

## **DARWIN AWARD WINNER FOR 1997 ANNOUNCED!**

You all know about the Darwin Awards -It's an annual honor given to the person who did the gene pool the biggest service by killing themselves in the most extraordinarily stupid way.

The 1995 winner was the fellow who was killed by a Coke machine which toppled over on top of him as he was attempting to tip a free soda out of it. In 1996 the winner was an airforce sergeant who attached a JATO unit to his car and crashed into a cliff several hundred feet above the roadbed.

And now, the 1997 winner: Larry Waters of Los Angeles—one of the few Darwin winners to survive his award winning accomplishment.

Larry's boyhood dream was to fly. When he graduated from high school, he joined the Air Force in hopes of becoming a pilot. Unfortunately, poor eyesight disqualified him. When he was finally discharged, he had to satisfy himself with watching jets fly over his back yard.

One day, Larry, had a bright idea. He decided to fly. He went to the local Army-Navy surplus store and purchased 45 weather balloons and several tanks of helium. The weather balloons, when fully inflated, would measure more than four feet across.

Back home, Larry securely strapped the balloons to his sturdy lawn chair. He anchored the chair to the bumper of his jeep and inflated the balloons with the helium. He climbed on for a test while it was still only a few feet above the ground.

Satisfied it would work, Larry packed several sandwiches and a six-pack of Miller Lite, loaded his pellet gun—figuring he could pop a few balloons when it was time to descend—and went back to the floating lawn chair. He tied himself in, along with his pellet gun and provisions. Larry's plan was to lazily float up to a height of about 30 feet above his back yard after severing the anchor and in a few hours come back down.

Things didn't quite work out that way. When he cut the cord anchoring the lawn chair to his jeep, he didn't float lazily up to 30 or so feet. Instead he streaked into the LA sky as if shot from a cannon. He didn't level off at 30 feet, nor did he level off at 100 feet. After climbing and climbing, he leveled off at 11,000 feet. At that height he couldn't risk shooting any of the balloons, lest he unbalance the load and really find himself in trouble. So he stayed there, drifting, cold and frightened, for more than 14 hours.

Then he really got in trouble. He found himself drifting into the primary approach corridor of Los Angeles International Airport. A United pilot first spotted Larry. He radioed the tower and described passing a guy in a lawn chair with a gun. Radar confirmed the existence of an object floating 11,000 feet above the airport.

LAX emergency procedures swung into full alert and a helicopter was dispatched to investigate. LAX is right on the ocean. Night was falling and the offshore breeze began to

flow. It carried Larry out to sea with the helicopter in hot pursuit. Several miles out, the helicopter caught up with Larry. Once the crew determined that Larry was not dangerous, they attempted to close in for a rescue but the draft from the blades would push Larry away whenever they neared.

Finally, the helicopter ascended to a position several hundred feet above Larry and lowered a rescue line. Larry snagged the line and was hauled back to shore. The difficult maneuver was flawlessly executed by the helicopter crew.

As soon as Larry was hauled to earth, he was arrested by waiting members of the LAPD for violating LAX airspace. As he was led away in handcuffs, a reporter dispatched to cover the daring rescue asked why he had done it. Larry stopped, turned and replied nonchalantly, "A man can't just sit around."

Let hear it for Larry Walters, the 1997 Darwin Award Winner!

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1. The average cost of rehabilitating a seal after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska was \$80,000. At a special ceremony, two of the most expensively saved animals were released back into the wild amid cheers and applause from onlookers. A minute later they were both eaten by a killer whale.
  2. A psychology student in New York rented out her spare room to a carpenter in order to nag him constantly and study his reactions. After weeks of needling, he snapped and beat her repeatedly with an axe leaving her mentally retarded.
  3. In 1992, Frank Perkins of Los Angeles made an attempt on the world flagpole-sitting record. Suffering from the flu he came down eight hours short of the 400 day record, his sponsor had gone bust, his girlfriend had left him and his phone and electricity had been cut off.
  4. A woman came home to find her husband in the kitchen, shaking frantically with what looked like a wire running from his waist towards the electric kettle. Intending to jolt him away from the deadly current she whacked him with a handy plank of wood by the back door, breaking his arm in two places. Till that moment he had been happily listening to his walkman.
  5. Two animal rights protesters were protesting at the cruelty of sending pigs to a slaughterhouse in Bonn. Suddenly the pigs, all two thousand of them, escaped through a broken fence and stampeded, trampling the two hapless protesters to death.

And the capper\*

6. Iraqi terrorist, Khay Rahnajet, didn't pay enough postage on a letter bomb. It came back with "return to sender" stamped on it. Forgetting it was the bomb, he opened it and was blown to bits.

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**Almost DARWIN Award Winners (These are not DARWIN Award Winners, but they are pretty close...)**

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And for the Main Course...

A man in Taormina, Italy was hospitalized after swallowing 46 teaspoons, 2 cigarette lighters, and a pair of salad tongs.

