

The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL



The **EDGE**™

THE HARNESS

- ◆ Custom built to your size
- ◆ Easy off/on leg pads
- ◆ 3-ring release
- ◆ Mini or standard risers
- ◆ ZooMO™ toggles - A quality line release mod.
- ◆ Outboard mounted cutaway pillow
- ◆ High mount - 2 point Back-Up System (B.U.S.) attachment
- ◆ Upper horizontal back strap

THE CONTAINER

- ◆ 1000 Denier Cordura
- ◆ Custom built for your canopy
- ◆ Bridle routing guides
- ◆ Spandex pilot chute pouch
- ◆ Non restrictive design
- ◆ Stiffened closing flaps allow:
 - a) Easier packing
 - b) A thinner profile
 - c) Consistant release of shrivel flap
 - d) Less chance of premature velcro release

THE PILOT CHUTE

- ◆ 48" diameter
- ◆ Large hole mesh
- ◆ F-111 & mesh incorporate 6 load tapes
- ◆ 9' Bridle

All Sizes in Stock!!

The **EDGE**™

Back Up System (B.U.S.)

CANOPY SIZES

- ◆ 20 Gore
- ◆ 22 Gore
- ◆ 24 Gore
- ◆ 18' regular bridle

CONTAINER

- ◆ Sized to fit canopy
- ◆ Well protected curved closing pin
- ◆ 2 point suspension
- ◆ Hand deployed free bag



Moe Viletto
Tailored For Survival
23480 Gerbera St.
Moreno Valley, CA 92388
(714) 656-1314



Publisher
Ralph Mittman
BASE 193

Editor
Nick Di Giovanni
BASE 194

Classifieds/Subscriptions
Karen M. Dodd

Make checks and money orders
payable to:
The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL

Send all correspondence to:
The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL
PO Box 195
Oceanside, California 92054
New Zip Code after July 1/1990
92049-0195

FAX (619) 789-8563
Voice (619) 721-2021

WARNING:

Information related to BASE jumping in any aspect, whether on the ground or in the air, is informational only and readers are cautioned to exercise due care and restraint. *The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL* accepts no responsibility for any actions taken as a result of information printed herein.

The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL is published quarterly by Up-n-Up publishing of San Diego, California. Subscription rates are \$20.00 for four issues, foreign addresses \$28. The Journal accepts unsolicited material. Mailing lists may be made available to vendors of BASE related items and then only with the subscriber's permission. The name, *The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL* is copywrited 1990© by Nick Di Giovanni. The entire contents are copywrited by *The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL* and all rights are reserved. In the spirit of disseminating safety information, limited parts may be reproduced for non-commercial use and only by subscribers. All others must seek permission and credit *The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL*.

The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL

Volume One Number Three/May 1990 – August 1990

Off The Ledge2
Editor's overview

Direct Bag...6
Useful Tool or Carnival Ride?

Elasticity10
The Journal Staff goes Bungee Jumping!

Early Days17
Living & Learning

DEPARTMENTS

Air Mail3

Around The BASEs4

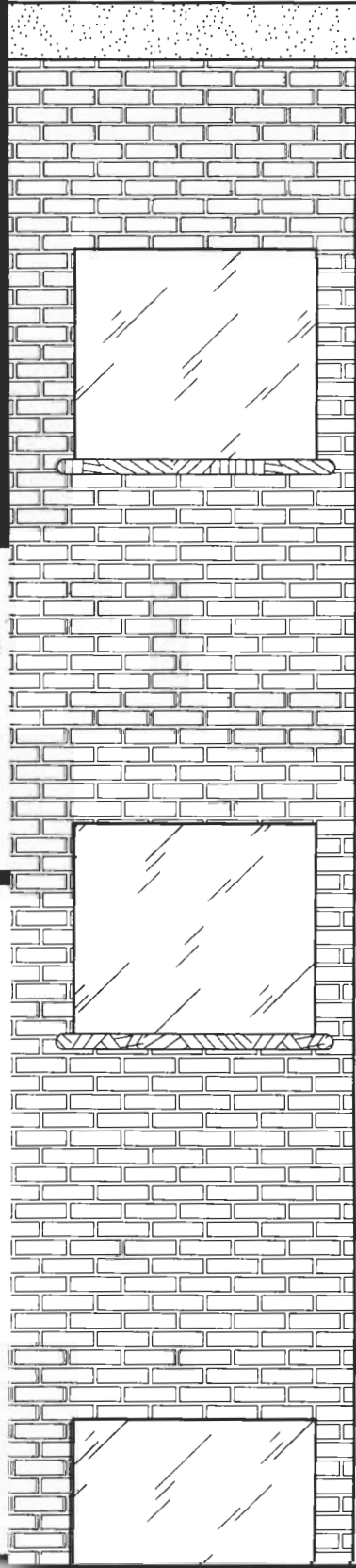
The Black Box...13
Anatomy of an Accident

Subterminal14
Photos from the field

**The
FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL INTERVIEWS**18
Matt McCarter, BASE 17 & Lane Kent, BASE 103

Last Off...25
BASE from the Heart

OFF THE LEDGE



ABOUT THE COVER

Rick Payne and Kevin Foust "Craning" from a Sacramento, California building.

Photo by Mike Allen

JOHN WILKES BOOTH, Charles J. Guiteau, Leon Czolgosz, Lee-Harvey Oswald and Chuck Sweeney. Wait a minute. . . Chuck Sweeney?

Any BASE jump one can make, always has the capacity to include a number of intangibles. Things you just don't expect - things you can't plan for - things that can get you. After many successful BASE jumps, and if you're cautious, you begin to always watch from the corner of your eye because you know, if it comes, it may come from way out of left field.

Such thoughts were surely in the mind of BASE jumper Chuck Sweeney, as the bullets flew through the early morning haze of

downtown Los Angeles and ripped into his car. Chuck was jump starting his day with a early morning BASE jump, when he ran smack into one of those intangibles. Unknown to him, the President of the United States was over-nighting in the hotel across the street.

Chuck departed the area believ-

ing he was dealing with security guards gone berserk, guards who'd finally had it with BASE jumpers. According to Chuck, press reports dealing with the incident were really stacked against him. After the legalities are cleared up, Chuck said he'd let the BASE community in on what really happened. By the way, Guiteau assassinated President Garfield and Czolgosz assassinated President McKinley. Don't feel bad I had to look it up too.

A look at using direct bag is one of the feature articles in this issue, along with a report on the bungee jumps made by Journal staffers and friends.

The Black Box, looks into the first fatality at Angel Falls and a preliminary look at a recent fatality in France. A reprint from *JUMP*, the British BASE publication, gives us a lesson in living and learning.

This issue's interview gives you two for the price of one as we talk with two very seasoned BASE jumpers, Matt McCarter, BASE 17 and Lane Kent, BASE 103. And finally, *Last Off* is a from the heart piece written by J.D. Walker, BASE 37.

As winter ends and summer approaches, BASE jumping activity will sharply increase. It may be worth remembering that our sport is still in its infancy. Go at your own pace and be as careful as you can. The fun is automatic!

Editor, Nick Di Giovanni

Air Mail...

NEEDS RIG

I am a French BASE jumper interested in your publication. I heard about you from Italy's Tristano Carraciolo, a friend of mine. There is a lot of BASE jumping here in France as well as the whole of Europe. I'm sure you will be getting more subscriptions from here. By the way, I'm looking for a rigger putting BASE containers on customer supplied harness', T&T has stopped. If you know someone, please let me know.

LAURENT LE CLEAC'H
Nevers, France

Although a common practice at one time, BASE gear manufactures attaching one of their BASE containers to a customer supplied harness may be a thing of the past. The problem is the airworthiness of a harness built by some other manufacturer may be difficult to determine. If the harness should fail at some later time, it becomes the failure of the BASE rig manufacturer, you can see the cause for concern.

Here are some other points to consider. Manufactures put great effort into building quality and safety into their BASE rigs, and the harness is an integral part of that overall design. Also, the fact they won't get involved with a half and half rig shows the sport is maturing. Lastly, the price of a new BASE rig, considering what you get and what you can do with it, is still very much a bargain.

ED

TO THE BONE

I would just like to say, I really like how you end all your little stories and things with that little skull. I just wanted to know, is that an educational tool... or does it really mean... the end?

A. GHOU
Moreno Valley, CA

FEELS THE NEED

Your mention of our film project in the last issue (TFOJ Vol. 1 #2) was a nice touch. Roger and I are nearing our last shooting weekend and will soon be cutting away in the editing room, (no pun intended.) We never expected to have as much support

and cooperation as we have been steadily receiving from all the BASE jumpers involved. We're grateful. This is the most fun I've ever had with a camera. It's been an exiting semester.

It's also been a tease really. I don't think I can go much longer without trying a jump myself. And I can't afford to do it from a plane so... lets make the first time the best time. I don't mind trespassing. Hell, I'm getting used to it! But I'm tired of taking the stairs back down. This has got to stop.

JOHN STARR
Los Angeles, CA

Their film was completed and John Starr successfully made his first BASE jump on May 13th.

ED

THANKS

Nice magazine, *almost* makes me wanna do something silly like visit downtown...

KATE COOPER
SQUARE ONE
Perris, CA

BASE SURVEY

Congratulations on your new publication - it's informative, entertaining & nicely presented. A suggestion: we have no data on how many jumps have been/are being made. Why not do a reader survey, requesting a breakdown on peoples BASE jump history? This data could be updated annually. I just returned from a weekend in California where I made some building jumps with the help of Moe Viletto and friends. Very exciting!

ALF HUMPHRIES
Denver, CO

Thank you for the compliments, Alf. A survey dealing with the factors you mentioned is currently under way. The effort is being carried out by Steve Morrell. For a copy of the survey questionnaire contact Steve at (803) 767-9412.

ED

JUST WANTS TO JUMP

Thank you for putting out a magazine that presents BASE jumping in such an honest, mature way. I just started BASE jumping and wasn't too sure about the motives, including my own, of the people involved in it. You've changed my mind. To heck with the politics and backstabbing, keep writing about the magic of BASE jumping!

RON LINC
De Moines, IA

Nice letter, Ron. The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL is for people who want to jump, and when they can't, want to read about it. We are committed to keeping the micky mouse to a minimum.

ED

A LEGG UP

Just thought I'd send you a few pictures, they are not the best, but just a few more to pick from of the ones sent to you by others. I've been jumping a BASE rig made by J.D. Walker and I just ordered one from T&T Riggering. As you know they are great BASE rigs and it will be nice to have a back up rig. I guess I'll see you guys at Bridge Day '90. Keep up the good work - it's nice to see something different.

BILL LEGG
BASE 175
Houston, TX

Thank you for the photographs Bill, we can never get enough and encourage BASE jumpers to send us more.

ED

ROYAL GORGE BRIDGE NUMBER ONE

I really enjoyed your last issue. Thank you for printing the nice article about my family and I. You are really doing a great job! I will try to keep you updated on the BASE activity around here.

DON BOYLES
Tulsa, OK



Around The BASEs

"The room went still as the music set a mood that made the audience gasp!"

STAINLESS STEEL LINKS

Due to the hardness of the metal, it's possible that a few stainless steel rapid link can slip through the manufacture's tumbling process with burrs intact. These burrs can damage lines and risers. Make sure to inspect any new connector links before use. Run the barrel nut up and down, checking for cracks, or burrs anywhere else in the part.

