

An aerial, black and white photograph of a skateboarder in mid-air, performing a jump over a city street. The skateboarder is wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt, dark pants, and light-colored sneakers. The background shows a dense urban environment with buildings, streets, and trees, viewed from a high angle.

THE FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL

VOLUME TWO, NUMBER FOUR

BRIDGE DAY 1992

TYPE 17 MINI RISERS?

EAST TEMPLE PEAK

MEDIA RAPE

FLIPPIN 'EM BURGERS

BY SIMON JAKEMAN

WE'RE SERIOUS!

REACTOR Harness Container

Velcro Free Riser Covers

Tapered Container

Protected Cutaway-Handle

Lined Container

Spandex Pilotchute Pouch

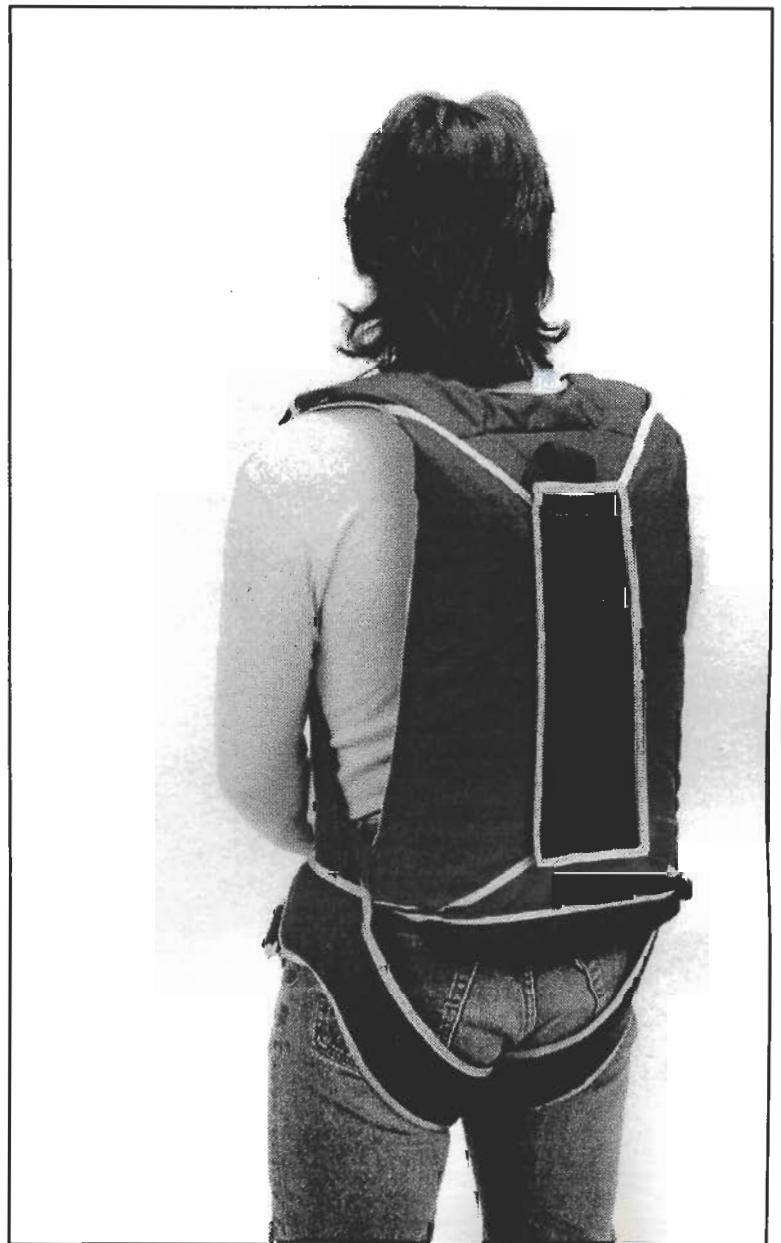
Video Owner's Manual

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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 do care and restraint. The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL accepts no responsibility for any actions taken as a result of information printed herein.

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THE FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL

VOLUME TWO, NUMBER FOUR

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OFF THE LEDGE

ABOUT THE COVER

A BASE jumper takes advantage of the fact whuffos sleep in on Sunday mornings.

Photo by Anne Helliwell



BASE jumping is like baseball.

Step off an edge or take a swing at a ball and only a few outcomes are likely. You hit safely and walk away. You get beamed and limp away. Or, you strike out and get killed. A simple game with simple rules, like never marry the first person you see naked and never be in a hurry to make a BASE jump.

We BASE jumpers are the river boat gamblers of our time, but our profits seem small considering how we bet the entire farm every time we play. What effects that play is subtle and damn easy to miss. The point? If you're doing it boy, you better be enjoying it, cause there ain't no other reason.

Now it was my turn at bat. I would zig or zag, turn this way or that, walk away or wind up broken on the rocks. I was lucky not to have been ejected from the game, but I sure did get beamed in *Anatomy of an Accident*.

Three BASE jumpers, not as fortunate as I, are dead as winter comes to my part of the world. I knew one, Jonathan Bowlin, BASE 76, through his writings and phone calls. The other, an Australian named Joe Shaw, only because I'm sure he loved BASE jumping. The third was an inexperienced skydiver attempting a first BASE jump that became El Capitan's first BASE jumping fatality. (The two previous Yosemite fatalities were both off Half Dome).

The late Mike Allen, BASE 163, left behind an electronic legacy. A body of thought sitting in a big mainframe where anyone with enough computer gee-whiz can log on and download it into their PC. For all who miss Mike Allen and for those he never met, here's a selection of messages Mike posted to GEnie, a worldwide electronic bulletin board. It begins with the tale *The Hitchhiker*.