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The Getaway

A man walked in to a Topeka, Kansas Kwik Shop, and asked for all the money in the cash drawer. Apparently, the take was too small, so he tied up the store clerk and worked the counter himself for three hours until police showed up and grabbed him.

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Do-It-Yourself Brain Surgery?!

In Ohio, an unidentified man in his late twenties walked into a police station with a 9-inch wire protruding from his forehead and calmly asked officers to give him an X-ray to help him find his brain, which he claimed had been stolen. Police were shocked to learn that the man had drilled a 6-inch deep hole in his skull with a Black & Decker power drill and had stuck the wire in to try and find the missing brain.

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Have I Got A Deal for You!

More than 600 people in Italy wanted to ride in a spaceship badly enough to pay \$10,000 a piece for the first tourist flight to Mars. According to the Italian police, the would-be space travelers were told to spend their "next vacation on Mars, amid the splendors of ruined temples and painted deserts. Ride a Martian camel from oasis to oasis and enjoy the incredible Martian sunsets. Explore mysterious canals and marvel at the views. Trips to the moon also available." Authorities believe that the con men running this scam made off with over six million dollars...

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Too Well-Educated

In Medford, Oregon, a 27-year-old jobless man with an MBA blamed his college degree for his murder of three people. "There are too many business grads out there," he said. "If I had chosen another field, all this may not have happened..."

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### Did I Say That?!

Police in Los Angeles had good luck with a robbery suspect who just couldn't control himself during a lineup. When detectives asked each man in the lineup to repeat the words, "Give me all your money or I'll shoot," the man shouted, "That's not what I said!"

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### Ouch, That Smarts!

A bank robber in Virginia Beach got a nasty surprise when a dye pack designed to mark stolen money exploded in his Fruit-of-the-Looms. The robber apparently stuffed the loot down the front of his pants as he was running out the door. "He was seen hopping and jumping around," said police spokesman Mike Carey, "with an explosion taking place inside his pants." Police have the man's charred trousers in custody...

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### Are We Not Communicating?

A man spoke frantically into the phone: "My wife is pregnant and her contractions are only two minutes apart!" "Is this her first child?" the doctor asked. "No, you idiot!" the man shouted. "This is her husband!"

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...Not the Sharpest Knife in the Drawer! In Modesto, CA, Steven Richard King was arrested for trying to hold up a Bank of America branch without a weapon. King used a thumb and a finger to simulate a gun, but unfortunately, he failed to keep his hand in his pocket. Hmm...wonder what he uses for a knife?

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### **Subject: Dumb Criminals**

When a man attempted to siphon gasoline from a motor home parked on a Seattle street, he got much more than he bargained for. Police arrived at the scene to find an ill man curled up next to a motor home near spilled sewage. A police spokesman said that the man admitted to trying to steal gasoline and plugged his hose into the motor home's sewage tank by mistake. The owner of the vehicle declined to press charges, saying that it was the best laugh he'd ever had.

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A woman was reporting her car as stolen, and mentioned that there was a car phone in it. The policeman taking the report called the phone and told the guy that answered that he had read the ad in the newspaper and wanted to buy the car. They arranged to meet, and the thief was arrested.

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David Posman, 33, was arrested recently in Providence, R.I., after allegedly knocking out an armored car driver and stealing the closest four bags of money. It turned out they contained \$800 in PENNIES, weighed 30 pounds each, and slowed him to a stagger during his getaway so that police officers easily jumped him from behind.

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The Belgium news agency Belga reported in November that a man suspected of robbing a jewelry store in Liege said he couldn't have done it because he was busy breaking into a school at the same time. Police then arrested him for breaking into the school.

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Drug-possession defendant Christopher Johns, on trial in March in Pontiac, Michigan, said he had been searched without a warrant. The prosecutor said the officer didn't need a warrant because a "bulge" in Christopher's jacket could have been a gun. Nonsense, said Christopher, who happened to be wearing the same jacket that day in court. He handed it over so the judge could see it. The judge discovered a packet of cocaine in the pocket and laughed so hard he required a five-minute recess to compose himself.

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Oklahoma City - Dennis Newton was on trial for the armed robbery of a convenience store in a district court this week when he fired his lawyer. Assistant district attorney Larry Jones said Newton, 47, was doing a fair job of defending himself until the store manager testified that Newton was the robber. Newton jumped up, accused the woman of lying and then said, "I should of blown your [expletive] head off." The defendant paused, then quickly added, "- if I'd been the one that was there." The jury took 20 minutes to convict Newton and recommend a 30-year sentence.

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R.C. Gaitlin, 21, walked up to two patrol officers who were showing their squad car computer equipment to children in a Detroit neighborhood. When he asked how the system worked, the officers asked him for a sample piece of identification. Gaitlin gave them his driver's license, they entered it into the computer, and moments later they arrested Gaitlin because information on the screen showed that Gaitlin was wanted for a two-year-old armed robbery in St. Louis, Missouri.

