

# Snowboarders become surfers at puddle jump event

As bona fide athletic competitions go, last Saturday's annual Puddle Jump at the Dagmar Ski Resort near Claremont was on a par with the Polar Bear Club's highly touted New Year's Day dip into the icy waters of Lake Ontario.

For the uninitiated, the name Puddle Jump is somebody's idea of optimism gone overboard. For even with the help of the elevated snow ramp at the top of the resort's modest pony hill, it's absolutely impossible for a skier or snow boarder to get up enough steam to clear the 52-foot-long trough that sits so threateningly at the bottom.

Consequently, the challenge lies in fighting to remain vertical upon touching down, thus avoiding the shock to the system afforded by a sudden sprawl into one degree Celsius water.

And as many of the 44 competitors came to realize, that's no mean feat. For that reason, the event should actually be called Puddle Plane in that the secret is to be able to imitate a sea plane as it comes in for a landing.

Several of the more adept snow boarders, and a few of the area ski instructors taking part in the madness, had both the momentum and the balance to make it relatively unscathed, or unsoaked, to the far shore of the temporary water hole. But others, including the resort's food services operator Robbie Gros, didn't come close.

Decked out in a tuxedo to help drum up business for the resort's wedding programs, the man who says he's about to purchase Dagmar went down for the count immediately upon making contact with the water. His wife came traipsing down the hill behind her beloved on foot, adorned in a wedding dress. Undaunted, the blushing bride proceeded to pose with her soaked spouse, for wedding pictures taken by Tribune photographer Sjoerd Witteveen.

Spectacular wipe outs were the order of the day, as organizers had hoped they would be. The most



From Where I Live

Bruce Stapley

creative crash landings came courtesy of the snow boarders, some of whom attempted to execute spins and jumps after making initial contact. Not a good idea, in that snow

boards tend to stick in the water, unlike hard packed snow. Thus, the boarder is left boardless as he tumbles, a heap of arms and legs, into the frosty drink.

Other thwarted efforts were more predictable. Such as the innovative contestant who came down, or tried to come down the hill, on water skis. The misguided twit soon discovered that there's a definite reason for displaying water skis and snow skis in separate sections of the sporting

goods store. He fell on his way down the ramp, got up, continued his erratic flight, and finally wrapped himself, crotch first, around the flag situated at the right hand extremity of the pond on his way to a brutal, baseball-like slide into the water.

Another contestant in a very impressive pink panther get-up made an equally big splash as his fur was engulfed by the frigid water.

There were face plants, desperation lunges, somersaults

and even a headstand from one game competitor. Luckily, when the last crazed contender had crawled to the safety of the water's edge and the warmth of the waiting blankets, the event was without a drowning, a broken bone or a cardiac arrest.

And the young men and women who provided the entertainment will be able to spend the rest of their lives embellishing on how they survived their spring break adventure.

