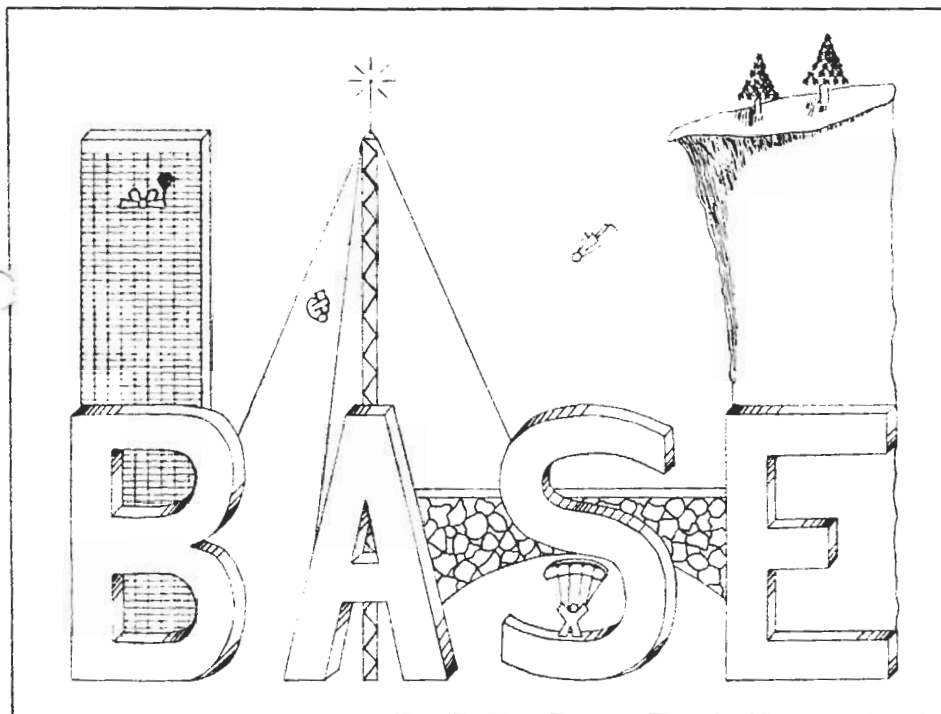


# BASE™ MAGAZINE

TO BENEFIT ALL MEN . . . TO HARM NO MAN . . .



## QUOTATIONS... TO INSPIRE US BY...

- *Happy are those who dream dreams, and are willing to pay the price to see them come true.*
- *I DO NOT CHOOSE TO BE A COMMON MAN. It is my right to be uncommon . . . if I can. I seek opportunity . . . not security. I do not wish to be a kept citizen, humbled and dulled by having the state look after me. I want to take the calculated risk; to dream and to build, to fail and to succeed. I refuse to barter incentive for a dole. I prefer the challenges of life to the guaranteed existence; the thrill of fulfillment to the state of calm utopia. I will not trade freedom for beneficence nor my dignity for a handout. I will never cower before any master nor bend to any threat. It is my heritage to stand erect, proud and unafraid; to think and act for myself; enjoy the benefits of my creations and to face the world boldly and say, this I have done. All this is what it means to be an American.*
- *The man who knows "how" will always have a job; the man who knows "why" will be his boss.*
- *The highest mountain peak receives the light first, followed eventually by even the entire valley at noonday.*
- *The man who puts aside perfection for the sake of travel, gets nowhere slowly; but the man who puts aside travel for the sake of perfection, gets anywhere instantly.*
- *Results need no excuses.*
- *What you identify with, and respond to, you experience.*
- *In the service of good, giving never impoverishes and withholding never enriches.*
- *Anyone can tell you how many seeds an apple has, but who can tell you how many apples a seed has?*
- *There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.—Shakespeare.*
- *One man's floor is another man's ceiling.*

The United States BASE Association is founded for and dedicated to the safety, advancement, and positive public image of BASE jumpers and BASE jumping throughout the world. Webster defines "association" as "a body of persons organized for some common purpose." The acronym BASE is derived from the words: BUILDING, ANTENNA TOWER (any tower or stack), SPAN (any bridge, arch, cable or dome), and EARTH (any cliff or natural formation). Every person who makes at least one jump from each category is awarded an officially recorded BASE number. Each jump must involve using a parachute as a life-saving device which cannot be inflated prior to the jump. The USBA publishes a list of all known "jumped" and "jumpable" BASE sites. BASE Magazine strives to disseminate information, technology, experiences, and opinions about BASE jumping "to benefit all men, to harm no man." Mem-

bership into the United States BASE Association is extended to anyone interested in the concept of man jumping off of fixed objects, an esoteric aspect of man's age-old dream of self-flight. BASE jumping is recognized as a sport, not a stunt. Understanding the motivation behind BASE jumping is perhaps only reached through the gradual osmosis of knowledge that "man's birthright is freedom and dominion over all the earth." BASE jumping is but one of countless facets of life which help inspire all of us to find, understand, and demonstrate this birthright. For these reasons, "everybody envies our ecstasy, but only those who dare, can share it."

BASE™ Magazine is published as the need arises, but no less than six issues per year. Subscription rate is \$8.00 for any consecutive six issue period. For foreign air mail postage, please add \$8.00. Please make all checks or money orders payable to "BASE", 12619 South Manor Dr., Hawthorne, CA 90250 USA, Phone (213) 678-0163. The acronym BASE™, BASE™ MAGAZINE, BASE™ AWARD, YOSEMITE CLIFF JUMPER—EL CAPITAN AWARD, are trademarked, copyrighted, and/or owned exclusively by Carl R. Boenish, 1980, all rights reserved. The entire contents of BASE™ Magazine is copyrighted, 1981, by Carl R. Boenish, all rights reserved. BASE™ Magazine is edited by Carl R. Boenish and is the unofficial publication of the United States BASE Association. Articles, letters and photos are welcomed from the readership, but cannot be returned without a stamped, self-addressed envelope enclosed.

BASE AWARD		
ASE #1	Phil Smith	TX
ASE #2	Phil Mayfield	TX
ASE #3	Jean Boenish	CA
ASE #4	Carl Boenish	CA
ASE #5	Mike Perron	CA
ASE #6	Sunny Ramos	CA
ASE #7	Dewayne Bruette	LA
ASE #8	Bradley Smith	CA
ASE #9	Andy Smith	TX

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NIGHT BASE #2	Phil Smith	TX
NIGHT BASE #3	Andy Smith	TX

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Mike Perron	5

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Phil Smith	4

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#### NEW QUOTATIONS

NO BRIDGE TOO HIGH  
NO CLIFF TOO STEEP  
NO OBJECT TOO TALL  
FOR US TO LEAP!

Mike Perron  
BASE #5

WHEN  
CLIFF  
JUMPING  
IS OUTLAWED,  
ONLY "OUTLAWS"  
WILL CLIFF JUMP.

Anonymous  
BASE #2

WE DO WHATEVER IT TAKES  
TO GET THE JOB DONE!

Roger Nelson  
Freak Brother #2

BUILD A HOUSE OF QUALITY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WOODS,  
AND THE WHOLE WORLD WILL BEAT A TRAIL TO ITS FRONT DOOR.  
Re-cycled from Willie Nelson off the television set.

THE WHOLE WORLD  
IS JUMPABLE!  
Anonymous BASE #4

CONSISTENCY IS THE LAST REFUGE OF THE UNIMAGINATIVE -- RULES ARE FOR THE OBEDIENCE  
OF FOOLS, BUT THE GUIDELINES OF WISE MEN. Two favorite sayings of Andy Keech



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# LETTERS

ello Carl,

This is to inform you that I have sent a request for a legal El Cap jump to the Park Superintendent, along with a letter stating that I have waited two years for permission, then finally received it, and then had it revoked three weeks prior to my jump date. I also told them that I'd wait two more years for permission, after which time I'd make the jump regardless of the consequences. I also informed them that I'd take only pictures and leave only footprints (where they belong) while in the park.

You were in Oklahoma when I made my first BASE jump. I went back a week later and made my first night BASE jump. It was even better than the day jump. There was complete darkness except for the antenna lights. Watching them take place by was an incredible visual experience.

I'm hooked! Here's a check for my subscription to BASE Magazine. Blue skies,

Larry Wolfe,  
Fall City, WA

## WRONG CONCLUSION

(Reprinted from PARACHUTIST Magazine)

Recently, I read an article (in another publication) about a new award called the BASE award. To qualify, a person must jump from a building, an antenna, a span (or bridge) and an earth formation (or cliff). The award was developed by Carl Boenish, one of our sport's most respected representatives to the non-jumping public as well as one of the foremost advisers to USPA on the development of rules governing jumps from El Capitan.

Skydiving suffers from bad press no matter how hard we try to promote safety. The BASE award will supply just one more opportunity for the whuffos to point a finger and call us irresponsible daredevils. Considering the fact that no regulations have been published to govern BASE jumps (other than El Cap), how can we disagree? In fact, Boenish told us in his article that his wife, who had less than 100 jumps and did not even qualify to make demo jumps, has already qualified for the BASE award! Granted, she probably received superior training. Even so, what is to keep anyone with a few jumps under his or her belt from pursuing the award?

It is not my intention to deny any qualified person the right to their "pursuit of happiness" and the "free spirit." All I am saying is that we need to do a lot more analysis of such a program before a lot of people "jump to the wrong conclusion." Rick Weinberg,  
Birmingham, AL

## BASE JUMPS NOT SKYDIVING

(Reprinted from SKYDIVING)

Just thought I'd cast my vote on the fixed-object (bridge, etc.) jumps. Since I started jumping in 1963, I always thought skydiving was the art of flying your body into a planned formation, or turning on your axis in a 6.8-second style jump.

I wish someone would explain to me what falling off a mountain or jumping off a bridge or tower or trestle have even remotely to do with the fine art of flying your body in freefall.

Butch Rubb  
Swampscott, MA

## ON BASE JUMPS

(Reprinted from SKYDIVING)

After reading Butch Rubb's letter and having read and heard of similar publications elsewhere, I felt compelled to answer.

People who feel that BASE type jumps have no place in our sport can't see beyond the ends of their noses. Since when have airplanes been the reason why we skydive? Most of the people I know don't really care what they step out of as long as they can make that next jump without delay.

An airplane is merely an elevator. A platform from which to skydive. A five second delay is a five second delay whether you step out of an airplane, or off of a bridge. It's all freefall and neither jump is less of a skydive than the other.

As for making leaps from low altitudes, that's the same choice everyone makes when they make their first jump. Some will feel it's worth it and some won't.