Alf Humphries takes a grand BASE adventure and finds a taste for Yukon Jack in *East Temple Peak*. We also take a look back at last year's Bridge Day where new management, a first ever BASE competition, and great weather made it a happening that garnered more attention than ever before.

Media Rape, is something that unfortunately happens when someone outside your sport reports on what you are doing. CBS did a number on us with their news/magazine show *Eye to Eye* with Connie Chung. We look at this prime example of media rape, why it's unfair, how it works, and how it effects the people involved.

Do you BASE jump with Type-17 "Mini" risers? During the Parachute Symposium in Orlando several manufacturers argued over the problem with mini risers. Our conclusion: They are better left behind when it comes to BASE jumping. See if you agree in *Type 17 Mini Risers*.

Despite the fatalities it's been a good, if not overly exciting year for BASE jumping. In addition to several firms already supplying BASE rigs and associated equipment there are now at least three companies marketing canopies especially for BASE jumping, and that is really a step in the right direction.

The Discovery channel aired a one hour film by Tom Sanders and Jan Davis of Aerial Focus that is probably the best ever look at our sport. Mark Hewitt and Guy Manos (Guy Manos?) scored a good bit in Sylvester Stallone's movie *Cliffhanger*, and its now five months since I broke myself into little pieces. Christ, the time.

C-YA
Nick Di Giovanni
Editor

AIR MAIL

Wired

There I was in San Francisco, ya know looking at the buildings and such. It ain't safe for a BASE jumper up here. There are non-insulated electrical lines that run throughout the city used to power the trolleys. A spider web that stings, you'd be a cindered-out wire-fried burned carcass with a city worker poking you with a stick. There are however some tasty bridges with cold water landings, and that awesome tower.

John Kockelman
Mountain View, CA

Little Bagged 'Calibur

At Bridge Day my little bagged 'Calibur with its 44-inch Z-P sea anchor opened fast. I cruised up the shoreline with all the glide of a bowling ball. High wing loaded canopies with big pilot chutes don't flare, and I should have gone in the river. My greed only cost me a scrapped knee. Thank you personally Nick, for showing my friend Jim how to pack his old Unit with his new tailpocket. He made his first three BASE jumps that day. Thanks also to Janet Kelly, BASE 281 and "Jake," BASE 177 for all their help and support. During all night map reading sessions looking for roads leading toward tall towers I spend hours with my copies of the JOURNAL dreaming of long boomed cranes atop buildings with lots of open air all around. I really look forward to standing outside the rail. That's when you really learn who you are.

Tim Harris
Trenton, NJ

How Low Can You Go?

Up here it's winter so we either store the rigs or get dressed up real warm. Our record so far is launching at -24° C. It's amazing how you don't feel the cold when you are standing on the edge, but back on earth it's cold as heck. Also a note for your records. My BASElog is full or should I say half full. You see back in 1991 BASE 318 and I were the only active jumpers in

this area. A new BASElog was given to us by a visiting jumper, so we divvied it in half, and now my half is full. Never thought I'd make it.

Mario Richard
BASE 320
Quebec, Canada

New Friends

I've just received my issue of The JOURNAL, it's great. I had fun jumping & partying at Bridge Day '92. The seven way was a blast, and I'm glad I got to meet you.

Troy Hahn
Arlington Heights, IL

Thanks for the copy of The JOURNAL. I read it cover to cover as soon as I received it, I recently made my first BASE jump at Bridge Day 92 and loved every scared minute of it. Enclosed is my \$20. Please let me know if there are any back issues, as I can't get enough of this stuff.

Doug Carroll
Arlington, TX

Being a board skydiver with 1000 jumps I'd like to BASE jump as an alternative, enclosed is my subscription, please send me The JOURNAL.

Jacek Von Huszla
Germany

Mr. Smith

I found this article in a British newspaper about the fellow who jumped London's St. Paul's Cathedral. Thought you'd like to see it. Hope all is well with you and your nice lady. I have some frequent flyer miles I need to use, and would love to come to California and do you know what. Hope to see you soon.

Jay Smith
Mobile, AL

Ripcord

Just a note to thank you for getting me into the air (what there was of it) at Bridge Day '92, and for the copies of The JOURNAL. They have given me an insight into some of your problems. I'd also like to thank Andy Calistrat for okaying my ripcord rig. This was the sixth Bridge Day that Jim Poulson jumped the bridge with similar equipment. Many expressed their concern for my welfare warning me of the evils of low airspeed, burbles, and pilot chute hesitations. It sounded like me talking to first jump students.

Bob Sinclair
D-272

Somewhere on the Road

I was glad to see you at Bridge Day and immediately thought to hook you up with Jim Poulson, who said, "No kidding, he's here?"
Ed.

Down Uppsala Way

My name is Mats Lundin. I have together with my good friend and BASE instructor Mikael Nordqvist done about 30 BASE jumps this year (including my first in January.) This may sound moderate to American ears, but it certainly is a national record here in Sweden. As you can see I've enclosed some photographs. These are from our summer BASE activities and of course, you are welcome to use them.

Mats Lundin
Uppsala, Sweden

Welcome Back

Just a note to let you know I read the report of my accident in the last issue. [On the Wire, vol 2 No 3]. I didn't recall much of what happened, and the article filled in a lot of gaps for me. I'd like to thank Jonathan Bowlin, BASE 76, for writing it, and you for publishing it. For those who may be wondering about my condition, I am fine and have returned to BASE jumping.

Leigh Brown
California

AROUND THE BASES

"It was impossible to keep them off the bridge."

