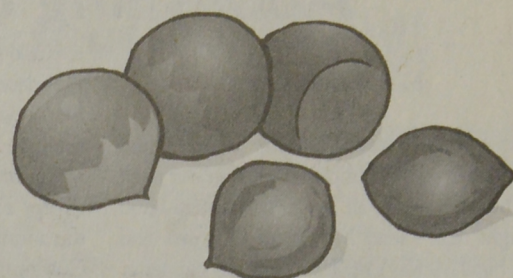




...nuts



Nobel prize spoof given for dubious achievements

Founder of the Apostrophe Protection Society honoured

BOSTON (AP) If airtight underwear someday makes its way onto the shelves of America's department stores, thank Buck Weimer.

Seven years ago, Weimer came up with the idea of "Under-Ease" shorts, complete with a flatulence filter.

Weimer, 62, and a dozen other researchers, inventors and scientists received the 2001 Ig Nobel Prize on Thursday night for their unique, occasionally head-scratching, and often bizarre contributions to the world.

The awards, bestowed each year by actual Nobel Prize winners, are granted for work that "cannot or should not be reproduced."

Weimer, no stranger to humorous pokes at his product with the motto: "Wear them for the ones you love", stresses that Under-Ease is a serious medical product.

"While we appreciate the humor - and get a lot of that - we recognize that it's a medical product, and it's for people in

need," he said. "We believe we're certainly fulfilling a service here."

The awards ceremony is a raucous event that is as absurd as the real Nobel Prize ceremony is august.

Nobel Prizes are the world's most coveted award for distinguished and groundbreaking discoveries.

The Ig Nobel recipients, by contrast, distinguish themselves in a slightly different fashion, according to Marc Abrahams, the editor of the Annals of Improbable Research, the humor science magazine that hosted the awards.

"There are many prizes in the world for people who are the best at something ... There are a few prizes for the worst things. But most people are somewhere in between, and there's nothing for them," he said. "That's why there's the Ig Nobel Prizes. It's for the great muddle in the middle, where most of us are, most of the time."

At this year's ceremony at Harvard's Saunders Theater, a couple was married in a 60-second ceremony with chanting ushers wearing Josef Stalin masks - a nod to one of this year's recipients, Viliumas Malinauskus, creator of the "Stalin World" theme park in Lithuania.

Malinauskus, a former wrestling

champion whose fortune in the fungus market has earned him the nickname "The Mushroom King," was one of seven recipients on hand to receive their prizes.

"He most definitely has a sense of humor," Abrahams said.

Dr. Peter Barss of McGill University will be honored for his article "Injuries Due to Falling Coconuts," published in the Journal of Trauma in 1984.

Lawrence Sherman of Miami University in Ohio received an award for his "influential research report" titled "An Ecological Study of Glee in Small Groups of Preschool Children."

The English founder of the Apostrophe Protection Society (for his efforts to protect, promote, and defend the differences between plural and possessive) and the Australian man who this year applied for, and received, a patent for the wheel, delivered their acceptance speeches by videotape.

David Schmidt, an assistant professor of mechanical and industrial engineering at the University of Massachusetts, is receiving an award for discovering that shower curtains billow inwards because of air currents caused by water spray, a subject he tackled after reading a billowing debate in a newspaper column.

Portland bans snakes from public property

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) The Portland City Council this week passed a new law prohibiting the display of snakes on or anywhere near public property.

Councilors believe the mere presence of snakes, especially big ones, poses a threat to public safety. They're concerned, in particular, about pedestrians bolting into the street to avoid a snake.

"These things scare the bejezus out of people," said the chairman of the city's Public Safety Committee. "Someone asked me if I'm afraid of them. Yes, I am."

The new ordinance states "no person shall display, transport outside a container or otherwise handle a snake" on or within 25 feet of public property. Circuses and other organized events approved by the city are exempted. Violators can be fined as much as \$500.

Snake owners and breeders say the new

rules are unnecessary and discriminatory. They say most snakes in captivity, even ones measuring 18 feet or more, are docile.