Besides, fixed object jumps are fun and a unique experience that you can't get at your DZ.

So our leaders should stop attacking these kinds of jumps and start spreading knowledge and information about them so everyone can MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICE. In this sport, ignorance promotes death and there is already too much of both.

Peter Hammond  
Los Angeles, CA

## WRONG EL CAP NUMBERS!

Got your El Cap app a few days ago. Unfortunately, it seems, the numbering dilemma was never solved. The last time I talked to Carl about this, he informed me that the only number available was #377 which I refused to accept on the grounds it was not chronologically correct. Now the app has assigned me number 389--which is even worse. If the numbers cannot be assigned in correlation with the date jumped (not the date you found out about the jump), then the numbering system cannot be considered acceptable, or valid. Therefore, it is with regret that I have to decline your invitation to buy a patch and certificate.

Mom always said, "If you can't do it right, then don't do it at all."

Sincerely,

Leigh Webb,  
Los Angeles, CA

Dear Leigh Webb,

Yes, unfortunately there are several mistakes in the chronology of the El Cap numbering system. Happily, it is only a few percent, though. If there were no compromises made, no numbers

# LETTERS CONTINUED

would have been issued to date, since there are still a few who have not responded and it would take literally only one person to hold up all the numbers. We feel our list is as good as is humanly possible. Some days we would receive lists with different numbers of people for a particular day, let alone a different exit order. Very often people only knew about their two or three friends with them and had no knowledge of even how many others had jumped that day, let alone who they were. What would you have done under these circumstances? The National Park Service has never kept a record of people, permits and dates. We have checked with them on this several times. If you have a better system, we would love to hear about it. We agree with your Mom, but phrase it a little differently: "Appreciate perfection, but don't demand it, because it is there regardless." Unfortunately, the skydivers' adage hits home closer: "If you snooze, you lose." We all should be grateful for everything we receive. We are enclosing an unnumbered El Cap patch as a sample for your perusal. Please return it when you are finished with it.

Respectfully yours, --Ed.  
P.S.: Half Dome and Glacier Point numbering systems are still single digit and so far, at least, are still perfectly chronological!

## LETTER FROM JORMA OSTER, FINLAND

Dear Carl and Jean,

I have just returned from Trollveggen in Norway where I made my second jump. There have already been over 100 jumps from TW made by 56 different jumpers. Now, when every country's nationals are over, it is going to be quite a busy place up there.

I also have some bad news for you. There has again been another rescue operation with 4 helicopters and a lot of men (total cost of the rescue operation was over \$100,000 and lasted two days). Two German jumpers, whom I met two days before their jump, took probably too long a freefall (12-13 seconds). The first one hit the ground without having time to use his reserve. According to the people who saw the accident, his canopy opened only partly. The jumper hit the snow first and rolled under the ice and snow. It took 32 hours before the rescue group found him ALIVE!!! He had hurt his back seriously. His friend who jumped 25 minutes later had a malfunction also but succeeded to use his reserve. He was tangled into the mountain and had to be rescued by helicopter. He was safe after 12 hours. Two days before this accident, one Swedish jumper broke his leg after having twisted lines and hitting the wall.

After all these accidents the press and television was full with negative stories against cliff jumping. The local police said that it would be impossible to stop anyone from jumping the Trollwall because the jumpers were not breaking any law. Also, the area is too large for the police to guard. The Norwegian Air Sports Association (NASA) soon came to the spot and asked jumpers not to jump from TW. Their authority is somewhat limited. There has also been several Norwegian

jumpers who have jumped. There is also a guestbook on the exit place where jumpers can write their names. The Norwegians who will lose their license if they jump, write only in the book, "Norwegian." If the two Germans had been Norwegians and had jumped in secrecy, they probably would still be hanging on the wall without anyone ever knowing that they had jumped. All previous Norwegians had jumped in utmost secrecy without telling anyone about their plans before the jump. The NASA should realize that all coins have two sides. The whole Trollwall area is enormous and it would be very easy for a jumper to get lost without leaving a track.

It has also been discussed that we should make our own association as you have done. I think we must do this very soon. This solution would satisfy all parties. The Finnish Air Sport Association has been watching jump from TW and has made the announcement that it will not dismiss its members if they jump from TW. The Finnish Association says that it is better that they wash their hands of the matter and say that they have nothing to do with this kind of activity. So this is about it regarding Trollwall this time.

Someone has made a cliff jump off a cliff in Madeira, Spain. It did not go well. He went up to the exit place by taxi with his jumper friend. They both planned to jump. The first one jumped first and had difficulty to get clear of the mountain. He touched the mountain edge three times during freefall and nearly hit himself into the stones. It was pure luck that the guy is alive! The mountain is not sheer for the first 150 meters. A group from Sweden visited the place also but they decided not to jump. The Finnish jumper who jumped and made it warns all other jumpers not to try to jump from this place. He jumped from TW this summer and was very surprised about the long distance he had to the wall when opening!

Enclosed is money for my EL CAP patch. Please send it along to me. Hope to hear from you soon and good luck.

High buildings and blue skies,

Jorma Oster  
Helsinki, Finland

## THE 1981 YOSEMITE CLIFF JUMPING SEASON -- AN EDITORIAL

According to reliable but unofficial sources apparently there has been relatively little activity in cliff jumping in Yosemite Valley this summer. Even though "hundreds" of skydivers claim that they would like to make the "jump of a lifetime," most have done little to make it a reality. A significant reason for this trend, it is felt, is because this year the World Relative Work Championships are being held in Zephyrhills, FL, and "everybody" has competition on their minds, as well as the fact they the National Park Service has refused to grant prior authorization this summer for any cliff jumping to any persons, qualified or not. Let's hope that the 1982 summer season in Yosemite National Park is not a repeat of 1981!

(cont. on page



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

P.O. BOX 577

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA 95189

IN REPLY REFER TO:

W56

July 17, 1981

BASF Magazine  
United States BASF Association  
12019 South Manor Drive  
Basthorpe, CA 90250

Dear Jean and Carl:

It was good to talk to both of you yesterday (July 13) about the May-June 1981 issue of BASF Magazine. In that issue you indicated that Glacier Point and Half Dome are jumpable. We had 10 injuries associated with the 1980 cliff-jumping program from El Capitan. Some of these injuries were extremely serious, but fortunately no fatalities resulted. I think that we would generally agree that El Cap is the "best" jump site. However, Half Dome is hazardous, and Glacier Point is extremely risky to the point of being foolhardy. Of course, all of this conjecture is academic because Yosemite no longer has a cliff-jumping program. Without a permit, we have to cite violators under the Powerless Flight regulation in 36 Code of Federal Regulations, Section 2.36. This has a maximum penalty by a fine not exceeding \$500 or by imprisonment not exceeding six months, or both.

Carl, I hate to get into this penalty stuff, but feel that the BASF jumpers should be informed about what they are getting into. Please advise them that if they jump El Cap between February 1 and August 1, they will be disturbing the Peregrine Falcons which are protected by the Endangered Species Act. This Act, which is covered under 16 United States Code, 15-31, has the penalty of a fine not exceeding \$10,000, or by imprisonment not exceeding one year, or both. Now, that is heavy duty! We would hate to see any of our friends in the parachuting community arrested for that offense. However, we are committed to the responsibility of giving the Peregrine Falcon the opportunity to nest and survive. This year they produced three fledglings, and two of them are practicing on the face of El Cap today. This is one of only two known nesting sites of this wonderful raptor in the entire Sierra Nevada mountain range.

The reason that we have had to discontinue our cliff-jumping program was a combination of three factors. One was safety. Law enforcement was the second factor. Even with an organized program, many "free spirits" in the parachuting community wanted to go ahead and do their own thing. With 35 infractions of the cliff-jumping rules which we wrote up together, there were numerous court cases. It required law enforcement efforts at the same level that it would have taken to prohibit the program in the first place. The third factor was the problem of crowd and traffic control. Combined with the time of the office staff, we simply couldn't afford this expenditure for 12 people per day. Based on this, we had to shut the program down on September 9, 1980. Given the present levels of funding, about all we can do is try to control illegal jumping in Yosemite together with all the other problems we have in running this place.

I am saddened at the prospect of being placed in an adversary role and having to enforce our regulations in Yosemite against some of the many fine people in the parachuting community that we met this last season. We really enjoy you guys, but cannot take on the additional budgetary or staffing commitment to a cliff-jumping program.

Sincerely yours,

*Charles W. Wendt*

Charles W. Wendt  
Chief Ranger

Phil S. Mayfield, President  
United States B.A.S.E. Association  
1219 Moore Terrace  
Arlington, Texas, 76010  
(817) 265-9440  
(214) 324-8117

Charles W. Wendt, Chief Ranger  
National Park Service  
P.O. Box 577  
Yosemite National Park  
California, 95189

August 8, 1981

Dear Mr. Wendt,

Thanks for your reply to my recent request for permission to jump off one of the cliffs in your beautiful park. I was extremely disappointed, however, to learn that my request had been denied. I am somewhat perplexed by a few things which you alluded to and would like clarification, please, on the following:

- 1.) Exactly what law prohibits descending from the cliffs of the park to the valley below under airfoils or parachutes?
- 2.) By what sets of facts or figures did you determine that El Capitan jumps are "not very safe"?
- 3.) Why do you feel that Half Dome and Glacier Point are "extremely dangerous" to jump from?
- 4.) What impact has the cliff jumping by hang-gliding enthusiasts had on your park (specifically regarding increases in manpower and expenses directly or indirectly attributable to this activity)?

The most exhilarating parachute jumps that I've made in over a decade of jumping have been within the confines of your park. Since my first El Capitan jump (which you signed off in my log book), I've made approximately thirty jumps off of a total of eleven different objects including three cliffs. I've learned that although the conditions, and risks differ greatly from skydiving, cliff-jumping can be done safely just as cliffs can be scaled safely and seemingly dangerous slopes can be negotiated safely on skis. "Safety", after all,

is an abstract term the meaning of which is affected by variables such as conditions, competence, and attitude. The awareness of potential dangers is generally a strong enough deterrent to keep sportsmen (and women) from biting off more than they can chew. Rules and regulations are certainly an aid, but nothing can improve safety in any endeavor more than education.

I certainly do empathize with your concerns about cliff-jumping in Yosemite National Park and I happily offer my services to help formulate a viable plan for this activity for the 1982 season... one that will tax neither the manpower nor the funds of the Park Service.

Many honorable and conscientious jumpers are being forced to either forego the "jump of a lifetime" or make the jump illegally (often under less than optimum conditions for the sake of secrecy). Hopefully, with a carefully formulated plan, their situation as well as yours will be ameliorated.