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Subject: More Darwin Awards

For those of you who don't know about the Darwin Awards; they are awarded to people who help the human race by not breeding and (generally) killing themselves off.

DARWIN AWARD CANDIDATES

BUXTON, N.C. A man died on a beach when an 8-foot-deep hole he had dug into the sand caved in as he sat inside it. Beachgoers said Daniel Jones, 21, dug the hole for fun, or protection from the wind, and had been sitting in a beach chair at the bottom Thursday afternoon when it collapsed, burying him beneath 5 feet of sand. People on the beach on the Outer Banks used their hands and shovels, trying to claw their way to Jones, a resident of Woodbridge, Va., but could not reach him. It took rescue workers using heavy equipment almost an hour to free him while about 200 people looked on.

Jones was pronounced dead at a hospital. You just wouldn't believe the outpouring of concern, people digging with their hands, using pails from kids," Dare County Sheriff Bert Austin said.

In February, Santiago Alvarado, 24, was killed in Lompoc, Calif., as he fell face-first through the ceiling of a bicycle shop he was burglarizing.

Death was caused when the large flashlight he had placed in his mouth (to keep his hands free) crammed against the base of his skull as he hit the floor. According to police in Dahlonaga, Ga., ROTC cadet Nick Berrena, 20, was stabbed to death in January by fellow cadet Jeffrey Hoffman, 23, who was trying to prove that a knife could not penetrate the flak vest Berrena was wearing.

Sylvester Briddell, Jr., 26, was killed in February in Selbyville, Del., As he won a bet with friends who said he would not put a revolver loaded with four bullets into his mouth and pull the trigger.

In February, according to police in Windsor, Ont., Daniel Kolta, 27, and Randy Taylor, 33, died in a head-on collision, thus earning a tie in the game of chicken they were playing with their snowmobiles.

In October, a 49-year-old San Francisco stockbroker, who "totally zoned when he ran," according to his wife, accidentally jogged off of a 200-foot-high cliff on his daily run. In September in Detroit, a 41-year-old man got stuck and drowned in two feet of water after squeezing headfirst through an 18-inch-wide sewer grate to retrieve his car keys. In September, a 7-year-old boy fell off a 100-foot-high bluff near Ozark, Ark., after he lost his grip swinging on a cross that marked the spot where another person had fallen to his death in 1990.

#### DARWIN AWARD WANNA-BE'S

In Guthrie, Okla., in October, Jason Heck tried to kill a millipede with a shot from his .22-caliber rifle, but the bullet ricocheted off a rock near the hole and hit pal Antonio Martinez in the head, fracturing his skull.

In Elyria, Ohio, in October, Martyn Eskins, attempting to clean out Cobwebs in his basement, declined to use a broom in favor of a propane torch and caused a fire that burned the first and second floors of his house.

Paul Stiller, 47, was hospitalized in Andover Township, N.J., in September, and his wife Bonnie was also injured, by a quarter-stick of dynamite that blew up in their car. While driving around at 2 a.m., the bored couple lit the dynamite and tried to toss it out the window to see what would happen, but they apparently failed to notice that the window was closed.

Taking "Amateur Night" Too Far: In Betulia, Colombia, an annual festival in November includes five days of amateur bullfighting. This year, no bull was killed, but dozens of matadors were injured, including one gored in the head and one Bobbittized. Said one participant, "It's just one bull against [a town of] a thousand morons." These are not DARWIN Award Winners, but they are pretty close...

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New candidates for the Darwin Award (courtesy of Mike B.). [note: for neophytes, the Darwin Award is given to the person(s) who do their best to improve the overall human gene pool by removing themselves from contention.....]

[1] Los Angeles, CA. Ani Saduki, 33, and his brother decided to remove a bees nest from a shed on their property with the aid of a pineapple. A pineapple is an illegal firecracker which is the explosive equivalent of one-half stick of dynamite. They ignited the fuse and retreated to watch from inside their home, behind a window some 10 feet away from the hive and shed.

The concussion of the explosion shattered the window inwards, seriously lacerating Ani. Deciding Mr. Saduki needed stitches, the brothers headed out to go to a nearby hospital. While walking towards their car, Ani was stung three times by the surviving bees. Unbeknownst to either brother, Ani was allergic to bee venom, and died of suffocation enroute to the hospital.

[2] A Queensland, Australia, man, 63, and his female companion, 64, were driving along the Newell Highway near Moree, in Northwestern New South Wales on Wednesday night, police said. Their car crashed into the side of a fully laden, 600 meter long train at a level crossing (a little harder to miss than the side of a barn).

The vehicle became wedged between the second last and last carriages and was dragged sideways beside the track as the train continued towards Moree, a police spokeswoman said. After being carried more than a kilometer and a half, they approached an unfenced bridge with a 10 meter drop, the spokeswoman said. Moments before they reached the precipice, the car was struck by a pylon, dislodged from the train and spun several times.

