



by Aaron N. Yarmoshuk

# More than just windshield splats



**Student Union Elections**  
THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**ELECTION DATES**  
March 15-18, 1993

Nominations are now open for the following positions:

- |                            |                              |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| President/Executive        | Dentistry Rep.               |
| Vice President (one term)  | Medicine Rep.                |
| Board of Governors (2)     | Nursing Rep.                 |
| Science Reps. (3)          | Occupational Therapy Rep.    |
| Arts Reps. (2)             | Physiotherapy Rep.           |
| Management Studies rep.    | Pharmacy Rep.                |
| Engineering Rep.           | Law Rep.                     |
| Sahper Rep.                | International Students' Rep. |
| Part-time Students' Rep.   | Women's Rep.                 |
| Mature Students' Rep.      | Men's Rep.                   |
| Graduate Studies Reps. (2) |                              |

## SENATE POSITIONS

- |                         |                         |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Science Rep.            | Medicine Rep.           |
| Arts Rep.               | Law Rep.                |
| Management Studies Rep. | Health Professions Rep. |
| Dentistry Rep.          | Graduate Studies Rep.   |

Nominations open: **Wed., Feb. 10, 9:30 am**  
Nominations close: **Mon., March 1, 4:00 pm**

Nomination forms are available from Room 222 of the Student Union Building starting Wednesday, February 10. For further information, please contact Wade Deisman, Chief Returning Officer at 494-6576, or in Room 222, S.U.B.

*Flattened Fauna* proclaims to be "The definitive guide for the millions of people who seldom see a wild animal that has not been flattened by the dozens of vehicles ahead of them, and baked by the sun to an indistinct fur-, scale-, or feathered-covered patty." The book succeeds at meeting this claim.

Knutson, Roger M.  
*Flattened Fauna: A Field Guide to Common Animals of Roads, Streets, and Highways.*  
Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1987.

Written by a biology teacher at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, *Flattened Fauna* is a thought provoking guidebook for those drivers and passengers interested in gaining more from their on-road experiences. Or, as Knutson declares, "This book is

devoted to making the experience of seeing dead animals on the road more meaningful, even enjoyable."

Knutson is not a morbid biologist who revels in seeing wildlife splattered across North American roadways. He finds it regrettable that the use of motorized-vehicles and the increased kilometres of roads in this century has resulted in more flattened fauna. Knutson, however, is a true academic, and therefore desires to learn from all opportunities presented to him. He would consider it unfortunate if those who drive forfeited the valuable learning experiences that studying road-kills (the more common term for flattened fauna) offers them.

Some readers of this review may be questioning the seriousness of this book (and therefore this review too): they should not. *Flattened Fauna* is a legitimate academic work. Although short, (it is only eighty-eight pages), this book is well-researched (consid-

ering the topic) and presents interesting information.

Two of the more interesting facts presented concern alligators and snakes. In both cases, Knutson highlights for the reader what can be learned from studying road-kills. In the case of alligators in Florida the author concludes that the increased number of "on the road" sightings of the creature in the 1980s illustrates that the population of the American Alligator (*Alligator mississippiensis*) has recovered from near extinction. On the other hand, the decline in sightings of snakes on asphalt highways, particularly in the Southwestern United States, shows us that snake populations have suffered significantly from the building and spread of roads. (Snakes being cold-blooded creatures have the deadly habit of sunbathing on asphalt.)

It must be noted that Knutson limits his subject area to fauna that are usually found flattened on roads. This means that larger mammals -- such as moose, bear and deer -- are not included in the book; for they usually remain three-dimensional after being hit by a vehicle.

It is unfortunate that Knutson's message has not attracted an audience in Halifax's university community. Until this reviewer picked up this book from St. Mary's Library it had yet to be "signed-out". Although one explanation for this may be the book's United States origin there remains much for a Canadian driver to learn from reading this book. While it remains unfortunate that humans in cars are a major predator of animals it would be even more unfortunate if humans did not learn what knowledge can be gained from these deaths. Understanding the relationship between human activities and animal responses to such activities is important if humans are going to live in greater harmony with the other creatures of this earth. Those animals that become flattened fauna may not be adorable like seal pups, but we should be concerned about them. Knutson's book is a first step. And, to some extent it has succeeded; biology teachers in Minneapolis-St. Paul have found it to be an excellent teaching resource.

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