Sincerely,

*Phil S. Mayfield*

Phil S. Mayfield



### NEWS FLASH

KFWB News Radio reported in mid-July that 3 peregrine falcons had been spotted nesting atop some 8-story highrise buildings in downtown Westwood Village, about 10 miles from Los Angeles International Airport. The peregrine falcon is on the endangered species list and some of these birds have been spotted nesting on the face of El Capitan in Yosemite National Park during the spring months of the last couple of years.

Some people theorize that lots of letter writing will succeed in obtaining authorized cliff jumps in Yosemite Valley next summer. Others seem to feel that only constant *de facto* cliff jumping activity, with or without "permits," will persuade the NPS to listen seriously to the cliff jumpers. Yet others believe that cliff jumping isn't illegal whatsoever in the first place because no one to date has tested the legality of the Park's handling of all cases to date by fighting a citation to the limit in the courts. The twenty or so who have been "convicted" of unlawful "aerial delivery" have all plead guilty because, among other various reasons, they didn't have the time, money, and/or inclination to fight the complaint to the end of appeals. The original complaints against Boenish *et al* which lasted over a year were eventually dismissed on technical grounds of unlawful governmental procedures.

Reliable but unofficial sources say that as of the last week in August, 1981, about 12 cliff jumps have been made off of El Cap, nearly all or all at night. Two groups of two each have jumped off of Half Dome without incident. Delays averaged about 8 seconds with the sliders being stowed up, with a 4,000 foot canopy ride. A square reserve at this site is more than desirable. One group of two apparently has jumped from Glacier Point. It is described as an "advanced site" for experienced, hard-core BASE jumpers only, as the net sheer is only about 850 feet. Separate passes were made with slider down with a delay of 3 seconds maximum. The canopy ride is about 2,900 feet.

In a sense, ironically, cliff jumping today in Yosemite is unregulated, as many feel it should be, assuming the prospective BASE jumper isn't detected. In a sense, the present status quo automatically keeps the sites safe from the unqualified, would-be cliff jumpers. The unzealous, uninformed, and/or unqualified usually don't want to brave the ranger hassles as well as the sometimes difficult elements of nature. The people who go ahead and cliff jump anyway are usually seen to succeed because they have their goals and priorities firmly in mind and they want to accomplish them at any cost, and this intense desire seems to be an important ingredient to success in a safe cliff jump as well as not being detected. These jumpers usually seem to be the hard-core, current, active and qualified ones anyway. It's sort of like Darwin's "survival of the fittest."

All of this is not to say that both sides, the National Park Service and the United States BASE Association, don't want to solve these possible areas of contention harmoniously. On the contrary, the USBA sincerely hopes that at least El Capitan and Half Dome will be accessible to cliff jumpers during the 1982 summer season with the blessings and close protection of the National Park Service.

Comments on this subject are welcome and will be printed in future issues of BASE Magazine. --Ed.

#### ANGEL FALLS JUMPED

Last issue BASE Magazine reported that Tom Bollinger et al from Phoenix, AZ had made the first successful jumps from the sheer cliffs in Venezuela. It is true. Tom has promised BASE Magazine a full-blown

report of the adventure, including a "tunnel" they had to fall through, calm winds on top and an unexpected 50 mph gale-force wind the last few hundred feet under canopy, including 50-foot tree landings for everybody instead of water landings into white-water rapids, some upset "Federales," and much, much more. We're all dying to hear the full report, Tom.

#### EL CAP JUMPERS

If you have ever made a cliff jump from El Capitan and are interested in obtaining your officially recorded EL CAP number and free ID card, please fill out the EL Cap Application form as found on page 7 of this issue and mail it to USBA headquarters. We currently have issued numbers up to approximately EL CAP No. 410. If you would like to purchase the beautiful, 6-color EL CAP patch (a Xerox copy of the patch is shown in this issue but without justice to its high quality), please send \$12 for the patch plus \$2 for the individual numbers embroidered one-at-a-time on each patch, plus \$1 for handling and shipping. If you would also like to purchase a handsome 3-color wall certificate acknowledging the date of your first El Cap jump and EL CAP No., please add \$6 for the certificate and \$4 for the custom calligraphy (each certificate takes almost an hour of preparation), plus \$1 for handling and shipping. The certificate measures 10X13 and is ideal for custom framing. If you would like both the patch and certificate and apply for both at the same time, a special total price of \$20 prevails, including handling and shipping. Application form completely filled out must accompany all requests. Make all checks or money orders payable to "BASE."

#### BASE MAGAZINE - Calendar Year Basis

Subscription to BASE Magazine is maintained on a calendar-year basis only. BASE Magazine is published every other month, or 6 issues per year at \$8.00 per year (foreign subscribers, please add \$8.00 for air mail postage). If you subscribe in the first part of the year, or the latter, you will be slated to receive issues numbering 1-6. If, for example, you subscribe in April, 1982, you should be slated to receive issues numbering 7-12. Everyone's renewal starts at the beginning of the next calendar year. Hopefully, BASE Magazine will be regarded as a history and reference source of BASE jumping throughout the world and subscribers will want to hold on to their back issues as a handy reference to their new sport. Back issues will be reprinted as the demand arises.

SUBSCRIBE now to BASE Magazine. You receive 6 issues per year for only \$8.00 annually. Foreign orders, please add \$8.00 for air mail postage. Send cash, check, or money order to: BASE, 12619 S. Manor Dr., Hawthorne, CA 90250 213 678-0163

Name	Phone
Street	
City	State Zip



# YOSEMITE CLIFF JUMPER — EL CAPITAN AWARD

(Application)

Last Name	First Name	Middle Name	( ) Phone Number
Street Address			Occupation
City	State	Zip Code	Date of First Jump (Airplane)
Sex	Age	Weight	Height
			Birthdate
Licenses and Awards			Years Jumping
			<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No USPA Member
			Number of Prior Jumps

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN: I hereby affirm that I made a cliff jump from El Capitan in Yosemite National Park and that I hereby request and apply for my officially recorded El Capitan number and I.D. card (with an option to purchase now or at a later date an El Cap Patch and El Cap Wall Certificate):

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Application \_\_\_\_\_

## DETAILS OF FIRST EL CAP JUMP:

Date	<input type="checkbox"/> A.M. <input type="checkbox"/> P.M.	Hour	mph Winds on Top	mph Winds on Ground	<input type="checkbox"/> Visual <input type="checkbox"/> None Communication to Ground	<input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Other:
Jump No.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Stable Exit	Delay in Seconds	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Line Twists	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Face Wall	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Touch Wall	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Malfunction	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Cufaway	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Touch Trees	<input type="checkbox"/> El Cap Meadow <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Landing Area			
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Safe Landing	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Injury	Describe Injury				
Type of Main Canopy		Type of Reserve Canopy		Type of Release		
Total Number of People in Party		Number Who Jumped		On Top Who Didn't Jump		Number on Ground
<input type="checkbox"/> Big Oak Flat <input type="checkbox"/> Yosemite Falls <input type="checkbox"/> Tamarack <input type="checkbox"/> Yosemite Creek <input type="checkbox"/> Other:						
Trail To Top		Hours Hiking Up		Pounds I Carried Up		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Used Sleeping Bag	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Packed Chute on Top	<input type="checkbox"/> Car <input type="checkbox"/> Air <input type="checkbox"/> Other: Type Travel to Park		Miles Traveled to Park		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Travel Just for This Jump	Days in Park		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No First Fixed Object Jump		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Like To Jump El Cap Again	

**COMMENTS** Include other El Cap Jumps (list dates, hours), other fixed-objects jumps (list the objects, locations and dates), and comments in general about your experiences in cliff jumping at El Capitan:

NOTE: Please print your name exactly as you wish it to appear on your wall certificate: \_\_\_\_\_



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Associate District Judge Paul Simmons shakes hands with parachutists, Jane Mellow (left) and Lori Love (right), after fining them \$1 for trespassing for jumping off Channel 8 tower.

## Women parachute from tower, land in jail

Two women visiting Oklahoma to participate in the U.S. Parachute Association national championships in Muskogee got a first-hand look at the law last Wednesday as they made a little trip to the county jail.

Lori Love, 31, of Wichita, and Jane Suzanne Mellow, 20, of Yorkshire, England, were arrested shortly after noon after they floated by parachute off the Channel Eight tower near Coweta.

Both women, their hands blistered from the 1,700-foot climb to make the jump, said the experience was well worth the effort and gladly paid the \$1 fine assessed Love.

A trespassing charge against Mellow in the same incident was dismissed because the security guard only told one of the women they would be trespassing if they climbed the tower.

The two women said they had more than 1,000 jumps between them and while they found the experience "beautiful" they would not recommend it for the inexperienced parachutist.

The women were not the first persons to jump off the tower, people have tried the stunt several times before and since the national championships moved into the area earlier this summer, there have been an estimated 15 persons jumping from the tower, one of the tallest man-made structures in the world. Five persons are said to

have jumped from the tower in pitch-dark Tuesday night and seven others jumped earlier in the week.

None of those were caught, however.

Associate District Judge Paul Simmons, who assessed the \$1 fine but suspended \$27 in court costs, reprimanded the two jumpers and they said they also got a lecture from the deputy who arrested them.

Sadie Adwon, general manager for KTUL, said the tower jumps pose a "great danger" to those taking the dive and security at the site will be increased to prevent further incidents.

Love and Mellow said the hardest part of the jump was the climb, they began their climbing about 6:30 a.m. and it took them until about noon to reach the point where the tower begins narrowing. That point is about 500 feet higher than the top of the Empire State Building in New York City.

The women were almost at their jumping point before they were spotted. "By that time, it was too late to stop us," Mellow said.

Winds and body momentum carried the women away from the tower to a point about a quarter-mile away. Mellow jumped first, followed by Love.

They said the Channel Eight tower has a reputation as being one of the best jumps around. "It was a challenge," Mellow said. "But I certainly wouldn't do it again."

# Skydivers leap from TV tower

COWETA (AP) — A television tower soaring 1,909 feet into the eastern Oklahoma sky presented a "personal challenge," said one of two women who parachuted from near the top of the tower.

"It was a personal challenge — something that you have to do for yourself," Jane Suzanne Mellow said after the unauthorized feat Wednesday.

Mellow, 20, of Yorkshire, England and Lori Love, 31, of Wichita, Kan., were exhausted but unhurt after the jump.

It required a five-hour climb, including rest stops during which the women sipped orange juice, to reach the 1,700-foot level of one of the tallest transmission towers in the country.

Upon drifting safely to earth, the women were arrested by deputies alerted to the attempt.