When it came to rest, the pair managed to free themselves from the wreck with minor bruising and the man set off along the railway line for help. But he slipped on the bridge and fell to his death.

[3] Phillipsburg, NJ. An unidentified 29 year old male choked to death on a sequined pastie he had orally removed from an exotic dancer at a local establishment. "I didn't think he was going to eat it," the dancer identified only as "Ginger" said, adding "He was really drunk."

[4] In February, according to police in Windsor, Ont., Daniel Kolta, 27, and Randy Taylor, 33, died in a head-on collision, thus earning a tie in the game of chicken they were playing with their snowmobiles.

[5] MOSCOW, Russia - A drunk security man asked a colleague at the Moscow bank they were guarding to stab his bullet-proof vest to see if it would protected him against a knife attack. It didn't, and the 25-year-old guard died of a heart wound. (It's good to see the Russians getting into the spirit of the Darwin Awards.)

[6] In France, Jacques LeFevrier left nothing to chance when he decided to commit suicide. He stood at the top of a tall cliff and tied a noose around his neck. He tied the other end of the rope to a large rock. He drank some poison and set fire to his clothes. He even tried to shoot himself at the last moment. He jumped and fired the pistol.

The bullet missed him completely and cut through the rope above him. Free of the threat of hanging, he plunged into the sea. The sudden dunking extinguished the flames and made him vomit the poison. He was dragged out of the water by a kind fisherman and was taken to a hospital, where he died of hypothermia.

[7] RENTON, Washington, USA. On February 3, 1990, a Renton, Washington man tried to commit a robbery. This was probably his first attempt, as suggested by the fact that he had no previous record of violent crime, and by his terminally stupid choices as listed below:

1. The target was H&J Leather & Firearms, a gun shop.
2. The shop was full of customers, in a state where a substantial portion of the adult population is licensed to carry concealed handguns in public places.
3. To enter the shop, he had to step around a marked Police patrol car parked at the front door.
4. An officer in uniform was standing next to the counter, having coffee before reporting to duty.

Upon seeing the officer, the would-be robber announced a holdup and fired a few wild shots. The officer and a clerk promptly returned fire, removing him from the gene pool. Several other customers also drew their guns, but didn't fire. No one else was hurt.

#### 1997 DARWIN AWARD HONORABLE MENTIONS (i.e., non-fatalities)

\* Gulf Breeze, Florida, three unidentified teenage males were using a home video camera to film an action/adventure "movie" one of the boys had written. In a scene that called for each character to be ignited by fire, the "special effects coordinator", age 15, prepared the "stunt" youth by dousing lighter fluid onto his clothes. The intentional fire, which proved unexpectedly difficult to extinguish, left the young man with third degree burns on his left arm, torso, and both legs. It was all captured on film.

\* In Bradford, PA, J. Cruwe, 28, caught a small snake in a container which he handed to his wife. She opened the container and, startled to see the snake, dropped it. The excited and, as it turns out, poisonous snake immediately bit Mr. Cruwe on the shin. Mr Cruwe survived the wound and recovered after a short visit to the local emergency room.

\* In rural Carbon County, PA, a group of men were drinking beer and discharging firearms from the rear deck of a home owned by Irving Michaels, age 27. The men were firing at a raccoon that was wandering by, but the beer apparently impaired their aim and, despite of the estimated 35 shots the group fired, the animal escaped into a 3 foot diameter drainage pipe some 100 feet away from Mr. Michaels' deck.

Determined to terminate the animal, Mr. Michaels retrieved a can of gasoline and poured some down the pipe, intending to smoke the animal out. After several unsuccessful attempts to ignite the fuel, Michaels emptied the entire 5 gallon fuel can down the pipe and tried to ignite it again, to no avail. Not one to admit defeat by wildlife, the determined Mr. Michaels proceeded to slide feet-first approximately 15 feet down the sloping pipe to toss the match.

The subsequent rapidly expanding fireball propelled Mr. Michaels back the way he had come, though at a much higher rate of speed. He exited the angled pipe "like a Polaris missile leaves a submarine", according to witness Joseph McFadden, 31. Mr. Michaels was launched directly over his own home, right over the heads of his astonished friends, onto his front lawn. In all, he traveled over 200 feet through the air.

"There was a Doppler Effect to his scream as he flew over us," McFadden reported, "followed by a loud thud." Amazingly, he suffered only minor injuries.

"It was actually pretty cool," Michaels said, "Like when they shoot someone out of a cannon at the circus. I'd do it again if I was sure wouldn't get hurt."

\* TACOMA, WA - Kerry Bingham had been drinking with several friends when one of them said they knew a person who had bungee-jumped from the middle of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. The conversation grew more heated and at least 10 men trooped along the walkway of the bridge at 4:30 a.m.

Upon arrival at the midpoint of the bridge they discovered that no one had brought bungee rope. Bingham, who had continued drinking, volunteered and pointed out that a coil of lineman's cable lay nearby.

