

World's Greatest Wipers



Dalton and Dagmar Dinklaker paused to wave to the crowd as they prepared to compete in the Third Invitational International Window Washing Tournament in Fort Worth, Texas. They were among a hundred and twenty-two teams competing for title of World's Greatest Wipers. Preliminary time trials had already eliminated half of the participants due mostly to a judge who could not abide even the teeniest water smear. Dalton had left one such mark, but Dagmar deftly wiped it dry with her absorbent fingernail pod before it was spotted (ha). Now their task was to wash, rinse, and polish 18 streaked and grimy windows on the 30th floor of a high-rise apartment complex. The world record was 66.512 seconds. Dalton and Dagmar were shooting for an even minute. But the moment they had clambered aboard the Competition Scaffold that was suspended a dizzying 150 feet above the ground, Dagmar noticed that their cleaning bucket and rags were nowhere to be found. Someone had swiped them! So their smiles of self-confidence belied a deep-seated anxiety. They had no choice but to go back to the basics. So when the starter's pistol fired, the pair employed the "spit and polish" method – expectorate onto the glass pane, then wipe it dry with an absorptive wrist band. That worked okay for the first dozen windows, but by the time they'd reached number 15, their mouths had begun to dry up. And by the seventeenth window, there was no saliva to be had anywhere. And yet *somehow* they finished all 18 windows, leaving nary a water smear. True, their combined time of 69.252 seconds was not good enough for the winners' podium, but the fact that they finished at all was a tribute to some quick and daring thinking. So, how *did* the Dinklakers manage to clean those last two windows?