"We received a severe warning, which of course we deserved," Mellow said.

As many as 15 other parachutists attending the U.S. Parachuting Association national championships in nearby Muskogee have jumped from the tower in recent days but were not apprehended, Mellow said.

WAGONER COUNTY deputies, summoned by a security guard for Tulsa television station KTUL-TV, arrested the two women on a misdemeanor trespassing complaint.

Love was fined \$1 while Mellow was released with a warning.

Deputy Thomas Powell said authorities watched for about two hours as the two women, clad in jumping coveralls and wearing the 10-pound parachutes, made their way up the tower.

When he arrested them in a nearby field, Powell said "it was a real shocker" to find they were women.

The skydivers first saw the tower while flying from Muskogee to Tulsa and decided to jump from it, Mellow said. Coweta is about 20 miles southeast of Tulsa. The tower is in an isolated area of treeless fields.

"Just to do these things once in a

while, as long as you're sensible and it's given the proper precautions — I think it can become a valid part of the sport," Mellow said.

SAIDIE ADWON, general manager of KTUL-TV, said television station officials called authorities after being notified by security personnel because "we were pretty concerned."

"There are guywires and there is power going to the tower. It would take a foolhardy person to do it," the television official said. "We will increase our security because there is great danger."

Mellow said the two women discussed the feat with jumpers who already had done it, then arrived at the tower with a pilot friend at 6:30 a.m. to begin the climb.

"We would kind of rest on the side of the ladder. It was quite hard on the arms, and I have a couple of blisters on my hands," Mellow said.

Temperatures rose to nearly 100 degrees, but the climbers weren't bothered by the heat because "there was quite a breeze," Mellow said.

When the women arrived at the 1,700-foot level, where the tower begins narrowing to a point, Mellow said she jumped first.

"I didn't want to be left there on my own," she said.

THE SKYDIVERS leaped from the tower one at a time and delayed three to five seconds before pulling the ripcord to deploy the rectangular parachutes favored by sport jumpers.

The canopies opened at about 1,500 feet, lower than the 2,000-foot minimum observed by skydivers.

The women landed without incident about one-half mile away and were taken into custody.

### TOWER-DIVE SILHOUETTE

The beautiful "Tower-Dive Silhouette" half-tone artwork appearing on the opposite page is presented to BASE Magazine readers by David Floyd of Minneapolis, MN. He took a straight photograph of a recent tower dive using a long lens and made it into a piece of artwork by making successive high-contrast copies of the shot over and over again until everything was either black or white. Thanks for your effort, David.

# MORE LETTERS

## TWO WOMEN JUMP KTUL ANTENNA TOWER

Dear BASE Magazine,

Enclosed please find newspaper clippings about my recent tower jump. I heard we also made the London papers.

On the subject of publicity and criticism, I have what probably sounds like a dumb question, but what approach do you use to the general public to convince them we're not all crazy? Having claimed to be from Wichita (I lived there for the past year), I went back after the jump for a few days to visit friends, and was literally bombarded by the news media (television, newspaper and radio) for interviews, etc. I've never been very good with whuffos and I didn't want to do BASE any harm, so I turned them all down. Could I have been more help by talking to them?

A couple more things: I heard or read that you have a list of all jumpable objects or places or some such thing; if so, can I have a copy? The tallest thing I can find anywhere around here is a 1,000 foot smoke stack, and I doubt that will work.

As per your request, here is my personal account of what happened on the tower jump:

"Arriving on site around 6:30 AM, our trip to the base of KTUL's TV tower was uneventful, and we soon began the climb. This brought two surprises: one, the majority of the stress is put on one's hands, arms, and shoulders (things like push-ups and pull-ups would be good tower climbing exercises), and two, due to the ladder's rough surface, gloves are an absolute necessity. We each had a can of Gatorade, which was nice, but even in jumpsuits and rigs, heat was no problem, probably due to a rather strong wind.

"After some 3½ hours and 1500 feet, the welcoming party began to arrive, and upon reaching the top, it had grown to six cars and a pick-up, all of which appeared to be there for the duration, so we jumped. It was definitely worth the effort, and (my friend's) instructions worked perfectly: facing downwind, pilot chute in hand, jump straight up and down as into a pool, three-second delay, watch deployment, immediate back risers . . . and another surprise! There was so much more space than I expected, the guy wires literally posed no problem at all.

"Shortly after landing, we were taken back to the tower by the local police, who after a few name-and-age type questions, let us pack. This proved to be a lengthy process, however, created by three or four extra cops and (including ours), five or six cameras, all of which had to be arranged in every possible combination for innumerable photographs. At long last everyone was satisfied, and we were escorted to headquarters, where it was determined the only illegality was "trespassing after being forbidden." Unfortunately, I had been forbidden, having been there a few days earlier to "check it out," so they felt duty-bound to fine me: one dollar, court costs suspended. After another photo session, and congratulations all around, we were set free, with promises to stop by, as opposed to drop in, the next time we were in town."

Hope this helps

Lori Love  
Casa Grande, AZ

## HOW TO JUMP KTUL's TOWER LEGALLY

Dear BASE Magazine,

I live very near the famous KTUL Channel 8 TV tower just outside of Tulsa, Oklahoma which stands some 1740 feet tall--erected back in 1965. Numerous BASE jumps have been made from it over the last six months or longer, even though the first jump was made from this tower way back in 1970 under a cheapo 28-foot round canopy.

Anyway, I recently had conversation with the TV station management about the possibility of making authorized jumps off their tower by qualified BASE jumpers. They suggested that I send them a formal letter requesting such permission and that they would consider it. Right after the National Parachuting Championships, I wrote them such a letter and they were responding favorably to the idea. Then, two girls climbed up the tower without permission, jumped off and were caught. Even though they were fined only \$1.00 by the local judge, the station management took a dim view of the occurrence. They have recently posted two 24-hour guards and have installed cameras watching the tower. They also have indicated that they would prosecute anyone caught attempting to climb the tower without authorization. They also have asked me to advise anyone thinking about jumping the tower not to do so.

Carl, I think we still have a good chance to make some authorized jumps from this and other nearby towers. (For your information, there are reported to be over 100 TV antenna towers in the United States alone over 1,000 feet tall.) I told the management that I would use experienced jumpers, sign waivers, and even do extensive film work of the jumps and let them have free access to these movies to promote their tower and TV station. In considering my proposals, they felt that if they were to make a promo out of this film, it probably would influence others to make the jump without authorization and thereby just make their whole situation worse, not better!

Where do we go from here?

Sincerely,  
Mike Sisemore  
Locust Grove, OK

Dear Mike,

Before we attempt to draw any final conclusions about the dilemma, let us first review some of the unalterable facts which will determine the ultimate solutions if correct logic is utilized.

First of all, it certainly is noble and legitimate that men and women should dream of jumping off such majestic monuments to man's technological achievements as 1700-foot TV antenna towers. The fact that men and women can jump from these towers at all is, in certain senses, even a greater technological achievement than the towers themselves!

Second of all, the owner or owners of such towers clearly have the legal and moral rights to govern their property as they so choose.

# Up to 4 parachute from tower here

## Building owner, chute expert take dim view of leap

By MARGARET DOWNING  
Post Reporter

Sunday morning, at least one man and perhaps as many as four, parachuted off the top of the 75-story Texas Commerce Tower onto the grounds of Tranquility Park, Houston police said.

According to what 30-year-old Dewayne Bruette told police when they arrested him, he and three buddies came all the way from Sulphur, La., to make the jump.

The 1,049-foot structure on Main Street is proudly billed as the tallest building in the Southern United States.

"It was a pretty sight. It was just the wrong place," said Officer J.B. Fortune.

Fortune and his partner, M.R. Furstenfeld, were patrolling the downtown sector around 8:30 a.m. when they saw Bruette float by them, dangling from a blue-and-white parachute.

Bruette, who was charged with the

misdeemeanor offense of trespassing, was released later Sunday on \$205 bond.

Fortune said Bruette told officers three other men jumped before he did, but police never located the other parachutists.

Another man was standing nearby, filming the descent, Fortune said, but officers were not able to catch him either.

Bruette, an avid amateur parachutist, told officers he and his friends came to Houston from Sulphur and camped out overnight on top of the bank building before making their early-morning leap.

"The unit just happened to be driving by and saw him floating down," said Lt. Jerril Crutcher. The lieutenant said Bruette offered no resistance when arrested.

Bruette gave several different reasons for making the jump, Fortune said. One was that he hoped to make a film about the safety of parachuting. He also told

officers he was doing it "for the challenge," Fortune said.

Asked if he was surprised to see the parachutist, Fortune said, "No — I've seen everything."

Bruette, reached at his home Sunday, refused to discuss the leap.

Security guards for the bank building refused to discuss how the four parachutists made it to the top and stayed there without detection. But police said the guards are charged with protecting lower-level doors and windows, not the top of the building.

The guards were not amused, police added.

"They had a guy go off on a . . . hang glider a while back," Fortune explained, "and they kind of wanted to discourage that."

Jim Bosler, project manager with Gerald Hines Interests, the developer and owner of the tower, said his company had a very negative reaction: "Turner (Construction Co.), the general con-

tractor, does everything it can to keep people safe. Workers wear safety belts. It would have been a terrible tragedy if something had gone wrong."

Bosler said his company had "heard rumors of the hang gliding . . . about three months ago, but they never caught anyone."

Bosler said Hines Interests is "not going to press charges" in Sunday's incident, but he hoped publicity about the dangers of such a jump will discourage others from a similar leap.

Mike Smith, manager of Spaceland Parachute Center, had a similar view of the Sunday tower jump: "It's not sanctioned by my organization or by the United States Parachute Association."

"Normally, we tell people to open their parachutes above 2,000 feet," Smith said. "Working with low altitudes and very little time, they would have been in trouble if something had gone wrong."

## His chute failed to close

### One of four skydivers arrested after leap from atop 75-story downtown building

BY JONATHAN DAHL  
Chronicle Staff

## One of 4 skydivers seized in tower leap

Look, up in the air! It's a bird! It's a plane!

No, it's just a bunch of people parachuting off the 75-story Texas Commerce Bank Tower in downtown Houston.

That's right, Sunday morning, four men in parachute outfits leaped off the 1,049-foot-tall building, tallest in the country west of the Mississippi River.

All four escaped unharmed. But one didn't escape police.

Dewayne Bruette, 30, of Sulphur, La., a suburb of Lake Charles, was charged with criminal trespass. But a spokesman for the developer of the building, which is still under construction, said a request will be made to drop the charges.

