

In case you have been waiting breathlessly for this year's Darwin Awards, awards are given each year to bestow upon (the remains or estate of, in most cases) that individual, who through single-minded self-sacrifice, has done the most to remove undesirable elements from the human gene pool.

Just think... until these events occurred, these same people were walking the streets just like normal people.

**SIXTH PLACE:** 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 CentralMammoth 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 removed 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.

**FIFTH PLACE:** Goes to Robert Puelo, 32, 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.

**FOURTH PLACE:** 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.

**THIRD PLACE:** "Man loses face at party " A man at a West Virginia party (probably related to the winner last year, a man in Arkansas who used the .22 bullet to replace the fuse in his pickup 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 had it in an aquarium hooked to a battery and was trying to explode it. It wouldn't go off and this guy said I'll show you how to set it off." He put it into his mouth, bit down and 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. (Note: Maybe that's why they call these the Darwin Awards)

**SECOND PLACE:** 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, but the arrow entered Robert's right eye. Doctors said that 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 that had Roberts tried to pull the arrow out on his own he surely would have killed himself. Roberts admitted afterwards that 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.  
(Editor's note: he probably would have gotten first, but he survived)

**THIS YEAR'S WINNER:** John Pernicky and his friend, 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 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) 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, 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 rectum. To make matters worse, upon landing his pocket knife penetrated his thigh. Hawkins, seeing his friend in considerable pain and agony, threw him a rope and tried to pull him to safety by tying the rope to the pickup truck and slowly driving away. However, in his drunken haste, 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 deceased under it half-naked, 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. Five more idiots have been removed from the gene pool and we are richer because of your supreme sacrifice.