One end of the cable was secured around Bingham's leg and the other end was tied to the bridge. His fall lasted 40 feet before the cable tightened and pulled his foot off at the ankle. He miraculously survived his fall into the frigid waters of the Tacoma Narrows and Puget Sound and was rescued by two nearby fishermen. "All I can say," said Bingham, "is that God was watching out for me on that night. There's just no other explanation for it." Bingham's severed foot was never located.

\* JAPAN - Earlier this year, the dazed crew of a Japanese trawler were plucked out of the Sea of Japan clinging to the wreckage of their sunken ship. Their rescue, however, was followed by immediate imprisonment once authorities questioned the sailors on their ship's loss.

They claimed that a cow, falling out of a clear blue sky, had struck the trawler amidships, shattering its hull and sinking the vessel within minutes. They remained in prison for several weeks, until the Russian Air Force reluctantly informed Japanese authorities that the crew of one of its cargo planes had apparently stolen a cow wandering at the edge of a Siberian airfield, forced the cow into the plane's hold and hastily taken off for home.

Unprepared for live cargo, the Russian crew was ill-equipped to manage a now rampaging cow within its hold. To save the aircraft and themselves, they shoved the animal out of the cargo hold as they crossed the Sea of Japan.

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from the Nov. 11, 1997 Midland Reporter Telegram.:

**Quotes taken from actual work performance evaluations:**

1. Since my last report, this employee has reached rock bottom and shows signs of starting to dig.
2. His men would follow him anywhere, but only out of morbid curiosity.
3. I would not allow this employee to breed.
4. This associate is really not so much of a has-been, but more of a definitely won't be.
5. Works well when under constant supervision and cornered like a rat in a trap.
6. When she opens her mouth, it seems that this is only to change whichever foot was previously in there.
7. He would be out of his depth in a parking lot puddle.
8. This young lady has delusions of adequacy.
9. He sets low personal standards and then consistently fails to achieve them.
10. This employee should go far - and the sooner he starts, the better.

**REAL SCIENCE AS SEEN BY STUDENTS**

This is a list of comments from test papers, essays, etc., submitted to science and health teachers by elementary, junior high, high school, and college students: "It is truly astonishing what weird science our young scholars can create under the pressures of time and grades." The spellings are the original ones. (Transmitted by Professor Pill-Soon Song, a KASTN editor, from a chemistry net group called SAFETY@uvmvm.uvm.edu, dated 1/13/96)

1. H<sub>2</sub>O is hot water, and CO<sub>2</sub> is cold water.
2. To collect fumes of sulphur, hold a deacon over a flame in a test tube.
3. When you smell an oderless gas, it is probably carbon monoxide.
4. Water is composed of two gins, Oxygin and Hydrogin. Oxygin is pure in. Hydrogin is water and gin.
5. A super saturated solution is one that holds more than it can hold.
6. Liter: A nest of young puppies.
7. Magnet: Something you find crawling all over a dead cat.
8. Momentum: What you give a person when they are going away.

9. Vacuum: A large, empty space where the pope lives.
10. Artificial insemination is when the farmer does it to the cow instead of the bull.
11. The pistol of the flower is its only protection against insects.
12. A fossil is an extinct animal. The older it is, the more extinct it is.
13. To remove dust from the eye, pull the eye down over the nose.
14. For a nosebleed: Put the nose much lower than the heart until the heart stops.
15. For head colds: use an agonizer to spray the nose until it drops in your throat.
16. Germinate: To become a naturalized German.
17. The tides are a fight between the Earth and moon. All water tends towards the moon, because there is no water on the moon, and nature abhors a vacuum. I forget where the sun joins in this fight.
18. Blood flows down one leg and up the other.

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**The following are the top three winners from a "Most Embarrassing Moments" contest in New Woman Magazine:**

No. 1

"While in line at the bank one afternoon, my toddler decided to release some pent-up energy and ran amok. I was finally able to grab hold of her after receiving looks of disgust and annoyance from other patrons. I told her that if she did not start behaving \*right now\*, she would be punished.

"To my horror, she looked me in the eye and said in a voice just as threatening, 'If you don't let me go right now, I will tell Grandma that I saw you kissing Daddy's pee-pee last night!' The silence was deafening after this enlightening exchange. Even the tellers stopped what they were doing!

"I mustered up the last of my dignity and walked out of the bank with my daughter in tow. The last thing I heard when the door closed behind me were screams of laughter."

No. 2

"It was the day before my 18th birthday. I was living at home, but my parents had gone out for the evening, so I invited my girlfriend over for a romantic night alone. As we lay in bed

after making love, we heard the telephone ring downstairs. I suggested to my girlfriend that I give her a piggyback ride to the phone. Since we didn't want to miss the call, we didn't have time to get dressed. When we got to the bottom of the stairs, the lights suddenly came on and a whole crowd of people yelled, 'SURPRISE!' My entire family -- aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, and all my friends were standing there! My girlfriend and I were frozen in a state of shock and embarrassment for what seemed like an eternity. Since then, no one in my family has planned a surprise party again."

