

Flying squirrels in action: amazing

The first time you see a flying squirrel in action, you're bound to stare in disbelief.

You're poking around an old hollow tree for some reason or other and a small brownish squirrel darts out of the hole above. As it sits there momentarily, blinking its big black eyes in the bright sunlight, it suddenly decides there's danger close by. Without a warning chatter, it leaps off its perch. But to your amazement, it doesn't land on a nearby branch or fall to the ground. Instead, it sails out across the forest opening as if suspended on a hidden wire.

I'm almost convinced that of all the wonders of Nature, the achievements of the flying squirrel must rate near the top of the list.

Ironically, my first observation of these furry frisbees was not a standard type sighting. As a lad growing up along the Niagara escarpment, much of my time was spent on a farm there. In the fall, we'd trap some muskrats and try to catch some big game—coons and foxes. We owned a pair of regular sized fox terriers that were not only good ratters but were used for hunting as well. Often in the early fall, a neighbor boy and myself would take these dogs along the edge of a small cornfield and chase out the raccoons that were feeding there. Once in awhile we'd get a crack at them with the .22 rifle and the odd time, the dogs would end up in a fierce battle.

One evening, these same terriers ran a coon into a hollow tree. While Laverne watched, I went back and picked up the bee smoker to chase it out. I remember putting a little corn silk into the canister along with leaves and wood chips, thinking it would make the coon dizzy as it did us when we



BACK TO NATURE

Art Briggs-Jude

tried to puff it. However, the coon must have had another air hole because, after a couple of fillings were blown in, we were still waiting in vain.

It was getting late, but there was still time to try one more blast before leaving. But instead of a clawing, scrambling raccoon at the entrance, two little soft-furred grey animals appeared. Big-eyed and flat-tailed, they resembled no squirrel we had ever seen. Our excited trip home with these new-found pets was shorter than our return. For it was agreed it would be best for all concerned if they were released back in their woodland home.

Since then, I've encountered flying squirrels on many occasions.

Once, while taking a Cub pack on a hike, we stopped on a wooded slope to allow some of the boys to catch up. Taking a stick, I began tapping on a nearby hollow tree to show the kids how this Indian method of signalling carried across the stillness of the winter woods. Again, as the boys gathered around, a family of flying squirrels, began launching themselves down the hill past the speechless group.

Another incident concerning these ghost-like gliders occurred one morning on a deer run. Waiting at the edge of a stand of hardwood, I was attracted by a scuffle at the top of a huge beech tree. A very upset red squirrel was

attempting to oust an intruder from one of its favorite cavities. The culprit was a flying squirrel that soon took a giant leap into space from a height of about sixty feet. When the pursuing red squirrel saw it glide to the base of a tree nearly fifty feet away, it gave up the chase.

Then last spring, while checking the bluebird boxes, a family of six flying squirrels appeared like frogs out of a tipped bait-box. Again, last year, while listing

birds for the annual Christmas Count, we spotted a little furred head poking out of a woodpecker hole in an old elm. It turned out to be a flying squirrel.

Wood duck nesting boxes are also common home sites for these ten-inch night-gliders.

On dull, overcast days, they will come out to forge in the late afternoon. In doing so, they risk the talons of swift-flying hawks. But normally, their greatest enemies are owls and cats.

The actual flying, (or really gliding), by these interesting little rodents, is accomplished by means of loose folds of skin between the front and hind legs. When their paws are stretched out and aided by their flat tail, used as

a rudder, they can not only travel up to fifty yards or more but can steer around other trees and branches.

Despite their common occurrence, these gentle creatures are seldom seen by man. Bird-feeding stations sometimes attract them in the dark hours, where they may be observed by the aid of a suddenly flicked on floodlight.

Trappers, setting for coon and marten, occasionally find them in their traps. Woodcutters often discover them when dropping trees. Apart from these and other casual sightings such as mentioned, the quiet little flying squirrel goes about its business in the woods like the fabled Leprechaun.

VALENTINE'S DAY DINNER FOR 2 WINNERS!

Mrs. Eugenia Cork, Manager of the Markville Shopping Centre, is pleased to announce the following winners of the Valentine's Day Dinner For Two Contest. The winners are Mrs. Margaret Davidson of Downsview and Mrs. C. Ryan of Markham. Congratulations to both of you!!!



The War Amputations of Canada presents:

THE NAKISKA KIDS

In a new film called *The Nakiska Kids*, 17 members of The War Amps Child Amputee (CHAMP) Program challenge the slopes of Nakiska—site for the alpine events at the 1988 Winter Olympics.

Chris, born missing his arms and legs, has always wanted to ski like Karl. At Nakiska, his dream comes true, thanks to your support of the CHAMP Program.

The Nakiska Kids is available on loan, free of charge, by contacting the address below:



Champ Chris Koch with War Amps Chief Executive Officer Cliff Chadderton and Karl Hiltzinger, double-leg amputee and well-known as the "silver-suited" skier in our T.V. messages.

The War Amputations of Canada, National Headquarters, 2827 Riverside Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K1V 0C4.

The War Amputations of Canada is a registered charitable organization operated by amputees for amputees on a non-profit basis. The War Amps does not receive government funds. Should you wish further information, please do not hesitate to contact us. Toronto (416) 488-0600; area codes 519, 513, 705, dial toll-free 1-800-268-8821; all other area codes dial toll-free 1-800-268-8917. Charitable Registration Number: 0286831 09 10.

FABRICLAND

CANADA'S LARGEST FASHION FABRIC DISTRIBUTOR

3 for

LAST WEEK!
Sale ends Feb. 24/88

Our Entire Stock of
MCCALLS
PATTERNS

3 for
the
Reg. Price of

No limit. Offer ends Feb. 24/88. Not valid with any other discount offer. Customer pays reg. price for highest priced pattern, gets next 2 at no charge. Sorry, no special orders.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS

Get 3 full metres of selected fabric for the regular price of 1 full metre. This offer applies to selected fabric/units to be sold in multiples of 3, existing stock only. Sorry, no special orders at these prices.

SALE

ON SELECTED MERCHANDISE

8573 McCowan Rd.

North East corner of Hwy. 7

Markham

471-1610

MASTERCARD • VISA • CHEQUES



CANADA'S LARGEST FASHION FABRIC DISTRIBUTOR

The Best in Selection and Price Anywhere

Lose 35 lbs. by EASTER!

With new and improved...

System II

Your results are guaranteed!

It's impossible to fail. Reach your desired weight within a specified number of visits or continue our program free until you do!

Joy Wright lost 83 lbs. & kept it off for 8 years!



LOSE 35 LBS. BY EASTER!

If you are 150 lbs. you can be 118 lbs!
If you are 160 lbs. you can be 128 lbs!
If you are 170 lbs. you can be 137 lbs!
If you are 180 lbs. you can be 147 lbs!
If you are 190 lbs. you can be 155 lbs!
**Individual results may vary*

Call now to find out about our guest special



Our Nurses make the difference

MARKHAM: 269 Wellington St. W., No. 201, 294-0030

VISA and MasterCard welcome. Open 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mon-Fri.

Weight Loss Clinic International, Inc. 1988