported it, but he knew what he'd seen. It was a monster! Like the cryptozoological Nessie of Loch Ness, it measured nearly 15 meters in length, had two humps atop its back, four flipper-like legs, a tail and a snakelike head, much like the plesiosaur of the Mesozoic Era. But the Portage monster's head also featured a gaping red mouth that spat fire, plus two quivering antennae just above the creature's horrific compound eyes that emitted lethal W-rays. Buddy stomped irritably on the snow. He knew what he'd seen! What he didn't know, however, was that the vibration of his foot stomping carried a long way underwater, all the way to the hidden lair of the Giant Mutant Coelacanth. Within seconds, the fiendish fish had sped through the water to a spot directly underneath Buddy. Then it hawked a torrent of fire, melting a ring of ice around its prey. With a yelp of surprise, the unlucky lad instantly sank beneath the lake's surface. On the bright side, the Giant Mutant Coelacanth didn't have to worry about supper for the next few nights.