BASE NUMBERS

Jean Boenish, Executive Director of the USBA, said at press time the number of BASE awards issued was 279.

BRIDGE DAY LEGAL

West Virginia State Senate Bill 441, makes the celebration of Bridge Day a permanent event. BASE jumping, an integral part of Bridge Day, is not specifically addressed in the legislation.

THE BASE GAZETTE

Andy Calistrat, former co-editor of BASELINE magazine, has published the first issue of his new magazine called, *The BASE GAZETTE*. For more information, call (713) 437-0323.

GETTING IT RIGHT

In the last issue of *The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL*, we incorrectly reported that John Hoover deployed a square from a Racer reserve container after a 200 foot cut-away. The jump was actually made by Mark Albert. We regret the error.

TRUMP TROUBLE

Donald Trump has run into opposition from groups who want to save the old Ambassador Hotel. The historic Los Angeles building

is currently on the same site Trump is considering for his 125 story project. Depending on the final design of the Trump building, total jumpable height may reach 1,562 feet. This would be higher than the Sears Tower in Chicago, which tops out at 1,454 feet and is currently the tallest building in the world.

MOONING

New Moons	Full Moons
June 22	June 8
July 21	July 7
August 20	August 6

ANGEL FALLS 1990

Tom Sanders has announced plans for a spring expedition to the Venezuelan jungle that will include BASE jumping from 3,212 foot-tall Angel Falls. The eight day trip is slated to include VIP attention from arrival to departure. The price includes all lodging and meals, helicopter transportation, river boat transportation, complete ground crews including medical support, one helicopter jump and one BASE jump per person. Cost of the trip is \$3,350 per person. According to Sanders, just traveling to Angel Falls is an incredible adventure and the entire expedition is a very unique experience. For more information contact: Tom Sanders, 8 Camino Verde, Santa Barbara, CA 93103 (805) 962-9911.

BALLISTIC RESERVE

Eric Fradet, an experienced French BASE jumper, is working on a ballistic reserve system using a *Martin Baker* pyrotechnic firing device. The system uses 16 to 26 foot round canopies.

3-2-1, WAIT A MINUTE

CNN's science reporter, Tom

Mintier, was doing the commentary during the last aborted attempt to launch the Hubble space telescope aboard the Space Shuttle Discovery. Discovery was four minutes from launch when the mission was scrubbed due to a faulty auxiliary power unit. The reporter, in trying to convey the feeling of pressure placed on the crew said, "It's like walking up to the edge of a cliff, with a parachute on your back!"

WRIST MOUNTED BASE TIMER

Laurent LeClerc'H, has invented a device that allows a BASE jumper to keep track of time and altitude. A mercury switch inside the device senses the launch and begins a countdown. It then emits a tone through an ear-piece after the desired delay. A second and different tone is transmitted when the jumper reaches a pre-selected altitude above the ground. The first tone corresponds to the amount of free fall the jumper has planned. The second tone alerts the jumper to go to his emergency procedures, while he still has the altitude to employ them.

EMR

Electromagnetic radiation (EMR) is a by-product of all electric fields. Heavy exposure to EMR is of concern to BASE jumpers who climb operational antenna towers.

Last month a study was completed by researchers in Denver, Colorado. The study looked at the effects of EMR on children who lived in close proximity to high voltage power lines. The study concluded these children were 1 and a half to twice as likely to have cancer than the children of a control group. They interpret this to mean that in a group of 2000 children, there are 2 more cases of cancer than normal for a group that size.

The lab portion of the study failed to produce cancer in rats after subjecting them to heavy doses of EMR. The conclusion is the effects of EMR is negligible. The study, however, was commissioned by the people

who build and operate high voltage power lines.

A second study, done by the Environmental Protection Agency, was not yet released when it was leaked to the press on May 21st. The EPA says there is definite proof linking EMR and cancer. The report is based on the study of telephone lineman and children living close to power lines.

Additionally, scientists agree heavy exposure to EMR can cause changes in biological systems. EMR is also being blamed for birth defects in children born to mothers who used electric blankets during pregnancy. Also, the state of Florida has a new law that limits the amount of EMR people can be exposed to.

Although, there needs to be more hard science, it seems EMR is something to be avoided. Risking exposure to EMR is an individual decision BASE jumpers must make for themselves.

YOSEMITE SKYDIVING ASSOCIATION

The trial of five jumpers facing charges in Yosemite, scheduled for

April 24, was postponed until sometime in May or June of 1990. The jumpers involved have formed the YSA in order to raise money to aid in a legal battle to force the Park Service to once again allow legal jumps from El Capitan. The contention of the YSA is that jumpers have the same rights as other sportsman who utilize National Parks and therefore are victims of unfair discrimination. For more information you can contact the YSA at: P.O. Box 9681, Canoga Park, CA 91309.

ROLL'EM

The Norris Theatre, on the campus of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, was standing room only when over 500 students, faculty and friends came to see ten films produced by this years class of student film makers. *Stealing Altitude*, a film by John Starr and Roger Teich, was about BASE jumping. The printed program showed the film good enough to be the final presentation of the evening.

A contingent of BASE jumpers involved in the film were on hand and anxious to see how the two film makers had chosen to portray the sport. Most did their parts without seeing the final version or knowing what slant the film makers had put on the film. After sitting through the first nine films, it was obvious that *Stealing Altitude* had the potential to be very good or very bad.

The film was outstanding. More than just a series of launches and free falls from high places. The film told the story of how jumpers rationalized leaping off buildings with parachutes on their backs. It proved interesting to observe the reactions of the audience.

The film opened with Keith Jones, walking

the plank that extended off the side of a downtown building. The room went still as the music set a mood that made the audience gasp.

After Jones' launch, murmurs of that's crazy and what's the point, could be heard rippling through the crowd of academics. This was going to be a tough sell!

The image of Don "Jake" Jacobson flashed onto the big screen. He was trying to pack in his living room while his small children played in the lines and fabric of his parachute. His wife Edna, articulate as she is beautiful, voiced her concerns and explained how she dealt with her husbands BASE jumping. It quickly became apparent that John and Roger had picked just the right angle for the film because the audience wanted to know just one thing, how could people do this?

The audience immediately embraced Jake and Edna and their classic version of family life. When Jake is shown launching from a building, the audience is clearly pulling for him, they want him to return home safely, home to Edna and kids. John and Roger had clearly manipulated the audience and they were eating it up. It was clear, we wouldn't need to dash for the exits before the lights came up.

The film ended with, "The BASE jumpers wish to dedicate this film to Dick Pedley, BASE 263." The applause lasted well after the credits had rolled, and continued as John and Roger were introduced. It was clear, *Stealing Altitude* was the people's choice for the evening. The jumpers were asked to stand and the applause was as unanticipated as it was rousing.

The party at Roger's West Hollywood home, where the BASE jumpers were both welcomed and congratulated, lasted well into the morning. The jumpers were pleased that the student's first look at BASE jumping was a positive one. However, another fact about life was also evident when one BASE jumper, looking over the selection of ten dollar a pound imported hors d'oeuvres asked, "You guys got any Cheese Whiz?"



Film maker, John Starr, on his first BASE jump.

PHOTO/KAREN DODD

Direct Bag...

Useful Tool or Carnival Ride?

By • NICK DI GIOVANNI

THE CURRENT RANCOR by jumpers over the pureness and value of direct bag compared to free fall may be a kind of apples and oranges debate. Doesn't each method serve a different purpose? It also sounds dangerously like, I'll only do CRW, RW or accuracy and the rest of you aren't serious jumpers. Where have we heard that before?

It seems the argument is, bagging objects clearly high enough for free fall, makes those jumps carnival rides. Some even say any direct bag jump is suspect.

Yet, if used to jump objects that couldn't be jumped any other way, or used with new BASE jumpers, doesn't it then become a useful tool?

Maybe the real question should be, is jumping an object too low for free fall worth the effort? The answer may depend on your perspective. Last year, a serious injury left me laid up and wondering if I'd ever be able to jump again. I realized how much the few direct bag jumps I had made meant to me. At one point, I think I would've sold my soul for just one more. So deep down, I can't help feeling all BASE jumps are worth it.

In my local area at least, BASE jump opportunities seem to present themselves one at a time. It's

almost never a choice between jump "A" which is a 5 second delay and jump "B" which is a direct bag. In the case of buildings, we watch them dig the hole and when it gets just high enough, direct bag it a few times to get the feel of the place. Then as it gets higher, we free fall the crud out of it.

I don't think getting in your car and driving 5 hours to make a direct bag jump is worth it, but if it's close, I'd rather do that, than do nothing.

Johnny is making his first BASE jump, should he go direct bag or free fall? Keeping in mind everything has advantages and disadvantages, especially anything flight related, that can be a tough question.

Skydiving instructors have known for a long time, the best way to sling students is to bag 'em. Once

multiple line twists, and a leg or two through the risers, but he had time to work all that out.

For BASE jumping, the direct bag idea works even better. The bag holder has complete control of the deployment, this eliminates bag spin and the line twists it generates.

Experienced skydivers sometimes launch first BASE jumps like they're following someone out of an airplane. They must unlearn skydiving. Instead of something new, it's something different, a harder handicap to overcome. Watching free BASE falls where the canopy deploys through a jumper's legs is no fun.

The unstable deployments and subsequent off heading openings of first time BASE jumpers can be clearly seen every year at Bridge Day. If it were the New River Building, instead of New River Bridge,

direct bag manufactures could do land office business.

The direct bag gives new BASE jumpers the same edge they had as student skydivers. They can launch with less than perfect form and still be pretty sure of getting not only an open canopy, but an

on heading opening as well.

It gives them a way to stick their big toe in before committing to that first BASE free fall. Free falls, where

"It's a little scary to hear direct bag put down because it's safe. Do we really jump off things because it's dangerous?"

the static line pulled the bag off the students back, even the most ungraceful novice could count on an open canopy. He may have mul-

the price of an unstable exit can very well be the ultimate.

Simulation of direct bag jumps can be pretty realistic. A launch from 3 feet feels like a launch from 300 feet. Since it's really a matter of just stepping off correctly, practice can be done into swimming pools,

trampolines or off the back of pickup trucks. Face it, step off correctly and you can have both hands in your pockets. Opening shock usually occurs before any stability trouble can begin.

A direct bag jump from a bridge or crane that offers clean air, a good

landing area and the altitude to deal with a line over is probably the safest BASE jump one can make. It may, as one jumper put it, "Reduce a person to a living breathing sack of potatoes." But, it gives most folks all they can handle on a first BASE jump. It's a little scary to hear direct

Direct Bag... A Closer Look

Direct bagging is a symbolic representation of again springing from the womb. (That's a bit much, but it sounded too good to toss out). Giving up the bag to your holder is the BASE equivalent of a climber roping into a friend; he knows, won't let him die. It's one time in BASE jumping you must truly trust someone besides yourself.

The basic concept is really nothing new. The first successful parachute jumps were made from fixed objects and the canopy was hand launched by assistants.

