

Media Advisory

May 24, 2005

EVENT:

40th Annual Watermelon Drop at University of California, San Diego

The Revelle College tradition marks the end of the school year at UCSD. (Revelle graduation is June 12.) Amidst much fanfare, a "Watermelon Queen" chosen by the students will *toss* the watermelon from the top (7th floor) of Urey Hall - to the countdown by the crowd below. The goal is to break velocity/splat records. Hundreds of UCSD students gather to witness this annual ritual and students try to predict where the farthest piece will land. A Revelle College 40th Anniversary Finale Celebration will follow with a BBQ, plenty of watermelon, and entertainment.

DATE/TIME:

12:05 p.m., Friday, June 3, 2005

LOCATION:

Optimal viewing is from the sidewalk in front of Urey Hall, Revelle Campus.

BACKGROUND:

The Watermelon Drop (or splat or toss) originated with UCSD's first undergraduate class in 1965. All Revelle freshmen took a physics class with professor Bob Swanson. As a physics problem, Swanson asked: "If a watermelon was dropped from a 7-story building, where would the farthest piece land?" and "What would be the velocity on impact of the watermelon?" Members of the class arranged the actual watermelon drop from Urey Hall, voted for a "Watermelon Queen" and the drop has been an annual challenge each year.

Assorted facts: Elizabeth Huller was the first Watermelon Queen. The first splat measured 91 feet. The terminal velocity of a watermelon when it hits the ground is about 112 miles per hour. The best official record for the splat is 167 feet 4 inches set in 1974.

Professor Swanson again will be observing the drop.

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CONTACT:

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