Jonathan Bowlin

Jonathan Bowlin, BASE 76, was killed and another jumper was seriously injured when the two collided under canopy after a two way launch from a 1400-ft cliff in the western United States. The incident occurred on Mother's Day. Jonathan from Northern California was the author of "On the Wire." (*Anatomy of an Accident*, vol 2, #3) which appeared in the last issue of The FIXED OBJECT JOURNAL. Details of the accident are being withheld for security and legal reasons. Jonathan Bowlin was 45.

BASE History

Bill Schumacher is a pilot and flew the B-17 during WWII. He recounts an early BASE jump he witnessed. "When I was 17 years old I attended a show at the International Amphitheater in Chicago. One of the acts was a guy who dropped from the top of the arena, about 95-feet, with a closed canopy. It had a static line so the canopy started to deploy instantly. The canopy opened right before the jumper hit the ground, and he landed very soft. This was about 1940 or '41. I went off to the war becoming a military pilot and forgot all about that jump. In 1952 I purchased a Fairchild PT-19 trainer and immediately purchased a couple of parachutes. I took them to the Rupert Parachute Loft at the Palwaukee airport in Wheeling, Ohio. The man there said not many pilots brought in parachutes for repacks, and most of loft's work was building missile recovery chutes. The Rupert Loft,

he told me, also pioneered seat belt use in automobiles. We were shooting the breeze when he mentioned he was the fellow who made those jumps back in the forties. His name was Carl Rupert. He said there was an old abandoned blimp hanger back at the Palwaukee airport [used to be] and he practiced the stunt from its ceiling. He used a dummy until he was sure it would work. After successfully making the jump, he was approached by the TV show *You Asked For It*, [a 1960s better version of *That's Incredible*] they offered him a sizable bit of money to do the stunt again, he declined, but referred them to some newsreel footage he knew had been made showing the jump. He didn't know if they ever found the footage. The last time I saw Carl was in 1964 at the Indy 500. He was supplying seat belts harness systems for the race cars.

A "Real" Tall Story

While climbing the dark interior of a new building under construction you must marvel at what it takes to raise all that steel and concrete up from a hole in the ground. A book called *Skyscraper, The Making of a Building* by Karl Sabbagh is a nuts-and-bolts look into the construction of a modern skyscraper. The book follows the construction of Worldwide Plaza, a 770-foot building erected between 1986 and 1989 in New York City. The book centers around the three principal money players. The construction manage-

ment team, the financiers, and the architects. The project was also recounted in a PBS TV program. Of particular interest is the chapter *Framing the Steel*. It deals with the Mohawk Indians who do most of the high and dangerous work. Although this book doesn't address our sport, it does cover an environment of interest to BASE jumpers. The book discusses how in 1886 Mohawks were hired for ground work to help erect a railroad bridge near their reservation. A construction official observed, "It was impossible to keep them off the bridge. If not watched they would climb up into the spans and walk around up there as cool and collected as our toughest riveters, most of whom were old sailing ship men, especially picked for their experience in working aloft."

Close Ones

Two jumpers were hurt in unrelated incidents at the same site last year. Both were severely injured after jumping from a California cliff. Reports indicate one, an experienced BASE jumper, suffered a broken mini-riser and spiraled into the cliff's talus. The other, an experienced skydiver making his first BASE jump, deployed his parachute while unstable and hit the wall numerous times after his canopy deployed. Both jumpers have recovered.

Getting it Down

The Sept/Oct issue of *Parachutes, Yesterday/Today/Tomorrow* (P: Y/T/T) published by Jim Bates included a lengthy seven page article on both Bridge Day '92 and BASE jumping in general. The cover of the issue depicts the West Virginia/New River Gorge Seal and beneath it says, *A Dream Come True for Fixed-Object Parachutist*. Author

Jim Bates applied his unique brand of painstaking research to the project and the results were outstanding. The JOURNAL often gets multiple page letters from Jim that detail his adventures as he crisscrosses the country running down leads regarding obscure parachute lore. Jim is well on his way to leaving a body of work behind that will make him the hero of future historians of parachuting. P: Y/T/T, 25 Whiton St/P.O. Box 283, Windsor Locks, CT 06096.

It's here

Groundrush, the book from Simon P. Jakeman is now available in the United States. Trafalgar Square Publishing in Vermont is distributing the work. The book is the first written with a BASE point of view. The hard cover price is \$24.95 and a soft cover edition is also available.

Fall From Grace

Russell Powell, the Brit who jumped inside St. Peter's Cathedral in London, and was also along with Darren Newton when he was killed last year jumping the London Hilton Hotel, was banned for life from skydiving in the U.K. The British Parachute Association has a policy of banning members who participate in BASE jumping. Powell was scheduled to appear before the BPA for a hearing, but choose not to attend.

Trango Tower

Nic Feteris, BASE 71, and fellow Aussie Glenn Singlemann teamed up for a grand BASE jump from Pakistan's Trango Tower, a mountain with a launch point 19,537-feet above sea level. The team included 48 porters, 2000 pounds of gear and the landings were made at 14,000-

feet. Both men experienced exit problems possibly from heavy cameras, and the high altitude. The National Geographic is planning both print and TV coverage later this year.

New Design from T&T Rigging

T&T Rigging has released the latest version of the Reactor, their Velcro closed BASE rig. This rig is longer and slimmer than previous designs and features a tapered square cornered shrivel flap. This is a departure from the firms easily identifiable round cornered flap. The rig has riser covers and is available in a variety of colors besides black. After a dozen test jumps we found the rig comfortable and like all T&T gear, very well built.