Instead of hand launching, the first jumps from aircraft involved the parachute being stowed in a metal or canvas container attached to the airframe. As the jumper went over the side, the container ripped open and the parachute deployed. That idea matured into the direct bag static line method skydivers use today.

BASE jumper's modified direct bag for their own particular needs and the concept went full circle. We again returned to hand launching.

When BASE jumpers first wanted to jump objects too low for free fall, the only alternative was static line. The static line, usually 100 pound breakcord, was attached to the bridle. This meant the static line had to open the container plus pull the canopy to full line stretch before breaking.

The problems were twofold. If the jumper mis-rigged the static line, it was possible to have it break before opening the main container or before it pulled the canopy out. This has happened, and resulted in total malfunctions.

Our brothers in Great Britain went through a rash of this and turned to *Buddying*. This was an assistant holding your pilot chute and bridle and only letting go when you achieved line stretch. The drawback was the increased potential for a 180 while too close to an object to back off. Direct bag is now gaining popularity over there.

The second problem with static line was it pulled a square parachute from its container by the center, leaving the rest of the canopy to follow. As the center cells received line stretch and the static line broke, the resulting rebound would send that part crashing back down through the rest of the canopy. The line over potential was enormous.

The next step was to put the canopy back in what was essentially a line bag and attaching a non-breaking static line. The bag and other gear were left hanging from the object. This, if not mis-rigged, would assure you of an open container. But, also presented the problem of line twists or off heading openings if the bag rotated during deployment.

The solution of the line stow pouch to the tail pocket configuration was a step in the right direction. It allowed jumpers to again static line their canopies, without using the bag and without the problems associated with center tail rebound. The tail pocket assured the canopy would leave the pack the way it all at once. Still, mis-rigged static lines were again a problem.

Then came hand held direct bag. Like many good ideas, it may

have occurred to many people at around the same time. The first comprehensive account on its use, authored by Mark Hewitt, was published in *BASELINE* magazine during the summer of 1987.

With direct bag, the lines unstow under tension and the canopy hits the relative wind ready to inflate, just like it was lying on the ground before going into the bag. All this is done in the shortest amount of time possible. Jumps from below 100 feet have been done and it seems the limit, at least for bottom surface inflation, is line stretch plus 10-15 feet.

(Although these ultra low jumps are possible, keep in mind, they leave no room for corrective action of any kind.)

The bag holder can make the canopy go any direction he wants, just by pointing the bag that way. He also just as easily, can give the jumper a 180 by taking the bag out of the container the wrong way or by twisting it around in the process.

The jumper can give himself a 180 by putting the bag on the canopy the wrong way. It sounds funny but when the bag is not connected to the canopy, it seems to get people all fouled up. You see jumpers holding the bag like they never saw one before.

Hand held direct bags can be obtained from a BASE equipment manufacturer or built by your rigger. You say you already have a bag, the one you skydive with? Well, there are a few important features built into commercial bags that regular deployment bags lack.

First is the handles. Without them, it's possible a bag holder can drop your bag. Either from not having a good grip or because a tough to release line stow just pulls it from their grasp. By the way, all bag holders should be protected from being pulled over the edge. It's highly unlikely that you would have some sort of bag lock, but securing the bag holder, gives them the assurance to hang on through any small hang-ups.

When holding a direct bag, put your hands through the handles and grasp the bag. This way if you lose a grip, the handle gives you a secondary hold. Holding only the handles, gives you only one shot at it. Lose the handle and you lose the bag.

Another important component is the safety line. This attaches your bag to the object. If the bag holder should drop your bag, you're going to get some lift. How much and which way it's going is another thing, but it's better than the alternative. Also, the safety line will hold you in case of a real bag lock.

An added feature on commercial bags, is an extra rubber band placed between the left and right line stows. This allows the left and right side suspension lines to go to their respective sides of the bag. This makes it practically impossible for the bag holder to turn your leading edge down, (he'd have to be asleep,) without it being real obvious to both of you.

You can have a direct bag built to fit the main container of your skydiving rig. But, if you have a Velnor checked BASE rig, the bag can be built larger. This is an advantage because it's easier to maintain the integrity of your pack if you don't have to stuff it into a small bag. It also will deploy easier and clearer from the bigger bag.

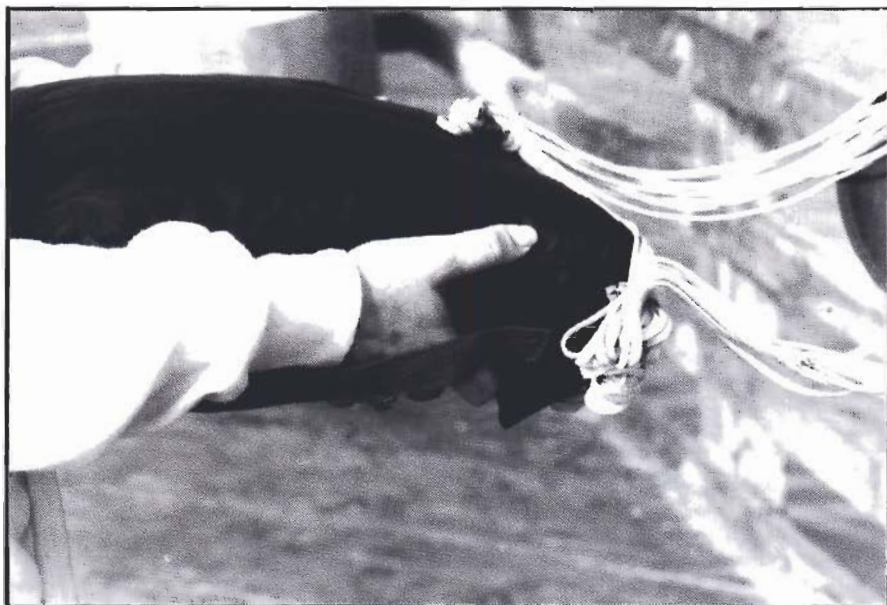
bag put down because it's safe. Do we really jump off things because it's dangerous?

On the other hand, 180s out of direct bags do happen. The jumper is in deep if it happens on a hard object. They don't have the object separation they'd have from even a modest free fall.

What are the chances for a 180 out of a direct bag? There have been three reported cases of this. The real number is probably larger. We just don't know how many direct bag jumps are being made, or how they turn out. It appears, however, that direct bag is pretty dependable.

Also to a lesser extent, consider this, setting up for direct bag is slightly more complicated than setting up for free fall. This increases the chance, because it's something new, a novice can rig himself out of existence.

A jumper doing a direct bag, once



Gripping the direct bag built by T&T Rigging.

PHOTO/NICK DI GIOVANNI

under a good canopy, can turn it back into the object by mishandling the brakes. A steering line can let go

during deployment or the holder can mishandle the bag. Direct bag is not perfect enough to be called a carnival ride.

On the other hand, what are the chances for a perfect free fall on the first try? This becomes a very important question when it's not you, but someone you're coaching, who's making the jump.

I've taught enough skydiving first jump courses to know that no matter how well you think you read people, a first timer is liable to do anything.

Freefall BASE jumps also end in object strikes and this has killed more of us than anything else. There have been 17 reported BASE fatalities since 1980. Of those, 8 involved object strikes. 5 have been totals. The other 4 consisted of a drowning, deploying too low, a high wind landing and one unknown.

You can see object



PHOTO/NICK DI GIOVANNI

Ralph Mittman ready to deploy from a direct bag built by *Tailored For Survival* and held by Larry Hart. In the rare event of a bag lock the wearing of a wrist watch may not be advisable.

strikes either directly or indirectly, are killers.

If coaching someone or contemplating your own first BASE jump you must weigh all those factors. In the end, it may be an accelerated free fall approach to BASE jumping isn't worth the increased chances of stability and deployment problems. A few direct bag jumps allows the

novice to ease himself into free fall by dialing in his launch technique, it also gives him a chance to become accustomed to the stress of the launch point environment.

Awareness, the most important asset a BASE jumper can have, is not something you automatically bring to a first BASE jump. It must be developed over time. These early

direct bag jumps, where the novice can concentrate on the basics, including canopy control, is where this awareness can start to develop.

If you first learn how to save yourself, it becomes that much safer and easier to learn how to fly.

General Packing Techniques

PACKING FOR DIRECT bag will depend on the type of canopy you have, yet, there are some general points. Make sure your canopy is BASEworthy. Don't make the mistake that because it's only a direct bag, any old rag will hold together.

Do a line check to make sure the canopy isn't attached backward and all the lines are clear. If you don't know how to do a four line check, now is the time to learn. The manual that came with your canopy or your rigger can explain how. Even if you just jumped the rig, a line check it is something that should be done before any BASE pack job.

If the slider is on the canopy, you should tie it down to the connector links. Tie it down only to the front risers, if tied to the rear risers it will limit the amount of rear riser travel. The rear risers will only go down the chord or width of your slider. When trying to back away from an object you may need more than that. The same limitation holds true for CRW connectors.

Also, the possibility exists, if your canopy snivels for some reason, the slider may inflate and slide up the lines inhibiting your opening further. It may be better to remove the slider altogether for the same reason accuracy jumpers use split sliders, the canopy just flies better.

If you're using the line mod and no slider, the amount of canopy control is increased. If you know how to fly a canopy, you can use that control to your advantage. Many jumpers complain their canopies fly differently with these changes. Yet, it's just a matter of flying what's up there and taking full advantage of what is really a fuller range of control inputs.

Next, decide what you'll do with the leading edge. The options are hide or expose it. Keep in mind, slider down the canopy will stop your free fall with bottom surface inflation very fast either way. The difference is mainly opening surge. The exposed leading edge will simply start flying sooner and also increase opening shock somewhat.

Hiding the leading edge may give you that extra split second you need to avoid an object strike. This is general because canopies are designed with different leading edge configurations, so you may have to experiment.

Splitting or fanning out the leading edge may sound like a good idea but reports from the field suggest it's prone to off heading openings.

You can stack pack or trash pack. One thing to watch with stack packing is with most canopies you can wind up with more canopy on one side of center. This can be avoided with some practice. The basic thing is to pull the folds over past center and then back to where you want them.

Trash packing, for a BASE jump, is nothing like trash packing at the DZ. And trash, probably isn't the best name for it when

applied to BASE jumping. Some jumpers like the way they can precisely orientate almost all parts of the canopy. This means however, that you must understand what you want all those parts to do.

The exact technique you use to pack is not as important as winding up with what you wanted. You want the canopy to open accordion fashion, with all the suspension lines under the same amount of tension. Any line that is slack and not taking its share of opening shock means the other lines have to work harder. It also increases the potential for line entanglements.

Keeping good line tension throughout your pack job is very important. Not only from the connector links to the top of the "A" lines, but also to the rest of the line attachment points as well. Before flaking the trailing edge, move it out of the way and get your hands up in there and re-set tension on lines B, C, and D.

When packing you want the leading edge and trailing edge to be centered up on each other. You want the leading edge and the other folds lined up and centered. All the line groups should be taut and centered. One problem, especially when learning, comes from working with the leading edge down and the trailing edge up.

To get the big picture, do a practice pack job. When you get to the point where you're ready to fold it into the bag, grab the whole canopy and flip it over so now its leading edge is facing up. You now see what effect your packing technique had on the canopy parts you don't normally see. Are the folds all leaning toward one side? If they are, the canopy might go that way when it opens.