"We've totally sensationalized the danger of these things," said Kevin McCurley, owner of New England Reptile Distributors Inc. "Laws like this are being dictated by people who don't know anything about snakes."

"What Portland's saying is, 'It's big and scary so you can't show it,'" McCurley said. "This is not justified."

Mikala Trafton and her friends sometimes take their pet anacondas to the Old Port, laying the snakes in a park and drawing "oohs" and "aahs" and few "ughs" from passers-by.

Trafton, a senior at a local high school, said she understands some people are repulsed by snakes. But that's no reason to ban them from public, she said.

"I just find snakes really beautiful," she said.

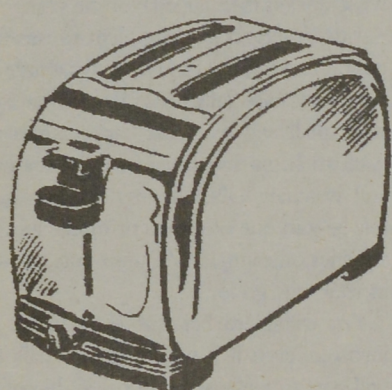
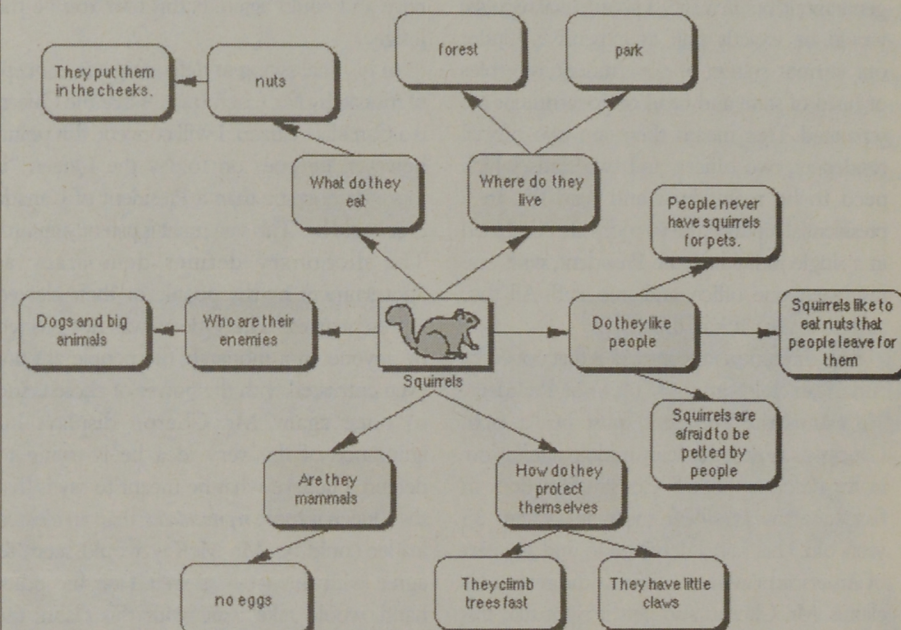
UNB SQUIRRELS release memo

Skip Thompson

In an unprecedented move, Students for the Quest of Undeniably Insane and Ridiculously Reckless Examples of Legendary Sliding (SQUIRRELS) have

issued the following memo detailing the inner workings of the club.

SQUIRRELS, well-recognized as UNB's only official sliding club, continues to deny that the organization has anything to do with real squirrels.



Everyone loves a good toaster.

Why do we bite people who bite people to show that biting people is wrong?

LONDON (AP) A teacher was ordered Monday to pay 30 pounds (dlrs 45) compensation for biting the arm of a 3-year-old pupil after he had bitten another pupil.

Mary-Ann Woodeson, 49, who has since resigned from the Stretton School in Norwich, admitted assaulting the boy in July. Her attorney, Jonathan Brock, said it was

a "reckless act" but intended only to make the child "appreciate it was not suitable behavior."

The boy suffered bruising and swelling from the bite, prosecutors said.

Woodeson, who has arthritis and appeared in court in a wheelchair, was placed on conditional discharge (probation) for 12 months.

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