Panama Steve

Steve Cooper, BASE 344, is serving with the military in Panama. He reports there are

Discovery

I first met photographer Tom Sanders at Lake Elsinore. His photography business was then called *Sport Shots* and we all marveled at his stuff. Now, almost 15 years later he's still doing it to us. The hour long *Discovery* program "Challenge" (aired April 1993) embodied all the elements of BASE jumping into a tight stirring package. The production values on this up-to-date look at BASE jumping were a treat after suffering our own conceited attempts to video ourselves. Tommy always brings it back in the can, and this has been the most positive look at our sport to date. The cast was a virtual who's who of BASE jumpers, but the credits rolling at the end state simply, "BASE Jumpers, You Know Who You Are." Tom Sanders and Jan Davis are no strangers to BASE jumping, they have been on numerous BASE expeditions were they have

was, in the case of BASE jumping, true. "Yeah, that could happen," I kept thinking. The real test, of course, is did it scare one to watch it. Tommy did a nice job of capturing the buzz of the launch point. Some jumps made me squirm and some made me soar as they conveyed the "moment" of BASE jumping. Thanks Tommy and Jan, and all who participated on this project. We needed that.

The FOX

The only real question here is, why did it take so long? A canopy designed from the ground up as fully dedicated BASE parachute is finally here. The FOX (Fixed Object eXpress) is a product of *Basic Research* a design team composed of T&T Rigging's Todd Shoebottom and Master rigger Anne Helliwell, BASE 222. Anne had already built several canopies including one she regularly used for BASE jumping. Todd Shoebottom was looking to bundle his firm's popular Reactor BASE rig with a canopy designed for BASE jumping. The design goal, according to the firm's publicist, was a canopy with a magical center of balance between planform, aspect ratio, trim and reinforcement. Specially designed stabilizers allow cleaner and easier pack jobs, lines are 525-lb dacron. The testbed models had continuous lines with floating cascades that together with special four legged risers made the trim of canopy fully adjustable in flight. This was a boon to finding just the right trim angle for mean conditions. The canopy has a freestow tailpocket installed during construction and the FOX sports a bridle attachment you could hang a truck on as well as spanwise reinforcement.

Jakeman gets Job

Simon Jakeman, BASE 60, was returning from a local bridge after getting winded when he came upon a welcome site on an Indian reservation near his home in San Diego. Overnight, it seemed, someone had erected a 240-foot free standing bungee tower. Jake was in the process of scaling the fence when employees showed up to question him. A half hour later Jake had made a free bungee jump, had set up a demo BASE jump from the tower to publicize the new bungee business, and was the greenest bungee-jumpmaster on the team. "Yes," Jake says, "I've broken into the bungee business."

Aussie Fatality

Joe Shaw was killed after a poor exit from Australia's Bungonia Gorge. Details are sketchy, however it was reported Joe hesitated for some time before performing a weak launch from the 920-foot cliff and deploying unstable after too short of a delay. Joe was in his late twenties.

Symposium BASE

At least two BASE gear manufacturers, and several experienced BASE jumpers have expressed an interest in setting up a booth in the exhibition hall of the next Parachute Symposium. A title for the lecture portion could be: "BASE JUMPING, IT'S NOT JUST BANK ROBBERY ANYMORE."

The Book

Jean Boenish, BASE 3, reports BASE numbers are currently standing at 352. Jean has been the "Keeper of the Book" since the BASE award began. To record a new BASE number call Jean at (213) 678-0163.



Photo by Jeroen Karstens

Anja Peters launches from a 390-foot Antenna in Sweden using *The EDGE* rig from *Tailored for Survival*.

some buildings, a bridge over the Panama Canal and a small cliff that he used to complete his BASE award all near where he lives.

both filmed and jumped. The danger angles were played up slightly in this piece, (hey, its gotta play in Perioria, ya know.) But, it's really not needless embellishment. Every reference to safety or death

El Cap Fatality

On September 25, 1993 Susan Oatley, 41, became the first person to die BASE jumping from Yosemite's El Capitan. Accompanied by at least one very experienced BASE jumper it was Susan Oatley's first BASE jump. She had made approximately 250 skydives since her first in February of this year. She was reported to have launched in a normal head up position, but remained that way, back and side sliding for twelve seconds before hitting that wall in freefall around El Cap Towers. She never tracked. One jumper remained on scene, alerting park rangers who later recovered the body. She made the decision to attempt El Cap quite suddenly, and some BASE jumpers had tried talking her out of it. The lesson here seems obvious. El Cap is very much a BASE jump, and despite its great height, which has no doubt saved countless unprepared skydivers, it is far from something to be done on a lark.

MOJO

Adam Fillippino, a BASE equipment manufacturer in Davis, California has added BASE 7 cell canopies to his product line. The MOJO, is available in 220, 240, and 260 sq. ft. versions. They come standard with tail pocket and extensive reinforcing. For more information call Consolidated Rigging: Voice (916) 666-3612, Fax (916) 661-0528.