Remember how meticulous you were when you first learned to pack for skydiving? That's the way you should pack for BASE. A good BASE pack job doesn't have to take 2 hours, but it shouldn't take five minutes either.

Somewhere, jumpers acquired the idea that the faster they packed the better they were at it. At the DZ that idea is academic because you're putting the slider up and dumping high. Packing fast and sloppy for BASE jumping will catch up with you.

Pack your canopy in the exact reverse order you want it to deploy. For instance, do you want your canopy to come out of the bag all at once or a fold at a time? Then don't put it in the bag all at one, put it in one fold at a time.

A good pack job is just a collection of good practices, some of which may seem ambiguous, but remember, it's what you wind up with that's important. Once you have your pack job dialed in, be consistent. Being consistent will save you from packing a canopy that's not hooked up correctly. It just won't pack up the way it should.

Record any changes you make and the results. Hopefully at some point we can collect all that information and make some real determinations about what works over time and what doesn't.



PHOTO/KAREN DODD

Nick Di Giovanni testing a harness that better simulates BASE jumping.

ELASTICITY

BY • NICK DI GIOVANNI

IT WASN'T A JOKE anymore, the bungee was hooked up, I'm standing on the rail, people were looking at me, this was it!

The trip began with Moe Viletto, Karen Dodd and I boarding an United Airlines 737 for the 1 hour flight to Oakland, California. It was Friday the 13th, so of course we asked for seats next to an exit door. The kit bags were under the seats, zippers open and rigs laying harness up. The fully loaded big twin rotated into a steep noise abatement departure that prompted, "If she gaks now, we've had it!" The fun had begun!

Expecting to be met in Oakland

by Ralph Mittman and Larry Hart, we weren't too surprised when they weren't there. We had them paged. It became, Ralph Mittman to gate 4, Ralph Mittman to the main concourse, Ralph Mittman to the bar!

Ralph and Larry finally arrived and two hours later we rolled into Angels Camp, home of the annual giant frog jumping competition. After spending the night we set out for Camp Nine Bridge. 17 miles down a switchback mining road gave us our first look at the bridge. It spanned the lower portion of a breathtaking canyon. The first thing we noticed is the sign posted on the guardrail, NO JUMPING OR DIVING OFF THE BRIDGE. We felt right at home!

The Kockelman brothers, John

and Peter, arrived a little later and began to set up. Fresh from an appearance on "The Arsenio Hall show" and the recent success of the "Reebok" TV commercial, the brothers and their staff quickly had the equipment set up and ready to go.

Although it was obvious they are professionals, we spent the first few moments inspecting the bungee cords and asking all the typical geek questions. "How many jumps are these bungee cords good for? How do you know we won't hit the water and rocks? Suppose your head gets caught in the bungee? How many people have you killed? The answers were 2000, we measured it, it doesn't happen and nobody yet.

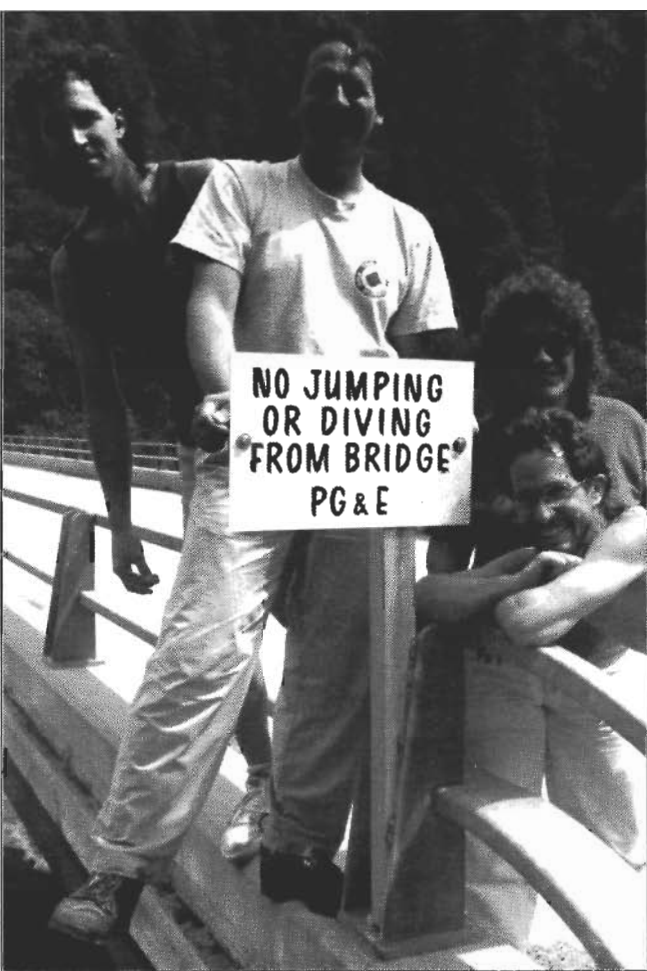
John introduced us to the rest of his staff and informed them we were BASE jumpers. This prompted a good natured round of whom was crazier, which I think we lost. The staff did offer that because we BASE jumped this should be a piece of cake. Ralph and I looked over the edge and at each other, we weren't so sure. "This is pretty low, John,"

we said. "That's funny,"

John answered, "most people say it's pretty high!"

Since the trip was my doing, I didn't put up much of a fuss when everybody lined up behind me. Peter fitted the two climbing harness' to my body and clipped in the bungee. There are three bungee cords, any one of which is sufficient to hold you. Peter asked my weight and when I told him 165 pounds., he said, "You'll come close," and grinned, "but I don't think you'll splash."

Looking at the rushing water and rocks 100 feet below, I began to ex-



PHOTO/NICK DI GIOVANNI

Left to right, Larry Hart, Ralph Mittman, Karen Dodd & Moe Viletto.

perience the principle of high risk sport relativity. Being proficient in one, still leaves you a babbling whuffo in another.

The staff started a loud count-down, (John later said that's the only way to get first timers off the bridge.) I couldn't bring myself to go head down as instructed and launched the only way I knew how, like I had a parachute on my pack.

The first part felt like any BASE jump, and it was immediately apparent, bungee jumping would make an excellent training device for novice BASE jumpers. The ground rush was certainly there, but before I could get too worried, the bungee cords barrel rolled me over, and up I went.

This was the part I wasn't ready for. You think it's over, but instead you're rocketing back up and get-

ting bridge rush. Before you can take it all in, you go negative again, and again, and again. It's a blast!

The climbing rope is lowered and you attach it to your harness. Pulled back up, you come over the rail like any first jump student, grinning the big grin and sure to embarrass yourself on video.

Ralph went next and showed surprising aplomb for a guy who usually likes to sneak up on danger.

Moe Viletto, who is as cool as they come, accented his rebounds by tracking up toward the bridge yelling "I want more, I want more!" Karen Dodd took the bungee on a most graceful ride, it left everybody on the bridge grinning

and panting to go again.

Larry, the last in our group to go, showed us how non-jumpers react to bungee jumping. Larry had never made any type of parachute jump before, Larry was a climber, he was into *not* falling.

After a quick front loop off the railing, Larry recovered enough to

laughed 'till our sides ached.

The brothers were making a new video that day and John suggested we have lunch and make our second jump after they did some filming. We went back to our camp on the side of the canyon and popped the tops of a well chilled lunch. With a good view of the bridge and the canyon below, we were treated to a stunning display of bungee jumping, by the guys who are pushing the sport to the edge.

They started out with what John calls the pendulum swing. The bungee is tied to the bridge and then passed underneath. The jumper launches from the opposite side from which the bungee is hooked. "Bungee cords are an energy storage system," John explained, "the more energy you can put in, the more you can get back out." The impressive rebounds left us cheering and clapping their act.

Next came the bag full of rocks pendulum swing jump. The jumper again launches from the opposite side of the bridge. Only this time, holding a sack full of rocks that he drops at the moment of full bungee stretch. The first rebound took the jumper up passed the bridge roadway and blew us all away.

As we watched, a ramp was put into position and launches made using roller blades, skateboards and snow boards. It made us smile and remember Carl Boeinsh's granite circus jumps in Yosemite. We had received an education from the Kockelman brothers, learning again that as usual, there is more to most things than may first be apparent.

The whole scene before us had

**"This is pretty low, John," we said.
"That's funny," John answered,
"most people say it's pretty high."**

give the thumbs up signal on his way to the top of his first rebound. As soon as he went negative, instinct took over, and Larry began treading air for all he was worth. "Don't kick Larry," we yelled, and

that magical quality and I caught Moe looking most thoughtful. In response to my questioning look he said simply, "Gravity World!"

They moved the bungee to a point on the bridge that was over

land and John invited Ralph and Moe, to become involved in trying to catch a jumper. The idea is for the catchers to grab the jumper as he comes within inches of the ground, holding on, and stopping him. The next step was to let the jumper go. This was called, doing negatives.

The timing involved in this

diagonals. This would allow a jumper to exit and remain in a more prone position during the decent and throughout the rebounds. Putting it on I

"You think it's over, but instead you're rocketing back up and getting bridge rush."

maneuver is considerable, and our boys just couldn't get it together. It was great fun watching them lunge in for the bungee, only to come up with great armfuls of each other, the jumper meanwhile, just squirted up and out of the pile. They settled for passing frosty beverages back and forth.

It was time for our second jumps!

John had one harness configured much like a skydiving rig. The bungee was connected to the back

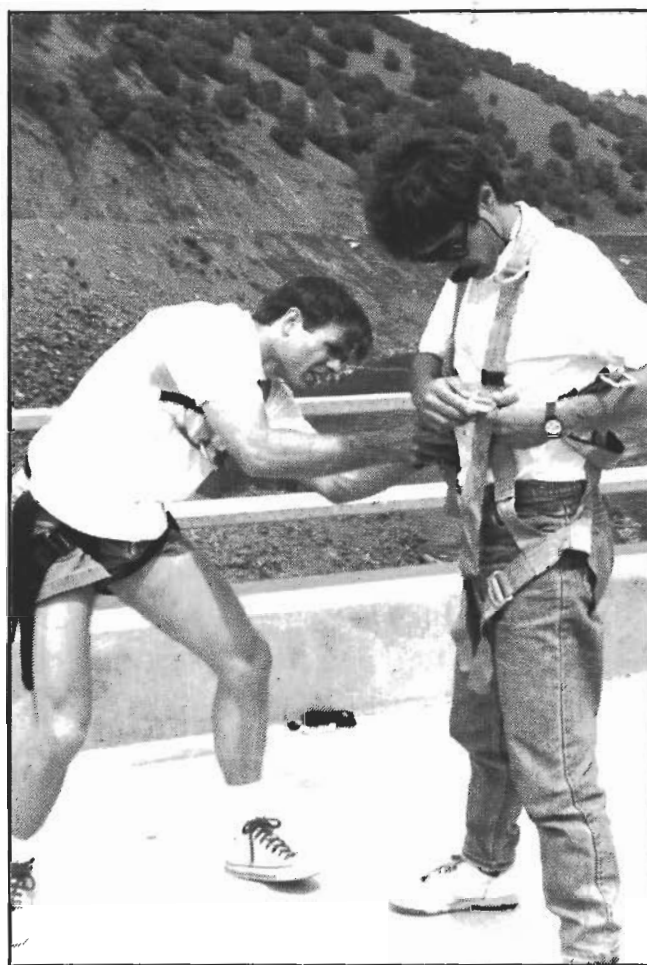
tried to forget overhearing a hushed, "Let's get the BASE jumpers to try it!"

