

Media Advisory, Annual Watermelon Drop to be held; historical highlights

June 3, 1986

EVENT: ANNUAL "WATERMELON DROP" AT UCSD

This popular Revelle College competition marks the end of the UCSD school year. A "Watermelon Queen" drops a watermelon from the top floor of Urey Hall, trying to break current velocity and "splat" records. After the drop, 1,500 pounds of watermelon cooled in the fountain on Revelle Plaza will be shared by the audience.

DATE: Friday, June 6, 1986

TIME: Noon

LOCATION: Best viewing is from the sidewalk in front of Urey Hall, Revelle Campus.

CONTACT: Winifred Cox (452-3120)

WATERMELON DROP HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS

1965 The Watermelon Drop (or splat) originated with UCSD's first undergraduate class. All Revelle freshman had to take a physics class with professor Bob Swanson. In his final exam Swanson asked what the velocity on impact (terminal velocity) would be of a watermelon dropped from the seventh floor of Building "B", later to be named Urey Hall. An actual watermelon drop was arranged for after the test, with ballots to vote for the "Queen" election attached to the exam. The winner, Elizabeth Heller, posed for photographers and then hurled the melon. A piece landed 91 feet away, for the first recorded distance.

1974 The present day splat record of 167 feet, 4 inches was set by Tina Flammer, which is the best official unofficial mark for this annual event.

1978 The pageant at which the Queen is chosen is an equal opportunity event. The Clone brothers, in 1978, became the first men to drop the watermelon.

1979 Bill Clabby, dressed in drag and sporting over-sized sunglasses, became the first solo male to be named Watermelon Queen.

1980 The Prophet Seth, a.k.a. Seth Munter, retained the male hold on the title of Watermelon Queen. Munter whipped the crowd into a frenzy, promising that the watermelon god would not allow the fruit to fall, but would instead pluck it into heaven. The melon hit the ground with a terminal velocity of 112 miles per hour -- the same speed reached by every melon before and after. (In fact, every member of Swanson's class of 1965 could have predicted that speed.)

(June 3, 1986)