THE MYSTERY OF THE TWO PINS

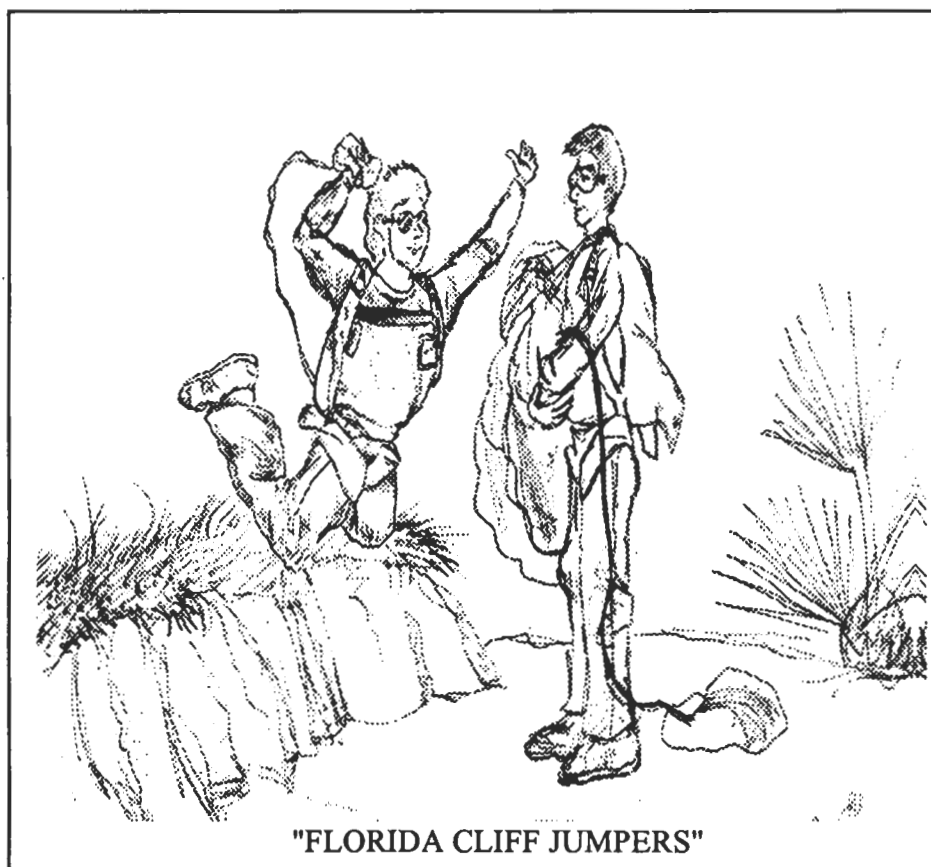
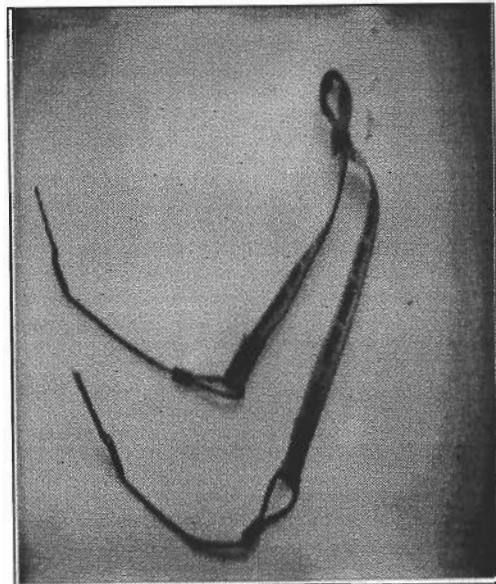
I found this strange little gizmo laying at the side of the road on Bixby Bridge the other morning. At first I wondered if maybe a roving rigger had stopped to do a reserve repack, and left behind his temporary pins. Then I got to wondering, sheet! I wonder if anyone actually jumped with that thing attached to them.

Some people just have to push the envelope.

There's something ominous about pins without pilot chutes, don't you think? Still, there was no crater in the sand, so I guess it must have worked.

I made a couple of static line jumps while I was there and on the second had a lone spectator watch me. He turned out to be a South African guy touring around in a beat up van, and believe it or not, he knew a bunch of jumpers back in S.A.. He stopped to look at the bridge because he thought - "Wow, my friends would love this. I wonder if its ever been jumped?" Ten seconds later - CRACK - one fully inflated Pegasus. Yee-Haa! P.S. Thanks to Todd at T&T Rigging for the breakcord.

SIMON JAKEMAN, BASE 60



BRIDGE DAY 1992

By NICK DI GIOVANNI

Precariously clinging to a piece of rope I wouldn't trust to tie up the dog, I hung on as the over loaded shuttle truck raced back to the launch point. I tried catching what the jumpers up front were saying.

"I got a ride across the bridge every time. Just stuck out my thumb and someone would stop for me." My bad heel was sympathizing with him.

It was a good stretch between where the shuttle truck dropped you and the launch point on the New River Gorge Bridge. Except, deep down I knew he'd missed something.

In three trips to the launch point, I walked across the bridge sifting my way through a sea of whuffos. I walked fast and most times sideways, carrying my BASE rig on one shoulder and battle gear on the other. The faces I passed were different this year. They were smiling. All seventy five thousand of them.

Bridge Day '92 started out grey and chilly, there had been rain the day before, but the day turned blue and warm. For October in West Virginia it was very subo-tropo. One of the first jumpers off unfortunately broke an ankle on landing, not a great start, but things improved. Except for the initial morning flurry, staff members manned mostly open launch points where there was no waiting for the big ride.

Mounting the rail for the first time at Bridge Day 1992 I looked back on the crowd. These people up close were the most curious and bold, the ones who had pushed and fought their

way to the rail. Sometimes the energy from this group isn't so positive. Nervous glances and almost-smiles show fear and apprehension. Not this year. This year they wished us well. This year they seemed to sense we knew what we were doing. This year they'd purely come to see the show.

A few weeks prior to Bridge Day I received a call from the President of Gravity Sports LTD. Dennis McGlynn was excited about an idea for a first ever BASE competition. He was serious. He was talking judges in stripped shirts, electronic accuracy pads, numbered bibs, and trophies. He meant a for real meet.

I was luke warm to the idea at first, thinking no, let's not turn BASE jumping into skydiving ba-blah ba-blah, but as Dennis explained I began to get excited too. We were good enough I thought. Let's show 'em, whuffos and all.

"ESPN's coming to film it," Dennis finished.