This would be the way to go for practice BASE exits. The stretch of the bungee even feels a little like the beginning of opening shock.



PHOTO/NICK DI GIOVANNI

Ralph Mittman (right), asking John Kockelman all the typical "geek" questions.



PHOTO/KAREN DODD

Nick Di Giovanni gets an assist from John Kockleman.

The eerie part was getting this simulated opening shock at what is undoubtedly, too late junction. Man, I've had dreams like that!

Back on the bridge John called out, "Who wants to do the pendulum swing?" I raised my hand, "I do, I do!"

"With the

bungee attached to your ankles," John finished.

"Moe does, Moe does!" I countered.

They attached the bungee around Moe's ankles, lifted him over the rail, cautioned him on a few points and off he went. Back on the bridge he said it was outstanding, but he was injured. They looked at him with concern. He said his jaw was sore from grinning!

During the thanks and good-byes, I asked John how we did, being BASE jumpers, compared to other first timers? He grinned and said without hesitation, "You guys don't flail!"

You can contact Bungee Adventures at: 450 San Antonio Rd #47, Palo Alto, CA 94306 or (415) 494-7047



THE BLACK BOX...Anatomy of an Accident

Fallen Angels

Compiled from a report received from • Laurent Le Cleac'H

ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 21st, Jean-Marc Boivin was killed during a BASE jump from Angel Falls in Venezuela. The information relating to the actual incident is from a report received from French BASE jumper, Laurent Le Cleac'H.

As a preface to his report, Le Cleac'H said the following: "The problem is that although there are many good sites to BASE jump from in France and indeed throughout Europe, the knowledge of BASE jumpers here isn't up to speed. Most jumpers are using skydiving gear with little or no modifications. They are skydiving from fixed objects."

At 39 years of age, Frenchman, Jean-Marc Boivin was a superb mountaineer, hang glider pilot, extreme skier and was accomplished at paragliding.

His biggest achievement may have been the marathon solo accents of four north faces in the Mont Blanc area. He flew paragliders and hang gliders, as a means of descent, and the entire tour was completed in 20 hours.

At the end of January, a group of about ten European skydivers traveled to Angel Falls in Venezuela. They were there to make BASE jumps while being filmed by a well know French adventure television magazine called, *Ushuaia*.

One jumper involved in the ill fated expedition told Le Cleac'H, "Our trip was well organized despite trouble in getting authorization for the jumps and a guide to show us the best launch point. The

guide we finally hired didn't know the area as well as he said he did, so we jumped from a launch point no one had ever done before. The landing area seemed a good 2000 feet beyond our opening point."

According to Le Cleac'H, most of the jumpers had small RW type canopies, packed slider up in deployment bags, and they worried about reaching the landing area. The planned 10 second delays were shortened to 5 or 6 seconds to ensure making the LZ. In light of the shorter delays and what happened later, Le Cleac'H said, "I think tail pockets, mesh sliders and more of a BASE approach should have been used. What should have been several relatively fun and simple jumps, turned into a nightmare."

The first to launch from the virgin 2,100 foot launch point was Catherine Vallaud, she left in an unsteady position and barrel rolled to the right as she went for her stowed 36 inch pilot chute. She opened off heading and hit the wall. She then released one brake line, and the canopy did a full 360 and she hit the wall again. She managed to land alive despite a broken pelvis, broken ankle and multi-facial injuries. (The report did not indicate the extent of Vallaud's BASE or skydiving experience).

Jean-Marc Boivin launched next in a stable prone position. Nobody observed his opening but when he again appeared to the jumpers on top, he had numerous line twists. He landed hard in the jungle and by the time the helicopter had rescued Vallaud, and found a way to Boivin, he had died from his injuries. Both of his legs were badly smashed. Although no one saw it, the extent of his injuries suggested an impact with the wall. Jean-Marc Boivin had 70 skydives and 12 BASE jumps at the time of his death.

It is important to note that these jumps were made from a launch point other than the one used by the

expeditions to Angel Falls that you see advertised. Those expeditions are lead by experienced guides and you're there with jumpers who have done it before.



At Presstime...

The JOURNAL has learned of two recent BASE fatalities. The first, reported by Laurent Le Cleac'H, involved a French jumper who's name has not yet been confirmed. Witnesses said the jumper's BASE pilot chute went into tow and only began to extract his free-packed canopy at impact. The jump was a 1 second delay from the 396-foot "Viaduc des Fades" bridge over the Sicule river.

There is strong agreement among witnesses that some part of the bridle became lodged between the rig and the jumpers back. They couldn't tell if it happened at launch or during the pilot chute throw sequence. The jumper was wearing a Racer, had 3000+ skydives and was attempting his third BASE jump. This is the first recorded BASE fatality in France.

The second fatality, which occurred in Philadelphia, PA., bears a similarity to the French fatality. Bobbie Morris Jr., was killed after jumping from the 57th floor of the Mellon Bank building. An unidentified witness said the jumper towed his BASE pilot chute to impact. Mr. Morris was wearing a Wonderhog with an empty reserve container. It was reported he had 15 BASE jumps and was an experienced skydiver.

Although it may be too early to pin point the cause of either of these deaths, it does bring up the importance of bridle line management. A rigger can attach a Velcro square to the main container of any rig used for BASE jumping. This, along with Velcro placed on the bridle can make it almost impossible, during a normal launch, for the bridle to get up and under the corner of the container. Do not route the bridle under any flap that may cause it to jam during an abnormal deployment position.

Also, there must be a certain amount of slack in the bridle on both sides of the pin. Without this slack, it's possible to lock the pin in place. Some rigs are more susceptible to this, but it can happen on any type of pin closed container. Ask your rigger to demonstrate this to you.

Subterminal...

Photos from the field



"Roger Cruisite, be advised,
traffic 6 o'clock and 1/4 mile ..."

Todd Shoebottom on final approach
after a dawn building jump.

by "Ground crew"

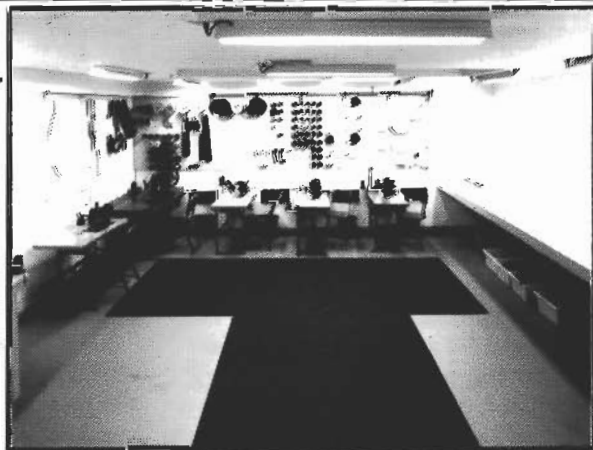
**Do you have a hot idea but not the "Sew How?"
Let T.F.S. rig it up or prototype it for you. Master
Rigger Morris has 18 years full time rigging experience.**

- ◆ Sport parachute rigging
- ◆ Tail pockets
- ◆ "ZooMO"™ Toggles
- ◆ Mesh Sliders
- ◆ Lower control line mods.
- ◆ Direct bags
- ◆ Bridle attachments
reinforced & installed
- ◆ Specialty Sewing
- ◆ Custom Rigging
- ◆ Consultation
- ◆ All sizes BASE pilot chutes

Moe Viletto
23480 Gerbera St.
Moreno Valley, CA 92388
(714) 656-1314



Call for Price Quote & Delivery Time





Subterminal...



"Don 'Jake' Jacobson leaps into the night, 40 stories above Century City, CA"

by friend

Early Days

By • BASE 139

The following is reprinted with permission, from the current issue of JUMP, the British BASE magazine, published by Nigel Slee.

I HAD BOOKED a flight to Japan with a friend who was a very experienced BASEr. We hoped to do some BASE jumps while there. As I still had to make me first BASE jump, my friend and I agreed it would be nice if I could have one BASE jump under my belt prior to the trip. A 245-foot bridge was proposed and some of my friends decided that they would like to be involved.

Unfortunately we had nobody at hand to get help from and so ended up getting our packing instructions over the phone. My rig was packed and unpacked several times until we were all happy that the instructions we had been given were okay. My rig was packed, using break tie to secure the rig closure and to attach the static line directly to the top of the canopy, the pilot chute and bridle were removed. I was ready to go. One of the other rigs was packed but not in my presence.

Jump night arrived and once we had assembled we headed for the bridge. By now we were all really buzzing at the thought of our first BASE jump. We had total confidence that the two rigs which were already packed were going to open fine. On our way to the bridge we stopped at a friends house to pick up the third rig. Soon that rig was packed and we all decided the packing method we were using was a good one. At last we were ready to explore a brand new experience.

At the bridge we went for a walk along the footpath that ran along the river, this was the chosen land-

ing area. We decided jumping over the water was an added safety precaution.

We walked casually across the bridge peering down into the darkness trying to see what we had for a landing area.

We would exit over the water but close enough to the bank to only require a gentle canopy turn to reach it. Jump time was still some time off. The waiting was terrible, nervous pees were contagious. We all agreed to drive on to the bridge at 11:30. As the big hand crawled its way toward half past, I kitted up. I felt 100 percent sure I would survive this jump. My friends had decided to wait and kit up on the bridge. Half way across the bridge our driver stopped to drop us off, we were out in a matter of seconds, in my mind there was only one way for me to get off this bridge, and that was down under canopy. Now my heart was racing, there was to be no turning back. Three late night strollers walked past enjoying the panoramic night time view. The clang of our static line attached snap links rung out as they hit the bridge metal work.

Then we were all kitted up. We checked each other out, all our static lines were attached to the bridge. And then there were three ready to leap. One leapt, disappearing into the darkness. His canopy opened, stalled and flew him into the steep slope directly under the bridge. I pushed off keeping my eyes fixed on the street lights ahead of me. I felt the first break tie snap, then the second as I was pulled upright with a perfect opening. Now approaching the dark foot path I realized I couldn't see the ground in enough detail, I piled in and broke my foot.

Number three leapt. Silence, he just kept on going... all the way to impact in the cold water beneath him. Two and a half hours later he was taken to the hospital. One walked away, one hobbled and one frapped but lived to tell the tale.

I knew in my own mind there must be more to BASE jumping than this. Having watched a friend go in isn't much fun. We knew what the cause of the accident was, our friend had a total. The 100lb. break tie attaching the end of the 9-foot static line to the canopy broke at the same time as the 50lb. break tie used to close the container, leaving the canopy in the now open container.

Ironically the canopy floated to the surface and spread out on heading. Our friend remembers coming to the surface, seeing the canopy spread out in the water behind him and thinking, "Man, that was a hard landing!"

We were a group of three who wanted to make a BASE jump and had nobody to ask for help. We all suffered in our own little way for our eagerness to do a BASE jump. We felt we had to tell someone about our experience. Someone who had a way of contacting other BASE jumpers and telling them about our nightmare. "Jump" seemed an ideal way. Hopefully no one will have to go through what we did.