Just what motivated the men remained a mystery. Patrolmen who arrested Bruette moments after he and his fellow daredevils jumped about 8:30 a.m. said he failed to give any plausible reason. And when he later emerged from police headquarters after posting \$205 bond, Bruette offered reporters only a wide, silent grin.

About the only explanation that police and observers seem willing to accept was the one that one of the jumpers told a witness:

"We're crazy."

But whatever the reason, the feat was certainly well planned. Each man wore the proper parachuting equipment, including helmet, and first sent out streamers to determine the wind's direction.

"As far as parachuting goes, they weren't nuts," said Officer M.R. Furstenfeld, who arrested Bruette in a park two blocks north of the building, bounded by Texas, Milam, Capitol and Travis. "They were just nuts for trying it."

Witnesses said the men planned out their escape — noting that getaway cars awaited the three who eluded police. The men, the witnesses said, even stationed photographers, one inside the building on the 47th floor — reportedly posing as a city building inspector — and one on the street, to record the event.

Bruette, the last to jump, apparently was unable to roll up his chute in time to get into his getaway car, witnesses said.

When he was arrested, Bruette did say he and the others sneaked into the building during the night. A spokesman for SETEC, a security patrol assigned to the building, said two guards were on duty but that "it would still be easy to slip in."

Once inside, the men apparently walked up 75 flights and prepared for their morning leaps — which provided an astounding sight for the drowsy construction workers arriving for the morning shift.

"I looked up, and there was this guy floating down in a parachute," recalled David McCartney, 36, of 5609 Nita Lee, still shaking his head. "It was fantastic to watch, excited the hell out of me."

He added, "It was worth coming to work today. They don't even have to pay me."

Witnesses said the first two men, wearing bright orange suits, simultaneously jumped from the north, or Texas Avenue side of the building. After falling about 20 flights, their multicolored chutes began to unravel and they floated in different directions — one north, over the Chronicle building to Old Market Square, a small park two blocks away, and one west towards Tranquility Park.

A third man, also in an orange suit, jumped from the same side and landed in Old Market Square. Bruette then took his turn, heading north as well.

Officer Furstenfeld said he and his partner, J.B. Fortune, were heading south on La Branch, a few blocks away, when they saw people looking up.

"It was a pretty interesting sight," Furstenfeld noted.

He said he followed Bruette's flight path and found him standing inside Old Market Square, dressed in a white parachute suit and holding a bright blue and white rolled-up chute.

Furstenfeld said Bruette, a muscular, blond man, first told him he was ejecting from a hot-air balloon that

was falling apart. He later said he jumped to demonstrate that construction workers on such tall structures should have parachutes for safety reasons.

Since construction began on the Texas Commerce Tower in November 1978, two workers have fallen to their deaths from scaffolding.

Mrs. Prudence Burns, chairman of an annual fair in Sulphur, said Bruette belongs to a group of skydivers and performed at the fair, doing target skydiving. She said she believes he is a construction worker.

Officer Furstenfeld said there was not a scratch on Bruette. "The only hurt was his pride," he said.

Furstenfeld said charges were filed against Bruette at the request of the security guards for SETEC, but Jim Bosler, a spokesman for Gerald D. Hines Interests, the building's developer, said a request would be made to drop the charges, "because we don't think it would prove anything."

He did say, though, that "our attitude would be different" if a similar stunt were repeated. "We don't like to see people jumping from our building," Bosler said.

Police said they have no record of anyone ever doing this before from any building here.



Bruette

# Several chutists have leaped from tower here

By MARGARET DOWNING  
Post Reporter

Sunday morning was not the first time someone has parachuted from the top of the 75-story Texas Commerce Tower in downtown Houston, the president of a skydiving club confirmed Monday.

Since January, members of the BASE (Building, Antenna, Span and Earth) Divers Association have been coming to Houston from throughout the United States to parachute from the top of the tallest building in the South, said Phil Mayfield, president of BASE Divers.

"From what I know, there have been 20 documented jumps made by 10 different people . . . on nine different days," said the 29-year-old Mayfield, a salesman who lives in Arlington, near Fort Worth.

"I was one of them (on Sunday's jump)," said Mayfield, who also said he was one of two parachutists who made the first jump from the building in January with a man he identified as Phil "Smitty" Ith of Houston.

Sunday, Dwayne Bruette, a 30-year-old Sulphur, La., man was arrested after making his first jump from the tower. Mayfield said this was the first time anyone has been caught in the act of jumping.

"The plan was for Smitty and I to go first 'cause we were filming each other and then the plan was for Dwayne and the other jumper to film us and go next (jumping together)," Mayfield said.

But Bruette stalled on top of the tower for some reason and this ultimately led to his detection and arrest, Mayfield said.

"I don't know why Dwayne waited," he added.

Curtis Johnson, a Houston pilot and amateur photographer, happened to be at the first jump in January and took pictures of the parachutists.

"They're just guys who do it for kicks," Johnson said.

Johnson said he understood each jump was meticulously planned out in advance and at the slightest hint of adverse weather conditions, the "mission" would be canceled.

Mayfield said members of BASE Divers are dedicated to jumping from various kinds of structures, which is considered more dangerous than jumping from a moving plane because of the low altitudes at which they work.

"There are seven people in the whole world" including himself, Mayfield said, who have made parachute jumps from each of the four BASE categories.

Sunday, Bruette became that seventh person, Mayfield said.

Sunday's project almost didn't come off, Mayfield said.

"This particular project was postponed three times over the last two or three months," Mayfield said.

Jumping from a building or other stationary object, with its added risk factor, provides a thrill that no longer comes from mere skydiving, Mayfield said.

"My first jump off anything stationary was last summer off El Capitan, a 3,000-foot cliff in Yosemite National Park. I always wanted to jump a building," Mayfield said. "If there was a legal building to jump, I would have paid money to do it legally, but since there's no legal place, we compromised."

"We didn't throw things off and try to hit people. We didn't hurt anyone. We just tried to make a clean getaway."

Mayfield was concerned about the image his group will receive since Bruette was apprehended and arrested for trespassing after his jump. He stressed that all BASE members are veteran jumpers and are extremely careful in all their parachuting.

"It's more dangerous to jump off that building than making a skydive, but I feel like it's safe," Mayfield said. "I've got two kids and 12 plus years of safe skydiving. I have no death wish."

"It's not for everybody. A lot of skydivers should not make jumps like this," Mayfield said.

No one was ever hurt in any of the jumps, Mayfield said, and he himself made three stand-up landings.

"We'd like to stay away from the sensationalism," he said. "The only reason I'm talking to you now is because Dwayne got arrested."

"Since we did finally get caught, I doubt we'll be able to get up there (Texas Commerce Tower) again," Mayfield said.

Still, he refused to disclose the details of how the parachutists made their way to the top of the tower without detection, saying, "I've still got friends that would dearly love to jump off the building."

## Man claims he made tower jump, says at least 9 others have done it

By JONATHAN DAHL  
and MIKE CINELLI  
Chronicle Staff

One of the four men who parachuted off the 75-story Texas Commerce Tower on Sunday says at least 10 individuals have pulled off the same stunt — some more than once.

Phil Mayfield, 29, an electrical engineer living in Arlington, admitted he was one of the four who, dressed in bright parachute outfits, leaped from the 1,044-foot-tall building, the tallest in the Southwest.

"We did it just for fun," he said Monday night. "It turns me on."

Mayfield said he has watched several people leap from the pentagon-shaped structure, still under construction in downtown Houston, and can document "at least" 10 others.

He also said he himself performed the stunt twice in January — once during the day, once at night.

"Even though it might sound crazy, we do know what we're doing," he said.

Although the jump Sunday came off without a hitch, one of the jumpers — Dwayne Bruette, 30, of Sulphur, La. — hit a slight snag upon landing. He was arrested and charged with criminal trespassing.

Bruette, now back home in Sulphur, today said he wants all the hoopla to die down.

"It was a beautiful jump," Bruette said. He noted, however, that the escape wasn't quite what he had planned. "I kinda blew that, didn't I?"

Bruette, a 13-year veteran of parachuting with 3,000 hours "in the air," revealed little of his reasons for the jump. "People do things for different reasons. I satisfy myself when I jump."

Asked if he climbed 75 flights of stairs to get to the jump site, Bruette said, "I can't imagine any other way" to reach it.

Parachuting officials say such daredevil gives the sport of sky diving a bad name.

"People begin to think that all sky divers are like these people," said Joe Svec, a national director for the 17,500-member U.S. Parachute Association. He said he fears that more parachutists, including unqualified ones, will attempt the same stunt.

Robert Fulks, co-owner of the Houston Skydiving Center, agreed. "What they (the four Sunday) did was a poor example," he said. "If young sky divers try to commit the same act, someone's going to die."

Fulks and Svec placed more blame

on a California-based cinematographer than the jumpers.

They said Carl Boenish of Photo-Chuting Enterprises in Hawthorne, Calif., has been convincing parachutists to let him film their jumps — free of charge — and has been selling these films to parachuting enthusiasts for hundreds of dollars.

They said Boenish made the same arrangement with Sunday's parachutists.

Mayfield refused to say whether Boenish did the actual filming, but did say a film was going to be pieced together from all the jumps from Texas Commerce Tower. The film, Mayfield said, will help promote a new, highly unusual and controversial parachuting organization — known as BASE.

To qualify as a member, he said, members must jump from four fixed objects — building, antenna, span and earth (or cliff), which form the acronym BASE. So far, only seven people have qualified, he added.

"It's a different sport than sky diving," Mayfield said. "It involves a lot more risks because of the low altitudes."

Parachuting officials, though, have labeled BASE a "bandit" organization because their jumps are illegal.



# 'A new sport?'

## Parachutists praise tower's jump-worthiness; foes say practice dangerous, publicity resented

By MARGARET DOWNING  
Post Reporter

Carl Boenish and his wife, Jean, regard the practice of parachuting off buildings, television station antennae, bridges and cliffs as "the birth of a new sport."

They think the Texas Commerce Tower is a great building and Tuesday Boenish complimented it as being "one of the highest we'll ever find and it has a really nice place (Tranquillity Park) to land."

**BOENISH SAYS HE** knows this because he and his wife have not only jumped from the downtown tower, but over the past five months have filmed other parachutists as part of a film they may make and sell about the wonders of this special brand of parachuting.

"We're not trying to flaunt anything. We're just very grateful for the building," Boenish said. "It's a monument to mankind."

Boenish said he believes the practice of parachuting off stationary objects will catch on in popularity over the next few years and hopes that soon officials will okay these now outlawed jumps.