Surf's up buddy. The wave of BASE popularity, the wave that will make us all rich and famous was coming. Dennis was going fast answering questions as they popped into my head and before I could speak them.

"We are going to do it right," Dennis went on, "it's going to be pro from top to bottom. So Nick, do you want to be one of the sponsors? We'll put The JOURNAL's name on the banner?"

Did I want in, you bet. Wax up the sticks, dudes. Let's see, I'll need a new jumpsuit (1993 was the year of the jumpsuit in BASE jumping) something black and ghoulish and . . .

"We are running a style and accuracy competition" Dennis interrupted my thoughts.

. . . I'll look really cool . . .

"There will be first, second and third place winners," Dennis said.

. . . and do a frontloop, no a backloop. A

backloop layout to a reaper roll. Point the toes, point the toes!

"Yeah, okay Dennis count us in, it sounds alright to me."

The trophy Dennis acquired for the meet was sweet. First place winners would have their names inscribed into what was a perpetual trophy and Dennis, bless his optimism, made room for twelve years worth of winners.

Forward thinking such as displayed by Dennis and others is just what Bridge Day needs. The BASE jumping portion of Bridge Day is always on the edge. Every year has the potential to be the best year or the last year. Hopefully, '92

It was the
year of
Andy

set the tone for many Bridge Days to come. It went well. It was the year of Andy.

Andy Calistrat impressed me immediately with the Bridge Day registration package he mailed out. He nailed the paperwork. The form was easy to read, even fun to fill out. It included an info sheet that folded into the size of a packing data card (replacing the one in your rig) and put all pertinent phone numbers and other information regarding Bridge Day at your fingertips. Andy's style of management was one of less is more. The class separating yellow shirts worn by staff members were gone replaced by more sedate badges. The meetings and the speeches were kept to a minimum. Politics remained of course, but only enough to keep things interesting and the result was more jumping and more fun. Long live Andy.

This year, in order to offset the associated costs of Bridge Day, a few innovative strategies were considered not including raising fees to the BASE jumpers. Brightly painted donation barrels you couldn't help passing on the way to the launch point were set up on either side of the bridge for whuffs to chuck in their change. I saw these askarma buckets and always tossed something in. Friday, the day before Bridge Day, started early chiefly due to the bar in the Holiday Inn being locked up tight.

"No sir, we didn't close the bar because you all were coming," the desk clerk said. "Some jealous husband shot his wife's boyfriend in the butt in there and the police made us close up for a while."

"Ouch." The preferred late night entertainment turned to elevator surfing, much to the dismay of Barney, the hotel security guard.

Friday in the Fayette Memorial Building registration was completed, gear was inspected, and the 3rd annual BASE trade show was held. Andy spent the day signing up a slow but steady stream of arriving BASE jumpers. Tom Sanders and Jan Davis, of Aerial Focus were on hand filming their popular Bridge Day video as first time BASE jumpers received assistance setting up their equipment.

In a very short speech Andy said little and was informative. He finished by introducing Ranger Kinsy Shillin. Hey, now this guy looks more like it, he was young, likable and he wasn't trying to look like my senior drill instructor from Marine boot camp.

No Fear was there with their line of tee-shirts only a whuffo could love. At the *No Fear* table I asked the reps if they would be jumping this year. Amid all those shirts proclaiming *No Fear*, they both giggled and confessed to being chickens.

The "good idea whose time hasn't come" award goes to the folks who showed up with kill line collapsible BASE pilot chutes for sale. After experienced jumpers saw them, a peer regulatory commission sort of formed and the pilot chutes disappeared. Some thought in certain situations they'd be alright, some that it was inevitable we'd start using them, but most seemed to think they needed a bit more thought. We all use kill line collapsible pilot chute for skydiving, but this was BASE jumping. I'm not real sure we're ready for someone to forget to cock a bridle on a BASE jump from the New River Gorge Bridge.

Bridge Day '92 saw less broken bones. Almost all the injuries occurred to jumpers under good canopies in stable wind conditions. Although no accident is a simple process they mostly landed too hard or going too fast. One day soon we could see an injury free Bridge Day. We only need get our educational system in gear.

It was a BASE jumpers Bridge Day. There were more BASE rigs on the bridge than I've ever seen in one place. Sometimes every jumper in the roped-



The first Championships, Bridge Day 1992.

off launch area was sporting their version of the Velcro closed dream rig. These folks come with the right gear, the right attitude, and they came to BASE jump. The choice set-up for hard-core BASE jumpers appeared to be a single parachute packed into a custom built Velcro closed BASE rig. Reefing was mostly via mesh sliders. There were only a smattering of small front mounted reserves. Freefalls were mostly in the three to four second range, with a few nickels and a deep six or two.

One jumper who packed slider down, and without the line mod, had a line-over. He cutaway low making some of crowd turn away lest they watch him bounce. He made it, although it was a close one with the New River saving him from an out of control landing. Later when I complemented him for being alive he honestly said he had pulled his reserve ripcord before cutting away by mistake. In this case, it seemed clear from

the ground, that launching his pilot chute first is what saved him. It also prompted a paramedic into asking, "You all have two parachutes, right?"

Yes," I answer holding up my 42-inch BASE pilot chute, "there's one," and pointing to my Fury, "and here's another."

Nick Bender, BASE 33, had two exciting jumps. Nick is one of the old regulars at this game, but on one jump he forgot which side of his BASE rig he had stowed his pilot chute. We all watched his thought process through the back of his head. On another, thinking he was packed slider up, he went a pregnant four seconds before finding out he was really slider down. The resultant hard opening blew the brake off his left riser.