In hindsight we should have sought better advice. If you seriously want to make a BASE jump, for god's sake get help before you start. There are people out there who will help you. They may be hard to find but that is the British Parachute Association's fault for trying to drive BASE underground.

It may not be easy to find someone to help you but it is essential. We were lucky. How lucky do you feel?



A Conversation With Matt McCarter, BASE 17 & Lane Kent, BASE 103

FROM HOLLYWOOD CAME Abbott & Costello. Sex research gave us Masters & Johnston. Exploring produced Lewis & Clark. In BASE jumping it's Matt & Lane. Alright, they aren't as famous, but in BASE jumping circles, you never hear one name mentioned without the other.

Long, lean and built for flight, Lane is one of those unique individuals you only hear good things about. Lane shows a skill level in his BASE jumping that few others can match. By not spending his time putting the knock on people around him, he revels in and enhances BASE jumping the way we all should. He also has a cheshire cat grin that could probably get him dinner at the Chief Ranger's house.

Matt, the more serious of the two, displays an intelligence and intuitiveness that makes him a genuine asset to the sport. He is the type of guy you could hold up and say, Matt is a BASE jumper, so what could be so wrong with BASE jumping? He is also just rugged enough looking to keep from being called pretty. You don't invite Matt to parties when your sister is going to be there.

Both men have a deep respect for BASE jumping and prove it every time they make a BASE jump. They think about the next guy.

Matt & Lane are low key about their BASE jumping. I consider the fact they agreed to do this interview, a small miracle. It's was easy to see both would rather BASE jump than talk about it.

TFOJ - Did you both start BASE jumping at the same time?

Lane - No, Matt took me on my first BASE jump.

TFOJ - How many BASE jumps did you have at the time, Matt?

Matt - I'd been a BASE jumper for three years and had a whole 24 BASE jumps.

TFOJ - Describe your first jump, Lane?

Lane - It was to be a tower at night, but I really didn't feel comfortable with it. I watched Matt climb up and jump and knew it was something I would eventually be doing, but I wound up passing on it. The next morning I went to Auburn bridge and jumped there.

TFOJ - Where was your first BASE jump, Matt?

Matt - My first was EL Cap, in October of 1982. I did a bridge two months later on New Years Day and went though the BASE cycle shortly after that. I did El Cap, Auburn Bridge, Walnut Grove tower and Crocker Center, to complete the BASE cycle.

TFOJ - How did you meet?

Matt - We met through a mutual friend, Dan Foley, who is a blind skydiver. He knew I was BASE jumping and also knew Lane wanted too. He said, "Hey, you two should know each other!"

TFOJ - How many BASE jumps have you made?

Lane - I've made 238 BASE jumps. **Matt** - 170.

TFOJ - Is there any fundamental difference in the way you two approach BASE jumping?

Matt - I think it's real similar, when Lane started, I taught him the way I did it. Since then, we **have** grown and learned new things **together**.

TFOJ - Do either of you use a **tersh** or reserve?

Matt - Tersh? Christ, my skydiving reserve is a bedroll and a quarter in case of a bad spot!

Lane - No, I don't use a **tersh** either.

TFOJ - How do your families see your BASE jumping?

Lane - With my wife, it was a big problem for awhile. I started out telling her when I was going, but she'd get upset and stay up all night. That went on for awhile and we both got tired of that, so I just stopped telling her. I'd sneak out and she wouldn't know until she woke up and saw my parachute unpacked and me sleeping away on the couch. That helped a bit.

TFOJ - Where you already married when you started BASE jumping?

Lane - Yes, we were high school sweethearts, we went through the first jump course together.

TFOJ - How about your family, Matt?

Matt - They are pretty supportive, my Dad goes along with anything I do. My mom likes talking about BASE jumping, likes the idea, likes the uniqueness of it, she likes everything about it **except for when** I actually go do it.

TFOJ - Is there **one** BASE jump you've made that **stands out** in your mind?

Matt - Every single one of them. They are **all** so different, it's hard to pick out just one and say, that one

was really special. One scares you more, one gets you off more, something memorable happens on this one. It could even be something that didn't have anything to do with the actual jump. There is just so much to it.

Lane - The jumps I was able to make in the Grand Canyon will always be among my favorites.

TFOJ - That trip produced some great BASE video. The shot of you tracking into the canyon was too much. Matt, why weren't you on that load?

Matt - Lane tried to get me on it, but I didn't know J.D. Walker at the time and that trip was his baby. The load was basically filled, I just stayed home with my box of Kleenex.

Lane - The jumps we've been making lately from the big one in L.A. have been doing me a number. I've enjoyed those quite a bit.

TFOJ - I guess since there's still people inventing ways to get in there, we better not mention the name of that building.

Lane - I think most people will know what building we mean.

Matt - You can make book on that!

TFOJ - Ok, how many jumps have you made from that building?

Matt - We made one apiece and both got arrested, so stay away!

LAUGHTER

Lane - I made 53 jumps off it.

Matt - I made 47.

TFOJ - What type of jumps are you doing there?

Lane - Five to six second delays with a mesh slider.

TFOJ - How many jumps, in total, do you estimate have been made off that building?

Lane - I'd say between 250 and 300 jumps.

Matt - An easy 300 jumps, and nobody has been arrested, that's the way it should be done.

TFOJ - I've heard about some interesting encounters with security guards you two have had, what about it?

Matt - We ran into this guard named Stanley. We just came out and asked him to let us in. He looked at the parachutes and then up at the building and said if it were up to him he would. We're standing there, just me, Lane and Stanley and no one else is around and I said, "Well Stan, it looks like it is up to you!" He smiled and said, "I guess it is," and let us in.

Lane - We were lurking a building one night and we're watching a guard, ya know, just waiting for him to move off. We noticed that every few minutes, he'd walk over to this cabinet, open it up and pull out a bottle of beer. After a long pull, he'd stash it and look around to see if anybody saw him. I walked right up to him and asked him to let us in. He said, "No way!" I asked him how that beer was and he got real defensive and said, "What beer?" I said, "The beer you been hitting on for the last half hour!" A few moments later, we're heading up the stairs.

TFOJ - What's the hardest time

"We had to open the elevator door and climb up the shaft to the next floor, that was always interesting."

you've had getting into a building?

Lane - For a time in the big one, they had the stairway blocked three or four floors up. We had to open the elevator door and climb up the shaft to the next floor, that was always interesting.

TFOJ - How about the closest call or the jump that scared you the most?

Matt - That would have to be my slip and flip, zap and frap, run from the gun jump!

LAUGHTER

TFOJ - Go on.

Matt - I had some unstable footing

on top of a 525-foot building in the direction I wanted to jump. When I pushed off, my feet slipped out from under me and I ended up going really head down. I was trying to keep track of the time and straining to pull it out but I was too far gone. I tucked it up and went all the way around. My canopy opened ninety right and was heading between two buildings without room to turn around. You're supposed to go the other way. I was heading straight into an intersection full of power lines. I managed to avoid hitting the lines with my body, but the canopy got them. The sparks went everywhere. Now here comes a guard from the building across the street. I picked up my gear and started to run and all of a sudden I hear, "Stop, or I'll blow your bleeping head off!"

Lane - The thing I'll never forget about that jump was, I had just landed and had all my gear off and didn't really see Matt jump. All of a sudden the whole side of the building just lit up, it was pretty spec-

tacular! I thought, as I ran to where Matt was, I was gonna find this smoking piece of sausage. I stopped when I saw him running down the street, laughing his head

off, with this guard right behind him.

Matt - Then there was more security guards and the police and I'm thinking, "Come on God, let me start this one over!"

TFOJ - Did you get arrested?

Matt - Most of the cops took it pretty lightly, except for one and he took me downtown and put me in a holding cell. I'd watch other policemen come in and I'd get that dirt bag look, but after finding out what I had done, I'd get a wave or a smile. A few of them cornered the guy

"I'd have absolutely no qualms about making a jump from the 900-foot, John Hancock building."

Ted Strong, 1968

"I'm not going to get myself shot over a trespassing charge. Christ, if I'd known they were Secret Service, I would have stopped, went downtown, paid the money and went home!"

Chuck Sweeney, 1990.

who brought me in and the next thing you know, their sending me on my way.

Lane - Most cops are stand up guys and deep down can see BASE jumping as a pretty neat thing to do. I think most of them will give you a break, if you just give them the chance. Sometimes there's nothing they or you can do, but most BASE jumpers probably talk themselves into jail.

Matt - I think they realize we aren't stealing things or vandalizing. As long as you keep it low key, come on, they have serious crime to deal with. I did get a letter from the District Attorney's office asking me to come in for a chat. The guy I talked to was just interested in knowing the extend of danger to innocent people. He wanted to be assured he wouldn't see a headline someday that said, MAN JUMPS BUILDING, 15 DEAD! I think that talk may have made a difference in whether they pressed charges or not, in cases were they had a choice.

Lane - One night on the big one, we sat down to wait out the winds. This was about three in the morning and we fell asleep. I woke up and it's daylight and this guy is standing there wanting to know what the hell we were doing. "I was thinking of making a parachute jump off your building," I said. "Don't worry about me," he said, "I won't try to stop you." It ended up with about twelve construction workers up there. We really didn't want to jump in the daylight and get the building hot, but there were so many people in the building, we thought we get busted for sure trying to walk out. There was only one guy who was giving us a hard time, he said, "You got this whole damn building to jump off, and you gotta jump right were I gotta work!" I was getting kinda mad because all the other guys were being cool and said, "You got this whole damn building to work on, and you gotta work right were I gotta jump!"

LAUGHTER

Lane - Finally I told him, "Look, this will be my 40th jump from this building and I'm made 15 from that

building over there, ten from that one, and ten from that one." He left me alone after that. My friend and I climbed the cable and got ready to go and all of a sudden we hear click, click, click as all these workers attached their snap links to the safety cable. They wanted to hang over and watch. In freefall, we heard lots of hooting and hollering.

TFOJ - How many times have you been arrested for BASE jumping?

Lane - I've never been arrested.

Matt - That time downtown and once in Yosemite, where they really jerked me around for a whole year. It was off Half Dome and one guy was hurt and had to be rescued. It ended up costing me about \$4,000!

TFOJ - That was after the legal jumps ended?

Matt - Yes, But that program was doomed from the start, the Park Service never wanted BASE jumping in Yosemite. There's an article in Audubon from back then, with a quote from one of the higher park officials saying, "We had to open it up in order to come up with an excuse to shut it down!"

TFOJ - Are you supporting the Yosemite Skydiving Association and their current effort to once again legalize jumping in Yosemite?

Matt - I really wish them the best. I guess their first case is coming up in front of Magistrate Donald Pitts, I don't think they stand a chance with him. But I believe, what he does, puts them in a good position to appeal to a higher court. Pitts has been hanging BASE jumpers out to dry for a long time. I did send the YSA a donation.

Lane - I'm not sure, it may just open a whole can of worms. If you want to jump in Yosemite, you just go do it. If they get it opened and keep calling it skydiving, and promote it to skydivers, than just like USPA did, they might fall on their sword. As high as it is, jumping from El Cap is still a BASE jump. I would like to see it legal and I wish them luck. But with the rules about having a "D" license, square reserves and TSO'd gear, I won't even be qualified to jump there!