No. 3

"One of the funniest 'most-embarrassing-moment' stories I've come upon in a long time was about a lady who picked up several items at a discount store. When she finally got up to the checker, she learned that one of her items had no price tag. Imagine her embarrassment when the checker got on the intercom and boomed out for all the store to hear: 'PRICE CHECK ON LANE 13, TAMPAX, SUPERSIZE.' That was bad enough, but somebody at the rear of the store apparently misunderstood the word 'tampax' for 'thumbtacks.'

"In a businesslike tone, a voice boomed back over the intercom: "DO YOU WANT THE KIND YOU PUSH IN WITH YOUR THUMB OR THE KIND YOU POUND IN WITH A HAMMER?"

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The long awaited 1999 Darwin "Natural Selection" Awards have been released!

These awards are given each year to bestow upon (the remains of) that individual, who through single-minded self-sacrifice, has done the most to remove undesirable elements from the human gene pool.

5th runner-up:

Goes to a San Anselmo, California man who died when he hit a lift tower at the Mammoth Mountain ski area while riding down the slope on a foam pad. 22-year old David Hubal was pronounced dead at Central Mammoth Hospital. The accident occurred about 3 a.m., the Mono County Sheriff's Department said. Hubal and his friends apparently had hiked up a ski run called Stump Alley and undid some yellow foam protectors from lift towers, said Lt. Mike Donnelly of the Mammoth Lakes Police Department. The pads are used to protect skiers who might hit towers. The group apparently used the pads to slide down the ski slope and Hubal crashed into a tower. It has since been investigated and determined the tower he hit was the one with its pad removed.

4th Runner-up:

Goes to Robert Puelo, 32, who was apparently being disorderly in a St. Louis market. When the clerk threatened to call the police, Puelo grabbed a hot dog, shoved it into his mouth and walked out without paying. Police found him unconscious in front of the store. Paramedics removed the six-inch wiener from his throat where it had choked him to death.

3rd Runner-up:

Goes to poacher Marino Malerba of Spain, who shot a stag standing above him on an overhanging rock and was killed instantly when it fell on him.

2nd Runner-up:

"Man loses face at party". A man at a West Virginia party (probably related to the man in Arkansas who used the .22 bullet to replace the fuse in his pick-up truck) popped a blasting cap into his mouth and bit down, triggering an explosion that blew off his lips, teeth, and tongue. Jerry Stromyer, 24, of Kincaid, bit the blasting cap as a prank during the party late Tuesday night, said Cpl. M.D. Payne. "Another man and it in an aquarium hooked to a battery and was trying to explode it", said Payne. "It wouldn't go off and this guy said I'll show you how to set it off". "He put it into his mouth and bit down. It blew all his teeth out and his lips and tongue off", Payne said. Stromyer was listed in guarded condition Wednesday with extensive facial injuries, according to a spokesperson at Charleston Area Medical Division. "I just can't imagine anyone doing something like that" Payne said.

1st Runner-up:

Doctors at Portland University Hospital said an Oregon man shot through the skull by a hunting arrow is lucky to be alive and will be released soon from the hospital. Tony Roberts, 25, lost his right eye last weekend during an initiation into a men's rafting club, Mountain Men Anonymous (probably known now as Stupid Mountain Men Anonymous) in Grants Pass, Oregon. A friend tried to shoot a beer can off his head with a bow & arrow, but the arrow entered Robert's right eye. Doctors said had the arrow gone 1 millimeter to the left, a major blood vessel would have been cut and Roberts would have died instantly.

Neurosurgeon Doctor Johnny Delashaw at the University Hospital in Portland said the arrow went through 8 to 10 inches of brain with the tip protruding at the rear of his skull, yet somehow managed to miss all major blood vessels. Delashaw also said had Roberts tried to pull the arrow out on his own he surely would have killed himself. Roberts admitted afterwards he and his friends had been drinking that afternoon. Said Roberts, "I feel so dumb about this". No charges have been filed, but the Josephine County district attorney's office said the initiation stunt is under investigation.

**Now this year's winners:**

(The late) John Pernicky and his friend, (the late) Sal Hawkins, of the great state of Washington, decided to attend a local Metallica concert at the George Washington amphitheater.