The Ranger presence was heavy as usual and they kept a good eye out, but they also presented a softer side this year. Young Ranger Shilling spent the majority of his time at the launch point and it was obvious he was enjoying himself. I couldn't help smiling when I heard him say wow a few times.

A record no contact seven way was launched that prompted a jumper who watched it into saying, "It wasn't pretty, but they did it." I saw it from the bottom and watched Rich Stein the last to deploy take it down to the trees.

Leaving Bridge Day I ran into John Vincent who was in the lobby of the hotel waiting for his limo. Mike Alderman and Chuck Sweeny joined us and the discussion turned to a televised jump where B.J. Worth exits a helicopter and freefalls into a deep sink hole.

B.J. later said the jump could also be made from the rim.

"It's in Brazil." Chuck Sweeny said.

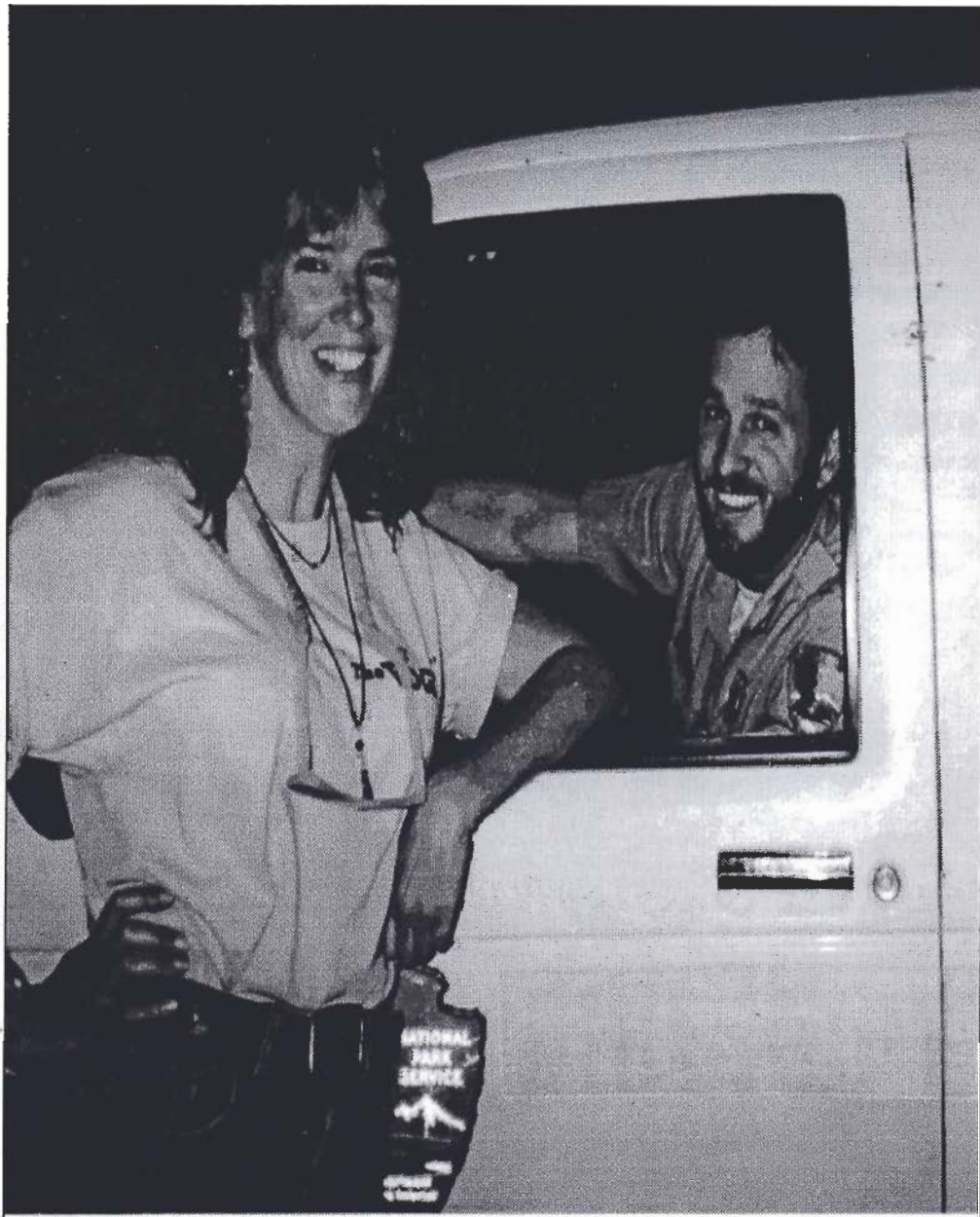
"No, I think Mexico." Mike Alderman corrected him.

"I thought it was Pittsburgh" John Vincent said.

Of course, some areas at Bridge Day need tightening up, such as the launch point, where unnoticed a small child managed to get to the top of the exit stairs before somebody grabbed him. Andy looked a little shook after that bit.

We are still teaching BASE jumping in fits and starts. There should be organized seminars, at least packing demos, either in the gym or in one of the hotels. The one

on one help is great but it burns out staff members, better to teach 25 at a time. Bridge Day 1992 was a successful event and Bridge Day remains the best place for most to make their first BASE jump. The expertise is there, the altitude is there, and if you are considering a first BASE



Janet Kelly, BASE 281 and Ranger Kinsey Shillian.

jump you should be there too. Bridge Day is held on the third Saturday of every October. If you plan to attend next year's Bridge Day, contact Andy Calistrat for registration or general information at: The World BASE Association, P.O. 451636, Houston, TX 77245-1636, for more information.