LAUGHTER

Matt - I think whether it's a skydive or a BASE jump, is a hard call to make. A lot of jumpers who would never BASE jump will go and do El Cap. That cliff is sort of a class by itself.

TFOJ - Have you ever had gear confiscated?

Matt - Twice for me, let's see, once in Yosemite, and once by some crack heads in downtown.

TFOJ - How'd that happen?

Matt - We had the gear in the car and Lane and I went to scout this building, when we came back the car was broken into and all the gear was gone.

Lane - I've lost gear downtown when a friend got hurt jumping a building, and also out of the car, and I just lost a rig ditching it after a bridge jump. So that's three times now.

TFOJ - Ever get any of that gear back?

Matt - Not the rig from the car, but I did get the rig back from Yosemite, it was in good enough shape except it smelled like marijuana. The first thing I did, was check the tailpocket to see if they planted something on me. I guess it had been in the evidence room for awhile and that canopy smelled pretty good for a long time.

Lane - I got the one back from the building jump, the police only kept it for a month.

TFOJ - Any malfunctions on BASE jumps?

Matt - I've only had one minor one, it was off a 1000-foot tower. It was just one line half hitching around another. The canopy was kinda bow-tied off on the right side. I pumped the brakes a few times and it cleared but it did rip a line attachment point from a stabilizer.

Lane - I haven't had any malfunctions.

Matt - Lots of my early jumps were slider down and that was before the line mod, and I never had a problem. But now most of our jumps are slider up so that may be helping too.

TFOJ - Matt, some time ago, I heard you say you didn't worry about off heading openings anymore. It stuck

in my mind because, that was all we were worried about at the time.

Matt - It's just preparation. I think when you BASE jump, you must be thinking about immediate canopy control. It's something you can practice on skydives. If you have a 180 you must be on it right away and if you are, 180's can be fun.

TFOJ - Are you saying this, in the context of doing the longer delays, and not say, 2 or 3 second delays from the shorter objects?

Matt - Well of course the longer you go the more clearance you'll have, but it's the same thing, you must be there 100 percent.

TFOJ - Have you had any true out of the container 180's, the kind where you look up and it's already going the other way?

Lane - I have, I had two in a row off Fox Plaza. My face was about 5 feet from the building when I backed it off. I could see my reflection in the glass. Those were both slider down,

had another 3 feet, I would have made it. Right up until impact, I was thinking, I'm gonna make it, I'm gonna make it. It hurt too, I broke my leg.

TFOJ - Because you stuck it out?

Matt - No, as I was coming off the building, my shoe caught traction on the granite and twisted my leg up behind me.

Lane - I've never hit anything.

TFOJ - Gee Lane, 238 BASE jumps, no injuries, no arrests, no malfunctions, no object strikes!

Matt - I gotta say, I haven't seen everybody, but if I had to point my finger at one BASE jumper and say that's the best BASE jumper I've ever seen, it's got to be Lane.

TFOJ - We agree. We had Lane along one night at Symphony Towers in San Diego, and we let him go first. The building was 40 stories, about 500 feet, and Lane just goes sailing across the street and opened right over the parking

"I got warned at Bridge Day for pulling low."

three second delays.

Matt - I've had immediate 180's and turning 180's. But after all, that's really the big danger in BASE jumping. It isn't the low altitude, it's object strikes.

TFOJ - Have you had any object strikes?

Matt - One, off a building. The ledge had some type of sticky substance painted on it and if I stood in one spot too long my feet would feel nailed to it. I was afraid I would wind up just hanging there. So I had the bright idea of dragging a pallet out there and setting it up on the edge. I leaned forward and pushed off and the pallet didn't stick and it slipped back and I ended up falling so close to the building I had to tuck up my legs to keep from hitting it. This was the perfect time to have a 180 so of course I did. The building was right there in my face. I had the canopy stalled and if I'd

lot. The same parking lot we'd sweat making under canopy. We all looked at each other with dopey looks on our faces. We were ready to walk back down the stairs. The only way of topping that would've been to bounce. People still would have said, it's too bad what's-his-name went in, but you should have seen Lane's jump!

LAUGHTER!

Lane - Thanks guys.

TFOJ - Tell us how you plan BASE jumps in relation to slider down, mesh slider and regular slider?

Matt - Before mesh sliders, I was doing slider down 4 second delays. It hurt, but at the time, was better than trying those short delays with sail sliders. But now, up to 3 seconds slider down, 5 or 6 seconds with a mesh slider and after that, a regular slider with a hole in the center.

Lane - I'll do six second delays with

a mesh slider, even though they can open kinda hard, I wouldn't go more than that without using a regular slider, and I won't go over three seconds, slider down anymore.

TFOJ - What is the lowest you'll launch using a mesh slider?

Matt - It's in a gray area right around 500 feet.

Lane - Yea, 500 feet I tend to go slider down.

TFOJ - Briefly describe the way you pack for slider down jumps?

Lane - Basically a real clean, with good line tension, stack pack with a tail pocket and the line mod.

Matt - I've packed just one way since I started skydiving. Just a basic stack pack, only for BASE, I modify it with a tailpocket and line mod.

TFOJ - What type of tailpockets do you use, the grommet and rubber band type or the free line pouch?

Matt - We both use the free line pouch from *Tailored For Survival*.

TFOJ - Lowest BASE jumps?

Lane - I'm not attracted to the real low stuff. I want to freefall. It's not worth a pack job to me if I can't go at least three seconds. I don't mind opening low, as long as I can freefall.

Lane - My lowest was a 240-foot free standing antenna. That was a direct bag.

Matt - We did some direct bags at Fox plaza. Mark Hewitt was playing with them, and it was something new to try.

Lane - I was always last off and got to freefall.

Matt - We were kinda the guinea pigs for direct bag. I'd be in bed thinking about the next days work and the phone would ring. It would be Mark Hewitt saying, "Were packed!" Next thing, I'm zinging down the freeway.

TFOJ - If you were to take a friend of moderate skydiving experience on a first BASE jump, would you put them off direct bag or freefall?

Lane - I think I would direct bag them. You never really know how people are going to react to BASE freefall.

Matt - That's hard to say, because with direct bag you open pretty close to the object and there is still

that chance for a 180. I'm pretty much against taking new people on BASE jumps. I wish we could and promote BASE jumping too, but with the clandestine nature of it, it's just not practical.

TFOJ - Do you think BASE jumping is relatively safe?

Lane - Definitely, but only as safe as you make it.

Matt - I think so, however, it's pretty serious stuff. It has a lot of inherent dangers. But if you go about it right and you're prepared, it can be done safely. You can't say that it is safe but you can say, it can be made safe.

Lane - You can't approach it haphazardly, it must be a step by step thing. And you definitely have to be clear headed, no partying and jumping.

TFOJ - What are your wind limits for BASE jumps?

Matt - If we can get the joint lit on top, it's not too windy to jump.

LAUGHTER

Matt - I'll tell you one thing, BASE jumping has proved itself a lot safer than I thought it would be. When I first started, I thought we'd be losing people left and right, and it really hasn't turned out that way.

Lane - There are people BASE jumping without all the knowledge they should have and they are getting away with it. The gear, I guess, is basically saving them.

TFOJ - Have you made any round BASE jumps?

Lane - Yes, I've done a few. But I made enough round jumps when I started skydiving, to sort of avoid them now. There are a few BASE sites where rounds are an advantage, but for the most part I only jump squares.

TFOJ - How many skydives did you have when you stated BASE jumping?

Lane - About 250 or so.

Matt - About the same.

TFOJ - Do you wear helmets and pads?

Lane - No, not really, I might wear kneepads now and again. And a helmet once in awhile, but 90% of the time nothing but my rig.

Matt - I'm not going to say wearing a helmet is not a good idea, any-

thing safety related is a good idea, but for me it's usually nothing more than a parachute and appropriate clothing for the weather. I like the freedom.

TFOJ - In what BASE category do you have the most and least BASE jumps?

Lane - We both have more building jumps than anything else. For me, tower jumps are the least.

TFOJ - Is that because you like buildings the most?

Matt - I don't know, maybe it's because we live right down the street from a whole mess of them.

Lane - I think buildings are my favorite. They have the easy access, and there is just something about downtown. It's pretty much a slum when you're down there, but when you're on top, it's just a beautiful sight. All the lights and everything, it's just a nice place to spend time.

Matt - It's funny, I used to hate skyscrapers. When I was younger and into backpacking and nature, I would look at these buildings as blights on the landscape. But now, they're the most beautiful things in the world to me.

TFOJ - How do we handle the growth of BASE jumping?

Matt - That's tough. It's going to grow whether we want it to or not. Although it may be a selfish thing, it's a fact, the more people who stay away the more chances we'll have to jump.

TFOJ - So you don't encourage people to BASE jump?

Lane - No not really, when around skydivers, I don't go out of my way to talk about BASE jumping.

Matt - Well you know, it comes up in conversation. If the skydiver you're talking to doesn't feel threatened by BASE jumping, than it's just like any jump story you tell at the DZ.

TFOJ - Yes, it seems the skydivers who get uptight are the ones who enjoy the death aspects of being a skydiver and are miffed because they see BASE jumpers as being deathier than they are. They're too used to being on top of the danger heap!

LAUGHTER

Matt - Yes!

TFOJ - So you don't take people under your wing and teach them BASE jumping?

Matt - No, not as a rule, I mean I have, but maybe less than 3 people. Sometimes you run into someone you just don't mind having along.

TFOJ - So what you are saying is, in the great sea of skydivers out there, some folks just bubble up to the top?

Lane - Yes.

TFOJ - So actually you do help people to BASE jump, if they are the right people?

Matt - Okay, you got me, that's pretty accurate. Moe Viletto was like that, he was a bubbler.

LAUGHTER

Matt - It's a personal thing, you meet someone you want to have along, someone you know will be a good partner and will BASE jump with the next guy in mind. I think a town the size of L.A. could support a lot more BASE jumpers, if they were all cool about it. But it just takes one guy to get the whole town hot.

TFOJ - What was your first exposure to BASE jumping?

Lane - I was at Elsinore and saw this photograph of Tom Sanders jumping El Capitan. That really turned me on.

Matt - I knew most of the people who were early BASE number holders. It was something I wanted to do, just from hearing them talk about it. But I remember being on El Cap for the first time thinking, I'm not real sure about this. The next thing you know we're at Auburn bridge smoking through 600 feet with no problem.

TFOJ - What do you think is the biggest problem facing BASE jumping today?

Matt - The law. Because of the laws we are pushed into making safety compromises.

Lane - And sometimes we're our own worst enemies, like when

people hang around after jumping to party. Drinking, yelling and just carrying on. I've still been up on the building trying to get my jump off and people are down there like they're at a Freak Brother convention. I've seen a lot of that, you try to tell them and they just don't listen.

"I thought, as I ran to where Matt was, I was gonna to find this smoking piece of sausage"

I look at it like I need to be as inconspicuous as I can, so the next guy can come and jump without any problem.

Matt - Some, start out being low key and getting away with it. Then they start to get more blatant, not realizing, they weren't being caught because they were being cool.