Having no tickets (but having had 18 beers between them), they thought it would be easy to "hop" over the nine foot fence and sneak into the show. They pulled their pickup truck over to the fence and the plan was for (the late) Mr. Pernicky who was 100-pounds heavier than Mr. Hawkins) to hop the fence and then assist his friend over. Unfortunately for (the late) Mr. Pernicky, there was a 30-foot drop on the other side of the fence. Having heaved himself over, he found himself crashing through a tree. His fall was abruptly halted (and

broken, along with his arm, as it were) by a large branch that snagged him by his shorts. Dangling from the tree with a broken arm, he looked down and saw some bushes below him. (Possibly) figuring the bushes would break his fall, he removed his pocket knife and proceeded to cut away his shorts to free himself from the tree. Finally free, (did I mention he is THE LATE) Mr. Pernicky crashed into Holly bushes. The sharp leaves scratched his ENTIRE body and now, without the protection of his shorts, a Holly branch penetrated his rectal cavity. To make matters worse (?!), on landing, his pocketknife penetrated his thigh 3-inches. (The late) Mr. Hawkins, on seeing his friend in considerable pain and agony, decided to throw him a rope and pull him to safety (now he thinks of the "S" word) by tying the rope to the pick-up truck and slowly driving away. However, in his drunken haste/state, he put the truck into reverse and crashed through the fence landing on his friend and killing him. Police arrived to find the crashed pickup with its driver thrown 100-feet from the truck and dead at the scene from massive internal injuries. Upon moving the truck, they found John under it, half-naked with scratches on his body, a holly stick in his rectum, a knife in his thigh, and his shorts dangling from a tree branch 25-feet in the air.

Congratulations gentlemen, you win...

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**The following are the first three winners of a Most Embarrassing Moment's Contest in New Woman Magazine.**

"It was Christmas Eve, and I was on my feet all day working behind the cosmetics counter. I decided I would find a place to sit for a moment. I spied a tall plastic trash can and plopped down, resting my feet on a cardboard box. I allowed my body to ease into the can. About that time a few customers came to the register to check out, but I couldn't get out of the trash can. I was stuck; I couldn't believe it. The customers came around the counter to help me - some pulled my arms while others held the can. Then my manager came to the counter, wanting to know what was going on. He said he was going to call the fire department, who blasted in with sirens and lights. My hips had created a vacuum, so they had to cut me out of the trash can with a giant pair of scissors."

-Linda Evans; Winter Park, Florida

"While in line at the bank one afternoon, my toddler decided to release some pent-up energy and ran amok. I was finally able to grab hold of her after receiving looks of disgust and annoyance from other patrons. I told her that if she did not start behaving \*right now\*, she would be punished. To my horror, she looked me in the eye and said in a voice just as threatening, 'If you don't let me go \*right now\*, I will tell Grandma that I saw you kissing Daddy's pee-pee last night!' The silence was deafening after this enlightening exchange. Even the tellers stopped what they were doing! I mustered up the last of my dignity and walked out of the bank with my daughter in tow. The last thing I heard when the door closed behind me were screams of laughter"

-Amy Richardson; Stafford, Virginia

"It was the day before my eighteenth birthday. I was living at home, but my parents had gone out for the evening, so I invited my girlfriend over for a romantic night alone. "As we lay in bed after making love, we heard the telephone ring downstairs. I suggested to my

girlfriend that I give her a piggyback ride to the phone. Since we didn't want to miss the call, we didn't have time to get dressed. When we got to the bottom of the stairs, the lights suddenly came on and a whole crowd of people yelled, 'SURPRISE!' My entire family - aunts, uncles, grandparents, cousins, and all my friends were standing there! My girlfriend and I were frozen in a state of shock and embarrassment for what seemed like an eternity. Since then, no one in my family has planned a surprise party again."  
-Tim Cahill; Poughkeepsie, New York

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**Subject: Pretty Weird News!**

**The NEW, undisputed Darwin Award winner for 1997 Japan Times -- April 16, 1997**

"The government must crack down on this disgusting craze of 'Pumping'," a spokesman for the Nakhon Ratchasima hospital told reporters. "If this perversion catches on, it will destroy the cream of Thailand's manhood."

He was speaking after the remains of 13 year-old Charnchai Puanmuangpak had been rushed into the hospital's emergency room. "Most 'Pumpers' use a standard bicycle pump," he explained, "inserting the nozzle far up their rectum, giving themselves a rush of air, creating a momentary high. This act is a sin against God."

Charnchai took it further still. He started using a two-cylinder foot pump, but even that wasn't exciting enough for him, and he boasted to friends that he was going to try the compressed air hose at a nearby gasoline station. They dared him to do it so, under cover of darkness, he snuck in. Not realizing how powerful the machine was, he inserted the tube deep into his rectum, and placed a coin in the slot. As a result, he died virtually instantly, but passersby are still in shock.

One woman thought she was watching a twilight fireworks display, and started clapping. "We still haven't located all of him.", say the police authorities. "When that quantity of air interacted with the gas in his system, he nearly exploded. It was like an atom bomb went off or something."

"Pumping is the devil's pastime, and we must all say no to Satan," Ratchasima concluded. "Inflate your tires by all means, but then hide your bicycle pump where it cannot tempt you." Let's hear it for Charnchai Puanmuangpak, the NEW 1997 undisputed Darwin Awards recipient!