"**LAST YEAR** I predicted that within five to 10 years every morning between 6 and 8 a.m. the police will cord off a two-block area and 50 skydivers will be permitted to take the elevator to the top (of a building) and after showing them their permit, will jump off every 60 seconds," Boenish said Tuesday when contacted at the national parachuting competition going on in Muskogee, Okla.

Sunday, the Boenishes were filming the jump made by four men who parachuted from the top of the 75-story Texas Commerce Tower. In anywhere from a month to a year from now, those shots may be made into a documentary film and sold commercially, Boenish said.

There are some people who may not be too happy about seeing that film.

**TUESDAY, OFFICIALS** with Turner Construction Co., general contractor in charge of security for the under-construction Texas Commerce Tower, were vowing "prosecution" if there is any repetition of Sunday's unauthorized leap.

Dick Corry, spokesman with Turner, said his company had not been aware there had been not one, but several jumps from the tower since January, but wants the practice stopped.

Turner has increased security to try to ensure there are no more jumps, Corry said.

"There are five entrances to the building. We will lock up three of them and post a guard at the other two during non-working hours."

**ORIGINALLY THE** entire building site was fenced off, Corry said. "As we have been getting ready for occupancy, we've been removing sections of the fence. We counted on the fence before (for security)."

Sunday, the parachuting missions were uncovered when a cruising patrol car spotted the last of the jumpers, 30-year-old Dewayne Bruette, as he made his way to earth on his first jump ever off the tower. Bruette was subsequently

arrested on a misdemeanor trespassing charge and released on \$205 bond.

Turner has said it will not press charges in the matter, but Bruette still faces arraignment in July before the charge can be dismissed in his case, authorities said Tuesday.

**ALTHOUGH BRUETTE** stood the heat of publicity alone on Sunday, by Monday, other parachutists were ready to confirm that there had been several Sunday morning jumps off the 1,049-foot tower since January — most of them made in the pre-dawn hours to avoid detection.

Members of a group known as BASE (Building, Antenna, Span and Earth) Divers Association had been coming to Houston from throughout the United States to jump off a building here, Phil Mayfield, the president of the maverick group said.

Boenish and his wife are proud members of BASE Divers, even though the organization has been denounced by some parachutists as a "bandit group" comprised of lawbreakers and irresponsible daredevils.

**BOENISH HAD NO** hesitation about identifying "the seven people in the world" who have made successful jumps in each of the four BASE categories.

"Number one is Phil Smith (of Houston) and No. 2 is Phil Mayfield (the BASE president from Arlington, Tex.)," Boenish said. "Jean Boenish and Carl Boenish are No. 3 and No. 4, No. 5 is Mike Perron from Sacramento, Calif., No. 6 is Sammy Ramos from California City, Calif., and No. 7 is Dewayne

Bruette."

"It's analogous to bicycle racing," Boenish said of his practice of parachuting off buildings. "The reason we do this is to have fun. We don't want publicity."

Why was the Texas Commerce Tower so easy to get into?

"Because it's under construction and because it's easily accessible," Boenish said. "Originally, there were no signs to say 'no trespassing.'"

**ROBERT FULKS**, co-owner of the Houston Skydiving Center, is one local parachutist who does not applaud the exploits of the BASE Divers.

"A first jump student makes his jump from 2,800 feet and their canopy will be open by 2,600 feet. These people (BASE Divers) jump from 1,000 feet and their canopies don't open until 800 to 850 feet. This gives them a reduced amount of reaction time."

Fulks said the daredevil divers are "betting on the parachutes opening first time everytime."

**"DESPITE THE FACT** that parachuting equipment is much improved . . . it's still man-made. No one should be on that. They're playing Russian Roulette. An expert should have his pack open at no less than 2,000 feet."

He resents the publicity accorded the BASE Divers.

"For years we've been working to build up an image that our sport was a safe sport . . . in the last couple years we have really lost a lot of ground because of the 'That's Incredible' syndrome. It's really set the sport back."

Sunday, July 26, 1981

Houston Chronicle ★★☆☆ Section 3, Page 17

### 75-story jump photographed

## Man who parachuted off building quietly pays fine

A Louisiana man who parachuted off the top of the 75-story Texas Commerce Tower June 28 has quietly pleaded guilty to criminal trespassing and been fined \$75 plus \$3.50 court costs.

Dewayne Bruette, 30, of Sulphur, La., entered the plea in Municipal Court No. 8 before Judge Angel Fraga.

"He was there only about 10 to 15 seconds, and then he just took off," Fraga said.

"I didn't even know he was the guy," Fraga said. "I wish I had known who he was. I would have given him a chance to explain what happened. I wanted to ask him some questions about it, from a curiosity standpoint."

Fraga said his clerk later mentioned who Bruette was. The judge declined to speculate on whether he would have lowered the fine if he had known earlier.

Bruette was one of four men who parachuted off the top of the 1,049-foot-tall building, the third tallest in the nation, early on a Sunday morning.

The other three men escaped before police arrived but Bruette, who landed in Old Market Square, was nabbed by officers.

Bruette was photographed by several persons as he made his jump.

Reached Saturday at his home in Sulphur, Bruette was reluctant to talk about his jump and the aftermath.

The developers of the building, the Gerald Hines Interest, said after Bruette's arrest they would ask that the charges be dropped.

Officials of the company could not be reached Saturday night about why the charges had not been dismissed.

Bruette said Saturday that he had hoped the charges would be dropped, but "the publicity killed me. When people started coming out of the closest with pictures of the jumps and all, I figured then that my ship was sunk."

He refused to say anything else about the jump or his July 21 guilty plea.

TEXAS COMMERCE TOWER  
Gerald Hines, Developer  
2100 Post Oak Tower  
Houston, TX 77056

Dear Mr. Hines,

I am the president of the United States BASE Association which is founded for and dedicated to the safety, advancement, and positive public image of "fixed-object" jumping throughout the world. We view BASE jumping as an esoteric aspect of man's age-old dream of self-flight. BASE jumping is a unique sport, separate from skydiving and not a stunt.

In the last three years, with the rapid development of parachuting technology and man's freefall skills, BASE jumping has become commonplace. The USBA wishes to interface with the owners and administrators of various BASE objects throughout the world. As you well know, the most striking addition to the Houston skyline, your own Texas Commerce Tower, is one of the most prominent and beautiful monuments found anywhere in the world. We are interested in knowing whether you would like to consider the idea of using BASE jumping to commemorate the completion of the Texas Commerce Tower in your upcoming ribbon-cutting ceremonies. If handled properly, it could certainly attract favorable publicity, not only nationally but worldwide. It would also be a thrilling experience for those BASE jumpers lucky enough to participate in an event such as the inauguration of your new building. Even though these activities are fairly new, we are in a position to discuss with you the details of our proposal. If necessary, we can provide our own public liability insurance policies, hold-harmless releases, etc. We can also provide films from previous building jumps for your examination.

We would very much like to meet with you and your representatives to discuss the various possibilities of such an idea. Like you, we are concerned with public image and would like to help make your grand opening even more awe-inspiring than it would be otherwise. We would not wish to pursue this proposal unless we all were in agreement that it could be conducted in a safe, professional and business-like manner.

Enclosed please find a recent issue of BASE Magazine for your perusal.

Here's hoping all of us can experience an event to be remembered for a lifetime.

Sincerely,  
Phil Mayfield  
President, USBA  
Dallas, TX

ROYAL GORGE BRIDGE TO BE JUMPED SOON

Ken Rick from Lake Orion, MI hasn't made a BASE jump yet, but he says he is hot on the trail to making a sanctioned, authorized jump from the Royal Gorge Bridge near Cañon City, CO. The Bridge management insists now on \$15 million of insurance and national TV coverage. He thinks he finally has both and hopes to make the jump(s) in the very near future. If Ken succeeds, we hope BASE readers will hear the whole news from start to finish right here in BASE Magazine. Best of luck, Ken.

LOG OF ALL JUMPED BASE SITES

In the next issue of BASE Magazine, a master log will be published of all known BASE sites which have been jumped to date, including the date, time, location, name of first jumper, geographic features, and general comments regarding the current "jumpability" of the site. Everybody's input on these data is most welcomed, and we hope to update these data as time goes on.

BASE LOG AND AWARDS VERIFICATION CHART (See page

BASE jumpers are encouraged to fill out the accompanying chart and send in a copy of same to USBA headquarters in order to procure their BASE numbers and subsequent awards. A notebook is being kept at USBA indexed according to BASE numbers. BASE jumpers are encouraged to update these logs as they add more and more BASE jumps to their experience. From these data, BASE Magazine publishes monthly statistics of general interest, including THE TOP TEN OF BASE, LEADERS IN BUILDINGS, LEADERS IN ANTENNAS, LEADERS IN SPANS, LEADERS ON EARTH, LEADERS IN NIGHT BASE, as well as BASE NUMBERS and NIGHT BASE NUMBERS.

A brief explanation of chart headings will be made in case any doubt may exist about them. The heading "Hour" refers to time of day, AM or PM, and the time. "Object" refers to the name of the object; "Locale" refers to the geographic location in which the object may be found. "Object Height" refers to the height in feet of the launch site above the actual landing area. "Sheer Height" refers to the height in feet of the launch site above the first protruberance of the wall beyond which a BASE jumper cannot exceed in his track. "Landing MSL" refers to the mean elevation in feet above sea level of the actual landing area. This is helpful in shedding light about what the landing conditions, in part, might be like. For example, landing at sea level is much softer than landing at 6,000 feet. "SL FF" refers to "static line" and "free fall." "Delay Sec." refers to the time in seconds from launch until a fully-opened canopy is realized. "Cum. Time" refers to the successive addition or "cumulative" delay time--whether SL or FF--that is listed in the preceding heading, listed initially in seconds and then thereafter in minutes and seconds. "Wind Wind" refers to the launch site wind conditions at time of exit, and landing winds at time of landing, respectively. "Main Reserve" describes the main canopy and reserve canopy, if any, used for that jump. "Object No." refers to the number of "new" objects jumped from by "that particular BASE jumper." In other words, "Object No." refers to the total different number of objects that that BASE jumper has ever jumped from. In the next heading, place a "B", "A", "S", or "E" in the clear area if the jump were made during the day, or in the shaded area if it were made during the night. The "CUMULATIVE BASE" heading tabulates the cumulative number of BASE jumps made from each type of object, day and night, respectively. All that appears in these spaces are cumulative numbers which reflect each successive jump added to the previous totals. Notice that the addition of all numbers in these eight "half spaces" should equal the total number of jumps made as listed in the first heading of the chart. "Object Award" refers to any significant number or award that may have been earned on that particular jump, for example, El Cap No. 500. Last, but most important, the "Signature" below attests that all of the information and facts contained in the chart is true and accurate according to the best knowledge of the BASE jumper, and he or she swears to that with his or her signature.