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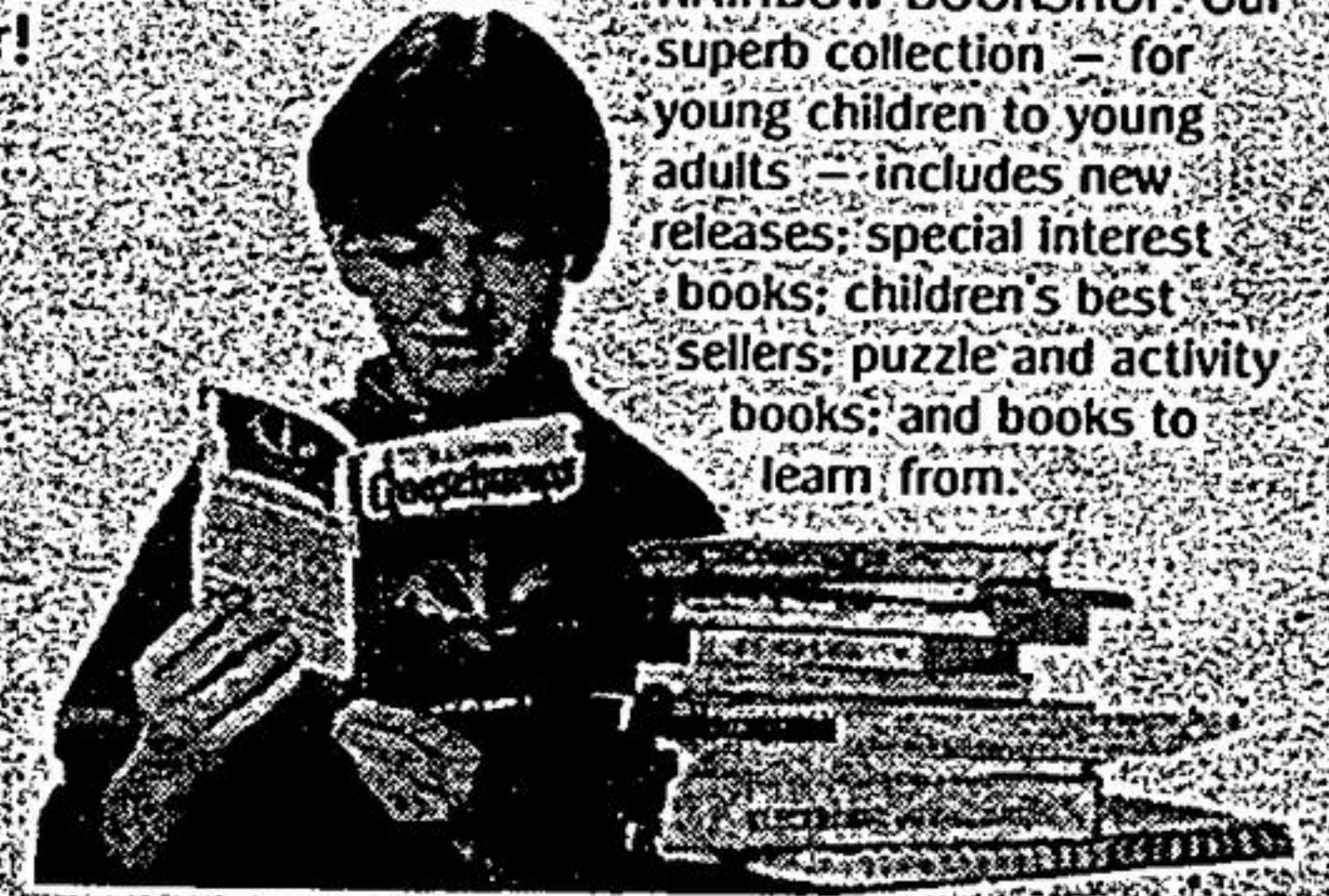
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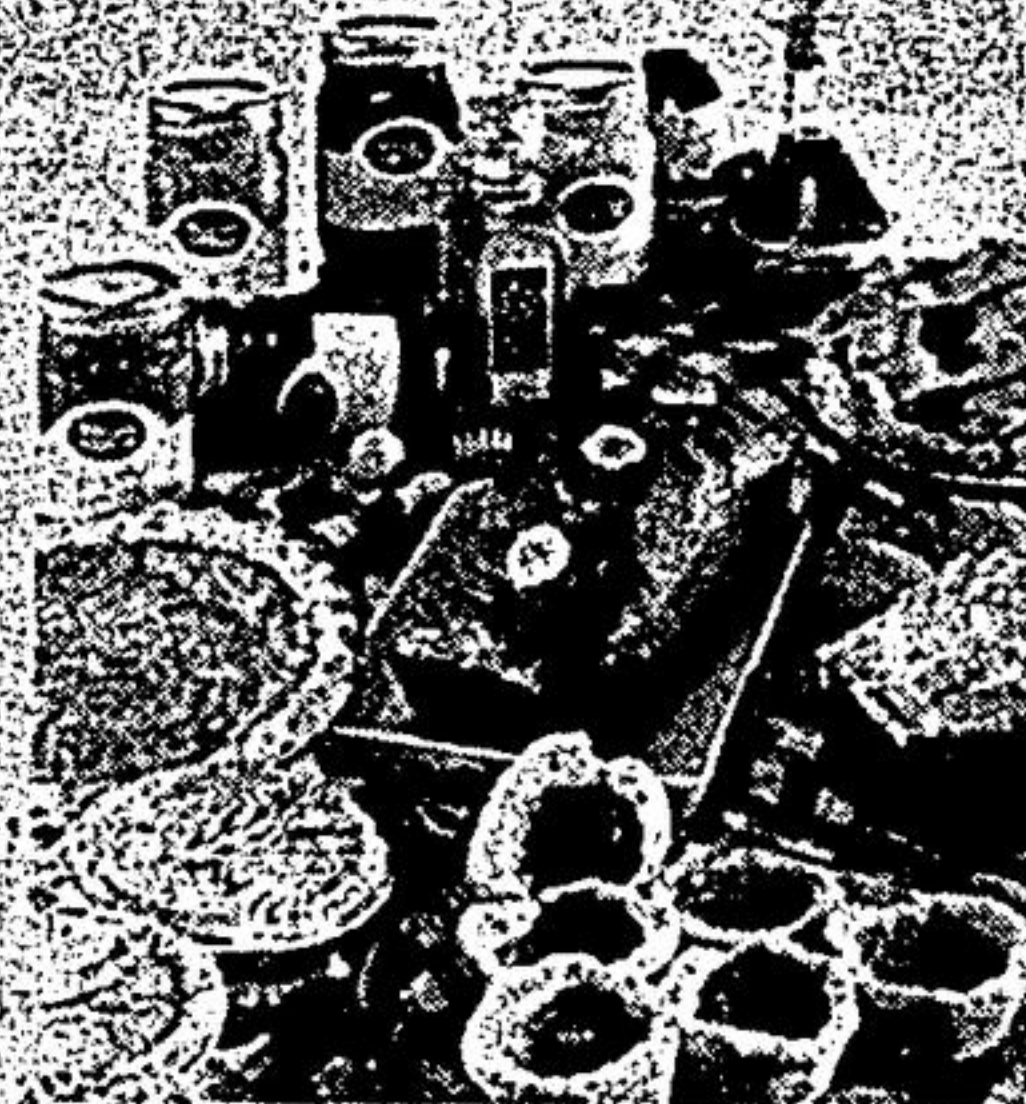


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