

Look! Up In The Sky!

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 throwing these objects out the door. Was this a case of teacher spite against the school and students? Was it a mad, mad way of getting even? Is this what happens to principals on sabbatical? What, in any event, were those objects Regester pitched out the door?

Well, put your fears at rest. This was an educational project, and the objects

coming from the plane were Lancaster County eggs. Not that you'd recognize them as eggs, but they were in fact, eggs. And the whole egg-cersize (sorry about that) was designed to see how well sixth, seventh and eighth graders could package eggs. The ultimate test of the packaging efforts was on Friday afternoon, when the wrapped, bundled, parachuted, propellered, sprung and winged packages were pitched out of a plane flying at 1000 feet.

Jacques Gibble, a PhD candidate and a teacher at the school for five years, was one of the teachers who thought of trying Project Egg Drop. Gibble said he saw a story about a similar project conducted by a school in Michigan some five years ago. And, it seemed to Gibble like a good, creative way to learn. The Michigan school children experienced a 90 percent rate of success with their egg packages - only one out of 10 of the fresh, uncooked eggs broke.

School budgets don't normally allow for eggs that are to be scrambled by dropping them on the lawn, so Gibble contacted Pennfield Corp., who agreed to furnish the eggs to go into the packages. Pennfield is also donating 15 Egg McMuffin breakfasts at McDonald's for the contest winners.

Each container holds one egg. Some 164 pupils, about 20 percent of the school's enrollment, submitted en-

tires for the contest. We had a chance to look at the packages on Wednesday afternoon, when they were judged on the basis of their suitability for various categories. For each grade level, the judges picked first place winners in lightest, heaviest, smallest, most unusual material, and most unusual design categories. To claim his Egg McMuffin prize, the winner's egg must survive the fall.

Only two ground rules guided the students in the design and construction of their packages. The container had to fit through an opening 6-inches square, and all parts of the container had to be connected. There was almost no direction from the faculty, Gibble explained, because they didn't want the packages to end up looking too similar.

The students used a lot of plastic foam and rubber bands, but they did come up with a bewildering array of designs. Some vaguely resembled rockets, others were primarily protective boxes with parachutes. One student submitted a whimsical entry consisting of a spring mounted on a piece of board topped by an egg-shaped container filled with a soft material protecting the egg inside.

None of the judges expected this particular entry to come through Operation Egg Drop unscrambled. But they all agreed that it was good for a few yolks.



Jacques Gibble, the Marticville Middle School teacher largely responsible for Operation Egg Drop, displays one of the 164 imaginatively-packaged hen fruits submitted by the school pupils.

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