Given these two "unalterable facts," what is the apparent source of confrontation, and what might be harmonious solutions to both sides?

The confrontation seems to be that the BASE jumper's dream--namely, jumping off the tower--is identical to the tower management's nightmare--having unauthorized BASE jumpers jumping off the tower. Note that the very same act appears to be both good and evil at the very same time. How possibly can that be so? Shakespeare tells us that "nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." Pat Boone states it another way: "Dirt on the carpet is ugly; dirt in the garden is beautiful."

In the minds of tower management, jumping from their tower triggers images of liabilities:

- (1) Will the BASE jumpers injure themselves?
- (2) Will the BASE jumpers damage the tower or guy wires?
- (3) Will the BASE jumpers degrade the television signal?
- (4) Will the public condemn the management if it condones these BASE jumps?

How can all these seeming liabilities be turned around into assets?

As in any department of life, the solution is brought about by understanding. By both sides.

The BASE jumper must clearly understand that the tower management has the legal and moral right to govern its tower as it so chooses. If tower management does not want authorized or unauthorized BASE jumps from its tower, then that is its prerogative.

But, on the other hand, "Freely ye have received; freely give." The tower management must also clearly understand that if, in fact, tower jumping can be done in safety by the BASE jumper, and without any physical damage to the tower, and without any degradation to the broadcast signals, and without any negative public opinion, then why shouldn't tower jumps be authorized under the proper circumstances? After all, thousands of man-hours of labor went into building that tower in the first place. And who should put a limitation on the fruitage of that labor? If it were not for that labor, there would be no tower to manage, and no television signals to broadcast. Perhaps some of that labor was donated by some would-be BASE jumpers. In short, the tower management has the moral obligation to listen to the earnest requests of the BASE jumper.

HOW CAN AN IMMEDIATE AND PRACTICAL SOLUTION BE BROUGHT TO THE DILEMMA? Answer: Eliminate the temptation for the BASE jumper to climb a tower without authorization.

How is this accomplished? First of all, we realize that it would be a BASE jumper's "dream come true" for him to have access to jump from a tower as much as he pleased, freely and openly, even to the point of boredom. (And preferably with full access to the electric elevator!) Secondly, we would even like the tower management to look forward to these tower jumps, too. Under what circumstances would tower management want to promote BASE jumps from its very own tower?

If tower management were convinced that tower jumps consistently could be made in safety, and if it could be absolved from all legal liability, and if, in fact, tower jumping spawned positive public support and widespread

favorable publicity for the station, then perhaps tower management might think tower jumping from its own tower could be an asset, not a liability.

#### PROPOSAL

What would happen if one weekend per month, KTUL granted free elevator rides to the top, all day long, Saturday and Sunday, to all qualified BASE jumpers. Maybe there could be 50 or 100 jumps made in a day. Crowds could come and watch. Reporters could do interviews. The media could cover the "aerial picnic," if you will, for the evening news. Everybody could share in the joy and fun.

Enter Shakespeare: "Nothing comes from nothing." Who is going to "pay" for the "inconvenience" of running the elevator to the top all day long for all these BASE jumps, the extra police for crowd control, the legal paperwork for the station lawyers, etc. Well, initially, hopefully the novel and favorable publicity the tower would receive would more than offset the extra man-hours and hassles to accommodate the BASE jumpers. But after the activity became commonplace, the point of diminishing return might set in and the management might tire of the extra work. The novelty might "wear off" and now nobody would care if BASE jumpers came to practice their high diving feats or not.

Enter Shakespeare again: "Everything comes from somewhere." The United States BASE Association would step in and say to the tower management: "We proved we can do it safely. We have made X-hundred jumps without an incident. The public likes the activity but no longer cares to flock out to watch it. The whole activity does not interfere with your broadcasting quality or other commercial responsibilities. Granted, it does take more of your man-hours and energy to oversee that we do a thorough job in making all these tower jumps safely. Why doesn't the USBA propose to make it worth while for you on a professional, commercial basis. Why don't you let us RENT your tower for our activities for two consecutive days once a month. We will pay you, say, \$1,000 per day for this privilege. It represents a more efficient and profitable use of your tower investment than what you had before, assuming we do a good job administering our activity. To generate our money back, we would have to charge BASE jumpers \$100 per jump at 10 jumps per day, or \$50 per jump at 20 jumps per day, or \$20 per jump at 50 jumps per day. Out of these fees, our organization, the USBA, would also have to charge for dividing qualifications for BASE jumpers, licenses, permits, whatever it took to screen out the unqualified, etc.

If the program became successful, other towers around the country could follow suit. If three other towers around the Tulsa area, for example, adopted a similar program as KTUL's, that would enable a BASE jumper to drive on any weekend to an "open" tower and for a nominal fee, jump all he wanted. He could perfect his front loop half twists, his gainers, etc. He could pay half price, or whatever, if he climbed up to stay in shape instead of "tying up" the elevator. Every tower, like every skydiving dropzone, has its own "personality"--like different heights, different terrain, different landing areas,

(Continued on p. 16)

different guy wire configurations, etc.-- and this variety from tower to tower would be welcomed.

#### POSITIVE USE OF ENERGIES

People are constantly striving to find new ways to spend their energies, expand and eliminate their limitations, and this certainly is one of them. A program such as the one outlined above makes pioneers and hard-working adventurers out of the ordinary citizen; it encourages Americans to be strong, inventive, imaginative--yep, to be world leaders--instead of venting the same amounts of "adventurous energy" towards the negative aspects of life, like surreptitiously breaking the law, or looking for trouble, or bowing down to crime, etc.

#### TRIAL BASIS

A small group of us BASE jumpers would like to talk earnestly with the KTUL tower management about the serious prospect of at least doing a small test on a trial basis to see if any of the above ideas are feasible to both sides. Those super-dedicated, hard-core BASE jumpers know in their hearts that in time, towers will be built in the future custom tailored to their specific high diving needs, perhaps even without guy wires, perhaps not one but even several thousand feet tall.

A small amount of information has been gleaned to date regarding the possibility of erecting a tower just for BASE jumping. A used "knock-down" 1,000-foot tower complete with guy wires can be purchased for about \$200,000. It would fit on about 20 acres of land. If you put it out of "city limits," you don't need special zoning for it. The same tower new might cost about \$500,000. Typically it takes 4-6 months to erect such a tower, with 3-6 people working full time. The construction time could be expedited to about 90 days if necessary. The main support pad requires about 12X12X5 feet of concrete. The guy wire anchor points require pads of about 12X6 or 12X8 by 12 feet deep. Add about \$120,000 to \$160,000 if you would like to have an elevator! The subject of various detailed, custom tower designs, elevator considerations, overhangs and other design parameters will be the basis for future articles. A study of possible radiation dangers presented by climbing towers which are broadcasting radio and television signals will also be the subject of future BASE Magazine articles. If anyone has any information on any of these subjects, your research will be most gratefully accepted.

#### VIDEO CASSETTES AVAILABLE

A 15-minute video cassette is available from USB A headquarters on the topic of tower jumping available to anyone serious about the prospect of pursuing authorized tower jumps. The cassette should make an ideal visual aid for various BASE clubs around the country in making their various "custom pitches" to their local tower management personnel. Please specify VHS or Beta format.

We hope this information is useful to you, Mike. Please let us know the fruits of your endeavors. --Ed. (Whew!)

#### ANTENNA TOWERS--HOW TO JUMP THEM AND WALK AWAY

by Phil Smith - BASE #1

The following is not intended to encourage illegal or dangerous jumps. Rather, it is intended to advise those who plan to make tower jumps how to avoid the potential hazards.

The first thing you need to do is locate a suitable tower. If you don't already have one in mind, consult the airmen sectional charts which display the location and altitudes above ground level (AGL). Also, you might ask the local office of the FCC for a listing of the local TV and radio towers. There are over 100 towers 1,000 feet tall or taller in the continental United States located primarily in the flatter sections of the country.

After selecting an antenna, you should make at least one visit to the site prior to the jump. Make sure there is a ladder. Many towers have elevators but do not plan to use them without authorization. The elevator may or may not be in service and it could prove very unwise to use it without proper knowledge of its operation. Unwanted attention is always desirable. Check the surrounding area for suitable landing places, noting all obstacles, power lines, etc.

Before making a tower jump, you should try to find out the hours of transmission and what electronic devices to avoid. If you use your wits, you can get this information directly from the TV or radio station.

When packing for a jump of this altitude, I recommend having your slider down or at least unstowed. This will allow a faster and only slightly harder opening. If you plan on wearing a jumpsuit, you should devise a way to roll it up and tie it to your rig. You should tape or tie your containers shut so that it won't be scraped open as you climb up the ladder through sometimes tight clearances. Remember to remove the tape or string at the top. I recommend getting an inexpensive pair of gloves for the climb. Fifteen hundred feet of steel can do horrors to your hands. In cold weather, I like to wear a wind breaker and a stocking cap. Water and food are an unnecessary luxury--leave them behind and travel light. Some people disagree with this, as it is somewhat personal preference. It also depends upon what kind of shape you are in. A roll of toilet paper is good to bring along--for the obvious use plus as a wind direction indicator.

For the actual climb, you should try to keep your body as close as possible to the ladder. This will allow your legs to carry more of the load than your arms. If there is a vertical pipe to one side of the ladder, I use it with one hand while gripping the ladder with the other. If you pace yourself and stop every few minutes, you won't get too fatigued. Most towers have horizontal crossbeams every ten feet or so which are suitable for standing and giving your arms a break. Usually you will find "rest stop" platforms every 100-150 feet where you can sit down and catch your breath for a few minutes. It is not uncommon to spend more than half of the time spent on the tower resting. The main thing is: DON'T GET IN A HURRY!

After getting to the top, you will want to determine with the aid of your wind streamer which side of the tower you will want to exit from. Obviously you will want to go off on the downwind side, but what if the wind is blowing directly down a guy wire? The answer is: DON'T JUMP!!! I have witnessed several close calls due to jumpers not heeding this advice and I suspect the same is true of the tower jumper death in Virginia. If the winds are not right, either climb back down or wait them out. Winds will often shift 15-20 degrees in a period of 30-40 minutes.

Even on a perfect day when the ground winds are either zero or calm, it is common on the plains for the wind at 1,000 feet to blow 20-40 mph, sometimes even over 50 mph. Actually, this amount of wind, if blowing between any two guy wires, is your friend, and serves to carry you even farther away from the tower

than you could possibly spring or track away. Just make sure that the ground winds haven't picked up and that they aren't this strong for your landing. Ground winds in excess of 18-22 mph should be cause to cancel the jump. Ground winds can be determined sometimes by studying tree movement, or by a radio or visual signal from a ground crew person.