TFOJ - Why do you BASE jump?

Matt - BASE jumping just has so many interesting aspects, the gear, the sites, the people. BASE jumpers are just neat people.

Lane - It's just the most fun I've ever had.

TFOJ - Does BASE jumping still scare you?

Matt - It varies, some jumps you feel real comfortable and real positive without a fear in the world. But sometimes you're on top and there's that little fear ball in your head and it starts to grow. Sometimes I'll tend to promote that and work myself up till I'm scared to death, I'm thinking there's no way I'm going to live through this jump! But after you do, it's just that much more elation.

Lane - There is always that concern that keeps you on your toes. Fear becomes respect after awhile, and it can keep you safe.

TFOJ - What are the misconceptions people have regarding BASE jumping?

Matt - The same ones people have about skydiving. Only we get it

from skydivers too, which really gets me. They just don't understand the preparation, the gear and techniques, all the ways you can keep yourself out of trouble.

Lane - A lot of skydivers can't comprehend BASE jumping because they don't understand the

gear they jump out of airplanes with. They know this handle does this and that handle does that and that's it. Most can't four line a canopy or even pack really. They put the slider up and that saves them from really bad pack

jobs. It may not be their fault really, the sport is just not that gear intensive anymore.

Matt - I saw a guy at the DZ pay \$100 for a BASE pack job, and he took it to El Cap!

LAUGHTER

Matt - If El Cap gets legal, BASE jumpers can make a fortune packing in the meadow for all the rich skydivers from the DZ.

LAUGHTER

TFOJ - Lane, you just came back from jumping a 2000-foot antenna tower. How did that go?

Lane - It was great, I had never done one that tall before. On top the winds were really blowing and the ground winds were cooking too. There was some water downwind to watch out for. We decided it would be best to open high and set up on the other side of the water for landing.

TFOJ - What happened?

Lane - I got off the top and was thinking about pitching, said the hell with that, and took it down and opened about 400 feet. The water wasn't a problem at all. I knew I wouldn't back into it from there.

LAUGHTER

Matt - The taller the object, the longer the freefall, that's the way I see it.

Lane - I was warned at Bridge Day for pulling low!

LAUGHTER

Lane - Yeah, it was Jean Boeish's brother, I guess he was there helping out. I did a good six or so in the middle of all these people who were doing 2 second delays and splashing down in the water all over. I did a nice landing right beside him on the sand bar and he comes up to me talking on his radio and said, "You pulled pretty low and your gonna have to watch it from now on!" I couldn't believe it, and said, "I pulled low on a BASE jump!" I knew he didn't know any better and he meant well, so I just walked off.

LAUGHTER

TFOJ - Any other Bridge Day thoughts?

Matt - There should be more of them and I wouldn't mind seeing a Bridge Day west at Auburn. I think bridge day should be at a better time of the year, to insure better weather conditions. But I realize Bridge Day is for the bridge and not just for the bridge jumpers.

Lane - Jean does a big job there, and even with all the other problems people seem to have with her, I give her a lot of credit.

Matt - Yeah, she really is a sweet lady with a big heart. Most of the people who badmouth her, don't really know her. It seems like Jean

bashing is just the in thing to do. I really appreciate what she has tried to do and is doing. There is some things I would do differently but, hey, I'm not doing it.

TFOJ - Do you ever think BASE jumping will become legitimate?

Lane - Maybe the cliff jumps, but with the liability, I don't see being able to do any of the others.

TFOJ - You don't see the possibility of someone throwing up a 1000-foot tower somewhere, just for BASE jumping?

Lane - That's possible. If we find someone with lots of money to hide and a good enough waiver, I guess it could be done. I'd sure like to work there!

TFOJ - What type of gear do you BASE jump with?

Lane - I use The EDGE BASE rig and a Pegasus canopy. It's the old non-reinforced model Pegasus and I have about 130 BASE jumps on it. Lately, most of the jumps have been slider up. I weigh about 200 pounds and I won't jump that canopy slider down anymore.

Matt - I started jumping a Comet, then I jumped a canopy Gargano built called the Lumen...

Lane - That canopy was black squiggly death!

Matt - No, it opened kinda hard,

but I liked it. Any moderate aspect ratio seven canopy in good shape is ok. I used to jump a Handbury and a Vector but now I also jump The EDGE BASE rig. It's the best BASE rig going. One nice feature is that with a jacket over it, nobody can tell you have it on.

TFOJ - How about pilot chutes?

Matt - We have been using 45 inch pilot chutes for most of our jumps.

TFOJ - What new piece of equipment do we need right now?

Lane - BASE air bags.

Matt - We already have them, Lane, only it's overhead and called a canopy. (LAUGHTER). If I could snap my fingers and get anything it would be a permit that allowed me to BASE jump anything I wanted.

TFOJ - How many BASE jumps did you make last year?

Lane - Probably 70.

Matt - Around 60.

TFOJ - So you guys are averaging two a week.

Matt - Some weeks three.

Lane - We're the walking dead at work. But who needs sleep when you got adrenalin.

TFOJ - Do you think, that on any given BASE jump, you can do everything right and still get killed?

Matt - It's possible.

Lane - Yes, but you could say the same about any high risk sport.

TFOJ - Do you jump AM antennas?

Matt - No, that stuff scares me and I still may want to father some kids.

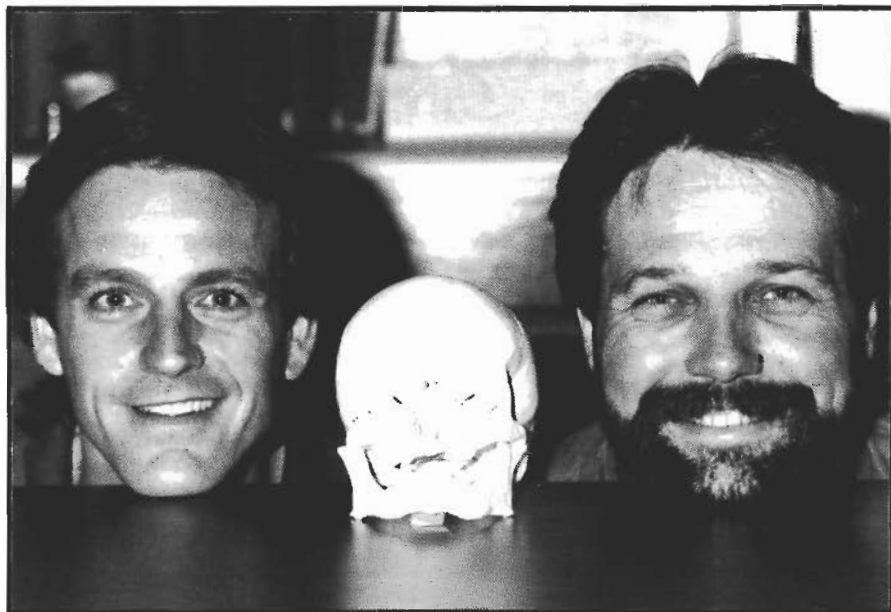
Lane - I live near a 700-foot AM tower and I have to pretend it just isn't there.

TFOJ - What are your plans for the future?

Lane - I'm not sure, we started out with a death wish and didn't die, so now we're just stuck having fun.

LAUGHTER

Matt - I want to keep on BASE jumping and at the same time keep it fresh. Sometimes I take myself out for a few months, once I didn't BASE jump for a whole year. BASE jumping to me is not about chasing numbers or anything like that. It's just about having fun!



Matt McCarter and Lane Kent

PHOTO/NICK DI GIOVANNI



Last Off...

BASE from the Heart

By • J.D. Walker, BASE 37

BASE veteran, J.D. Walker, talks about losing friends, BASE jumping equipment and the sport he has loved for ten years.

Just received your last issue and it looks great!! The layout, format and attitude are just perfect and I wish you the best.

I read with great sadness, your story on Dick Pedley and I want to say that you handled this emotional area with incredible sensitivity and concern.

I am so *very* glad you have decided not to give the "statistical" story, with some B.S. conclusion, to add salt to a bad wound. I know Dick was your friend and one very cool ol'dude. I had a lot of fun when he came out to do our local stuff (before I moved to So. Cal) and believe it or not, even my wife liked him!! (Top that)!

After the pain goes away, I will always remember the 57 year old skygod who would ask questions and take advice, just like he was new at the game. He wanted to learn all that he could. I will always treasure the photos of he and I at various sites, he looking more like a tourist than a jumper.

On the subject of losing friends, I hate to say it, but in this sport you're gonna get hurt eventually. And sooner or later you will lose a friend - just like Dick - and, the hurt is always the same. **The only** thing you can do is to **learn from** other people's mistakes or misfortunes and decide if the risk is worth it.

There are many things I used to do, things that now make me shudder when I think of them. Many older guys are rethinking their strategy and I think the sport can only get better for it.

For instance guys like Matt

"...put your ideas in motion, always evaluating and refining them."

McCarter and Lane Kent. Most of the newer jumpers have never heard of either one of them, and they like it that way. Matt is BASE 17 and won't even bother jumping something he can't do a delay off of. The same goes for Lane, who is pushing 300 BASE jumps - about half of those buildings - and also doesn't prefer low altitude jumps.

Both of them have honed their skills to a fine art. They don't get hurt by doing things just to keep up with anybody else or to get mentioned in some magazine. (Matt needs a good pair of sneakers, though).

Even Mark Hewitt, who made hundreds of jumps without a reserve, (his old saying was, "Leave your malfunctions at home,") has recently built an incredible BASE rig with a very custom reserve system on it. I believe he is the most innovative idea-man out there, and there are several more guys like him coming up.

The point of all this is, put your ideas in motion, always evaluating and refining them. When I made

my first BASE jump a decade ago, *nobody* would even consider building my ideas for me. So I had learn it myself, building BASE rigs and large pilot chutes, tershes and the like. Now, just in Southern California, you have *T&T Rigging* building super clean rigs and assorted goodies and *Tailored for Survival*, who is building beautiful custom rigs and

tersh reserves. TFS also builds the nicest pilot chute I've seen yet! (Moe, can I have one for that)?

There are also several rigger/BASE jumpers who can help you with cus-

tom stuff. Many ideas I've had over the years are coming back now, like the 48 inch Hot-Dog-on-a-Racer, with a Stevens set up. With some canopies you can get a clean inflation in less than 150 feet. John Carta made several jumps with a rig we co-designed 6 or 7 years ago with this idea and it worked great. One person I know has a hand deployed, slider down, square reserve set-up.

Most of us have a canopy of choice, (and we all differ!) The point is there are many great ideas out there, and jumpers are always looking for a better way, and should continue to do so, always.

With all that mush out of the way, (whew!!) I want to close by saying that although I don't BASE jump much at all anymore, I have always enjoyed the people and the good times I've had BASE jumping. You guys are carrying the torch now, and I commend you for your effort. Stay healthy and happy, and I'll see you guys, this summer, at the summit!

P.S. Tell Todd and Moe, I prefer black!!



Builders of Quality BASE Gear

BASE Rigs
Pilot Chutes
Tail Pockets
Zoo Toggles
Mesh Sliders
Direct Bags
Much more

**T
&
T
RIGGING**

27475 Ynez Rd. #200, Temecula CA 92390
(714) 699-5206