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A Charlotte, North Carolina man, having purchased a case of rare, very expensive cigars, insured them against...get this...fire. Within a month, having smoked his entire stockpile of fabulous cigars, and having yet to make a single premium payment on the policy, the man filed a claim against the insurance company. In his claim, the man stated that he had lost the cigars in "a series of small fires." The insurance company refused to pay, citing the obvious reason that the man had consumed the cigars in a normal fashion. The man sued... and won! In delivering his ruling, the judge stated that since the man held a policy from the

company in which it had warranted that the cigars were insurable, and also guaranteed that it would insure the cigars against fire, without defining what it considered to be "unacceptable fire," it was obligated to compensate the insured for his loss. Rather than endure a lengthy and costly appeal process, the insurance company accepted the judge's ruling and paid the man \$15,000 for the rare cigars he lost in "the fires." After the man cashed his check, however, the insurance company had him arrested...on 24 counts of arson! With his own insurance claim and testimony from the previous case being used as evidence against him, the man was convicted of intentionally burning the rare cigars and sentenced to 24 consecutive one year terms!

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TRUE STORY NO. 1:

A man was working on his motorcycle on his patio and his wife was in the house in the kitchen. The man was racing the engine on the motorcycle and somehow the motorcycle slipped into gear. The man, still holding the handlebars, was dragged through a glass patio door and the motorcycle dumped onto the floor inside the house.

The wife, hearing the crash, ran into the dining room and found her husband laying on the floor, cut and bleeding, the motorcycle laying next to him and the patio door shattered. The wife ran to the phone and summoned an ambulance.

Because they lived on a fairly large hill, the wife went down several flights of long steps to the street to direct the paramedics to her husband. After the ambulance arrived and transported the husband to the hospital, the wife uprighted the motorcycle and pushed it outside. Seeing that gas had spilled on the floor, the wife obtained some paper towels, blotted up the gasoline and threw the towels in the toilet.

The husband was treated at the hospital and released to come home.

After arriving home, he looked at the shattered patio door and the damage done to his motorcycle. He became despondent, went into the bathroom, sat on the toilet and smoked a cigarette. After finishing the cigarette, he flipped it between his legs into the toilet bowl while still seated.

The wife, who was in the kitchen, heard a loud explosion and her husband screaming. She ran into the bathroom and found her husband laying on the floor. His trousers had been blown away and he was suffering burns on the buttocks, the back of his legs and his groin. The wife again ran to the phone and called for an ambulance.

The same ambulance crew was dispatched and the wife met them at the street. The paramedics loaded the husband on the stretcher and began carrying him to the street. While they were going down the steps to the street accompanied by the wife, one of the paramedics asked the wife how the husband had burned himself. She told them and the paramedics started laughing so hard, one of them tipped the stretcher and dumped the husband out. He fell down the remaining steps and broke his ankle.

## TRUE STORY NO. 2:

A young couple had a terrific argument one morning before leaving for work. The wife couldn't get her dress zipped up in back, so she backed up to her husband and motioned for him to zip up her dress.

"I'll show you zipping," he thought, and briskly whipped it up and down the slide till it broke. He had to cut her out of her favorite dress, which didn't make her any happier with him. They went their separate ways to work, both boiling mad at each other. The wife did a slow burn all day.

When she got home that evening, she walked through the garage and saw her husband under the car fixing something, with only his legs sticking out. She decided her moment of REVENGE had come. She leaned over, grabbed his pants zipper, and hipped it up and down.

Quite contented, she walked into the kitchen, where she found her husband standing by the sink. Sheepishly, she asked him, "Who is in the garage, under the car?" She was told it was a neighbor who had come over to help work on the car. The acutely embarrassed wife asked her husband to help explain the situation to the neighbor, and they both returned to the garage. They asked him to come out from under the car, but he didn't respond. When they finally dragged him out, he was unconscious and bleeding, from slamming his head into the underside of the car each time he got zipped by surprise!!

## TRUE STORY NO. 3:

Our story is not complete without telling of a man who could not give a convincing explanation about his broken arm. He kept muttering something about trying to stick his arm through his car window, which he thought was down. . . .

That was the public version. In private, he confessed that it happened when his wife brought some potted plants indoors after they had been out on the patio all day. A friendly garter snake had hidden in one of the pots, and later slithered out across the floor, and the wife spotted it.

"I was in the bathtub when I heard her scream," he related. "I thought she was being murdered, so I jumped out of the tub and ran to help her. I didn't even grab a towel. When I ran into the living room, she yelled that a snake was under the couch. I got down on all fours to look for it and just then, my dog came up from behind and 'cold-nosed' me. I guess I thought it was the snake, and I fainted dead away.

My wife thought I'd had a heart attack and called for an ambulance. I was still groggy when the medics arrived and lifted me onto a stretcher. Just as they were carrying me out, the snake came out from under the couch and obviously frightened one of the medics. He dropped his end of the stretcher . . . and that is when I broke my arm."