Right before I climb over the guard rail in order to exit, I pull my hand deploy and part of its bridle out of its pocket and bunch it up in my hand. I don't like the idea of burning up several hundred feet of altitude clawing for my pilot chute! A good stable exit is possible by arching your back and trying to put your chest on the horizon as you jump. This position should counteract the tendency to go head down or to front loop. On opening, immediately grab your rear risers and be ready to steer clear of the tower or guy wires in the event of line twists or a non-straight opening. This is most important!

HAVE A PLAN MEMORIZED in the case of a malfunction. How low will you cut away? What about a streamer. A possible alternative to cutting away is the hang-glider front-mounted "tertiary" or third parachute attached by a long bridle, say fifteen feet, that should clear any mess before deploying. You give up steerability with this setup, but gain an acceptable rate of descent in most cases.

Unless the jump has been set up for publicity, or to commemorate a special function, etc., usually it is best to keep a "low profile" after the jump. This would even apply to an authorized jump from El Capitan in Yosemite National Park. BASE jumpers are interested in making these various BASE jumps to have fun, but not to prove anything to the general public or to boost one's ego. Last but not least, if you don't have a nearby driver, or a ground crew assistant, you may wish to pull out a plastic "garbage bag" from your jacket or jumpsuit, put all your gear into it, and stow it at the base of any nearby trees, etc. Hours later you may wish to go back there to recover same. HAVE A GOOD ONE.

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#### WARNING -- TOWER CLIMBERS

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It has recently been pointed out to BASE Magazine that some towers may be dangerous to climb. Not all towers are alike. In particular, television towers are dirrerent than some radio towers.

Roughly speaking, television towers are literally nothing more than towers which happen to hold a one-or two-hundred-foot television radiator, or antenna, very high up in the air. For example, a 1,000-foot tower might hold a 200-foot radiator, making the total height 1,200 feet. The tower itself is grounded and can be climbed, whether or not the antenna is radiating. Microwave dishes sometimes found at varying heights along the tower, most people believe, pose no radiation exposure since a person on the tower is behind the dish and not in front of it. Some dishes are thought to receive only, which certainly would cause no radiation dangers. Several people have stood within 5 or 10 feet of the base of a television radiating mast, around the 1,000-foot elevation, and felt no short range deleterious effects from the radiation.

It is believed by some, under certain circumstances, that sterilization and other gene damage can result from close proximity to these radiations. If a person were to touch the antenna while he were standing on the grounded tower and while it were radiating probably would be electrocuted.

Some towers are referred to as radio and television towers. This probably means that the tower holds, very often, several antennas, all at different frequencies for different broadcast stations, possibly both television and FM radio. What was mentioned above probably applies in these cases, also.

One BASE jumper recently had a startling realization--fortunately, it was not a "shocking" realization. He had "found" a "new" 1,000-foot tower in his own "backyard." He decided to study the tower to see if it were jumpable. It was a very old tower and it was for AM radio only. He read the usual sign: DANGER--HIGH VOLTAGE. He thought, "I bet they really don't mean that. That's what they always say." All of the several towers he had visited before had been grounded and none carried any high voltage, yet all of those towers carried the same warning sign. But something looked different about this new tower. The entire antenna was resting on a giant insulator 2 or 3 feet in size. Actually, there were 2 large conical insulators, each one resting point-to-point, holding up the entire weight of the tower. Further examination revealed that everything touching the antenna also was insulated from the ground. Finally, it was discovered that the entire tower itself was the radiator and was fed by a single wire that carried several thousand volts. Had he attempted to climb up onto the tower while standing on the ground, he probably would have been electrocuted. How do the birds do it, he wondered? They don't touch the ground and the tower at the same time. If he were to use a wooden ladder on a non-rainy day or night, once he were entirely onto the tower and never again touched the ground, he should be out of danger.

There is another story about climbing antenna towers. It turns out that two or three skydivers discovered a nearby tower that had an electric elevator to the top. They figured out how to operate the elevator and had a neat 20-minute free ride to the top. The jumps went well and everybody was happy with the new site. Anyway, the next weekend, the same people treated themselves to another free ride to the top and those jumps went well, too. After a month or so, one of the jumpers thought a little publicity was in order. He convinced a local news television station to join the group and cover an antenna jump for their local news show. The station news cameraman decided he wanted to get some super coverage by going up to the top for filming. He and his camera equipment took the first ride up to the top where he discovered that his video equipment was being interfered with by the broadcast signal. The jumpers finally got up to the top, but the entire operation now took an hour, not the usual twenty minutes. By this time, a silent alarm had sounded and the authorities arrived on the scene. The jumpers made the jump successfully but the television cameraman got nabbed. It makes one wonder about the motives of the BASE jumpers and why they made the jumps--to make the jumps, or for the publicity, or for both. The seeming age-old dilemma of confrontation must be licked. To jump a majestic 1,000-foot tower is majestic; to trespass is ignoble.

It is hoped that all BASE jumpers who have or who would like to jump a tower will carefully read Mike Sisemore's letter and the editorial remark about it in this issue of BASE Magazine. Man's desire to jump these towers is legitimate; his desire will never recede or go away, and neither will the towers. BUT, his motives must constantly

purify his acts, or he will never achieve public acceptance. If 20,000 skydivers in the U.S. alone would donate \$10 each to the antenna fund, BASE could assemble its very own (used) 1,000-foot tower--custom tailored exclusively for BASE jumping! Ya-hoo. All ideas on this subject will be gratefully accepted. --Ed.

WEDNESDAY EVENING, JULY 22, 1981

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## Jumpers say their BASE is sanity

By KAREN POTTER 7-22-81  
Star-Telegram Writer F.W. S.T.

ARLINGTON — Phil Mayfield jumps off buildings with a single bound. And antennae. And bridges. And cliffs. All the time trailing a silky canopy plume.

He and a group that has organized nationally have taken traditional skydiving a step further — by stepping off of objects instead of out of planes.

In his most recent conquest this weekend, Mayfield and two friends parachuted from a local broadcast tower.

Mayfield and another man who had a camera attached to his helmet jumped from about 1,300 feet up the 1,450-foot tower. A third man jumped from 1,000 feet. After delays of between three and five seconds, they opened their chutes. And they landed safely.

It was a close call, Mayfield said, not because they had any trouble with the jumps, but because they nearly had trouble with the law. A highway patrolman and a Cedar Hill patrolwoman witnessed one man's jump. They could have charged them with trespassing.

Mayfield, of Arlington, is experienced at jumping off stationery objects — and at avoiding notice while doing it.

**HE HAS PARACHUTED** off the 75-story Texas Commerce Bank Tower in Houston three times. He has escaped noticed twice.

A June jump from the nearly completed structure, which at 1,047 feet is the tallest building west of the Mississippi River, brought him attention when one of his three parachuting friends was caught by police and charged with trespassing.

The owner and developer of the building later agreed to drop the complaint against the Louisiana jumper.

But Mayfield and the BASE jumping organization over which he's president are destined to continue

attracting attention to the unusual sport of jumping off just about anything that's high and stationery.

The United States BASE Jumping Association is a group that splintered from the United States Parachuting Association.

BASE is an acronym for buildings, antennae towers, spans (bridges) and Earth, the four kinds of bases from which they parachute. So far, only nine people have qualified as members by jumping off objects in all four categories, though many more perform BASE jumps. And at a recent meeting of the national parachuting association, 350 people indicated interest in the organization, Mayfield said.

Concerns of BASE jumpers now focus on stressing safety and proving their sanity.

"WE'RE IN IT for fun, because it's different," Mayfield said, his young son tugging on his arm. "I have a wife and two kids. I don't plan on dying anytime soon."

Though he said he's not a publicity-seeker, Mayfield said he's turning to promotions as a means for making his jumping legitimate.

Jumping off buildings and antennae towers is illegal — it's trespassing unless the owner gives permission. Building owners have nothing to gain from BASE jumpers' using their properties for springboards into the wild blue yonder. And liability is one of those subjects no BASE jumper likes to discuss.

So Mayfield has written the owner of the Texas Commerce Bank Tower, Gerald Hines, proposing a jump to promote the building when it's opened.

A similar proposal to jump off the antenna tower of an area radio station earlier netted an offer, but permission was pulled at the last minute.

Mayfield jumped from it anyway, later on. He was arrested for trespassing and paid a \$50 fine.

"I don't encourage breaking the law, even though I do it or have done it," Mayfield said. "I'm helping them do some research and development, if you will, about jumping off things."

Mayfield has little hope of making building and tower jumps legal, but the BASE organization is working hard to get cliff jumps in Yosemite National Park legalized.

EL CAPITAN, a sheer, monolithic cliff 3,000 feet high, is an ideal jump, Mayfield said. The national park allowed parachute jumps off the cliff for a short time last year, until unruly guests broke park rules.

Park officials also said several serious injuries were reported during that period. Mayfield noted that in 400 legal jumps, no one had died as a result of injuries, however.

A skydiver for 12 years, Mayfield began his BASE jumping career at El Capitan last August, when jumping was legal. He has made one other legal jump and two illegal jumps from the cliff since. In all, he has jumped 27 times as a BASE jumper.

BASE jumping was a new twist, a progression, for Mayfield.

The sport differs from skydiving in some obvious and not-so-obvious ways.

The obvious: the aircraft vs. the non-aircraft base.

The not-so-obvious: the altitude differential. Most skydiving begins from altitudes of 2,000 feet. Most BASE jumping is from considerably less — partly because few structures are that tall. The lowest base Mayfield has used is a bridge just 317 feet above the water. The lower altitude requires greater skill and better timing so the parachute is released soon enough to catch the BASE jumper, Mayfield said.

**ANOTHER COMPLICATION** is the lack of initial airspeed that characterizes a BASE jump.

"We can't fly our bodies (without airspeed) for the first three or four seconds. We're in a helpless position. Like when you're diving off a diving board, whatever position you go off in you're stuck."

Mayfield stressed that not all skydivers can — or should — do BASE jumping.

"This is inherently a little more dangerous than skydiving," he said.

And some BASE jumps are easier — and safer — than others.

"All of us still have a fear of heights. Otherwise we wouldn't have the adrenaline rush."

Though he's a strong supporter of BASE jumping, he shies away from promoting it for others.

"Normally, I discourage anyone who comes to me wanting to jump off other things. I don't want to encourage people saying I'm trying to be a pied piper of doom."