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TYPE 17 "MINI" RISERS

If you wonder about your Type 17 "mini" risers occasionally, it's not without reason. Having a riser fail on a BASE jump is no fun. Are mini risers strong enough for BASE jumping? Jumps that may be single parachute jumps or have opening points below cutaway altitude?

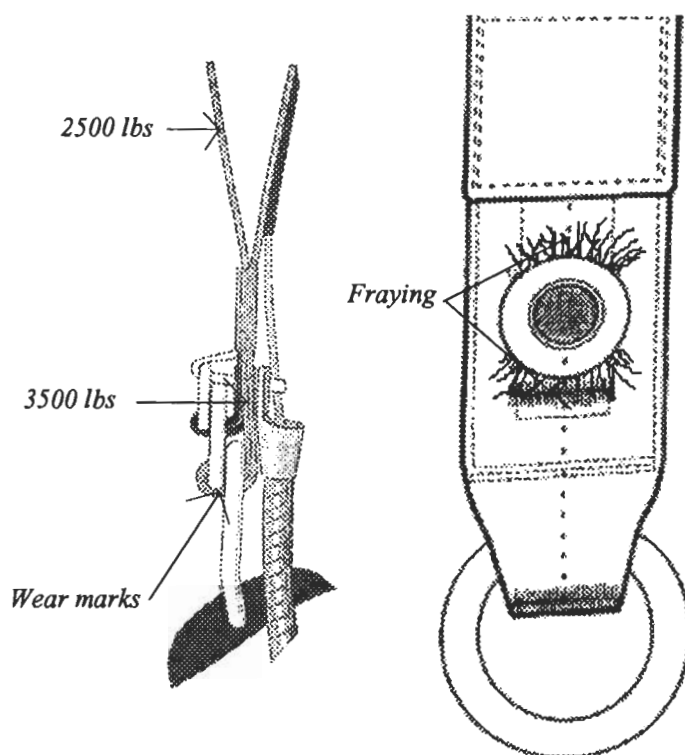
There has been several failures of these risers at drop zones, and at least one in BASE jumping. The manufacturers have tweaked the configuration of the type-17 riser by adding type-3 tape to the bottom boosting that portion an additional 1000 pounds. However, while the new rated strength at that point is about 3500 pounds, the front and rear individual riser legs still have a yield point of around 2500 pounds.

By TFOJ STAFF

How much does a riser have to stand during opening shock? It depends on who you ask. Poynter's Manual (Paragraph 8.22) states opening shock can briefly attain 10Gs. A jumper with a total suspended weight of 180 pounds traveling at terminal velocity could put 1800 pounds on the risers. Others say it's probably not that much. However, if you factor in slider down jumps or if the opening is atypical, with line dump or other reefing system failure, the G-forces could reach significantly higher levels. It's hard to say exactly what forces are experienced 100 percent of the time. Some riser manufacturers say the riser should act as a fusible link in the harness design. In other words, a hard opening and the shock it produces is taken by the riser that fails and not passed on to the harness were failure is unthinkable. That's fine at the drop zone where you have a reserve, but not down at the Flatiron Building.

The decision to use type 17 risers rests with the jumper with all the facts. It is safe to say however, that when performing a one-parachute jump what's the point? Type 8 (1 23/32 inch) risers are more apt to hold in extremism due to their 4000 pound rated strength.

Type 8 (large) risers are available from many sources, some factory made and some built by individual lofts. All risers are by no means created equal and the major skydiving manufacture's risers aren't necessarily the best for BASE jumping. Where their risers may be built by sewing machine operators who have never been off the ground, most manufactures of BASE equipment build risers that incorporate trick toggle release systems, and are built like they are attached to the only parachute you have by riggers who BASE jump themselves and know the feeling.



Above right is one area where type 17 risers are prone to failure. A hole is punched through the riser to install the grommet and it significantly weakens the riser. Although perfect looking risers have failed, generally fraying or wear marks will first be visible either around the grommet or on the bottom end of the riser. The bottom is also where mini risers suffer the guillotine effect where the two bottom rings slice the riser open. In addition when enough force is placed on these risers the cutaway cable can be sucked back through the grommet, where it might hold, but it would make cutting away difficult if not impossible.



EAST TEMPLE PEAK

BY ALF HUMPHRIES

East Temple Peak is 12,590 feet high, and lies towards the south of Wyoming's Wind River Range (the Winds) close to the continental divide. Rob Slater, BASE 42, a friend who's climbed in the Winds many times, told me

he's sure the north-east face of East Temple was jumpable. Hundreds of feet vertical and overhung with a large snow field below. It sounded like an interesting project. I couldn't find another jumper to accompany me, so decided to jump it alone with a ground crew.

We rolled out of Denver late in June 1992 with my station wagon loaded to the gills. The road trip was 9 hours, including an hour on rough dirt roads. I planned to camp near the foot of East Temple with my three kids plus one of their friends. There was no way the kids and I could carry our camping gear the 10 miles from the car. It was uphill and 10,200 feet above sea level. We arranged to hire horses at the Big Sandy Lodge, and have them pack our gear in while we hiked. We met my friend Rob Slater and his chum John Sherman (they'd climbed the face of El Cap together) at Big Sandy. We all hiked in together. They were planning rock climbs while I jumped and the kids would be fishing. We had a ton of gear and lots of warm clothes, as it can be very cold and wet even in July.

The hike in was pleasant. The weather was good, though the kids complained a bit. Four horses carrying our gear passed us on the way. They'd be leaving our load in a pre-arranged spot. We found ourselves under Haystack Mountain, a spectacular peak with many famous climbing routes up its west face. We arrived at our destination, and after pitching

camp, I immediately set off to scout the landing area. I once got into serious trouble jumping a cliff without first checking out the landing area.

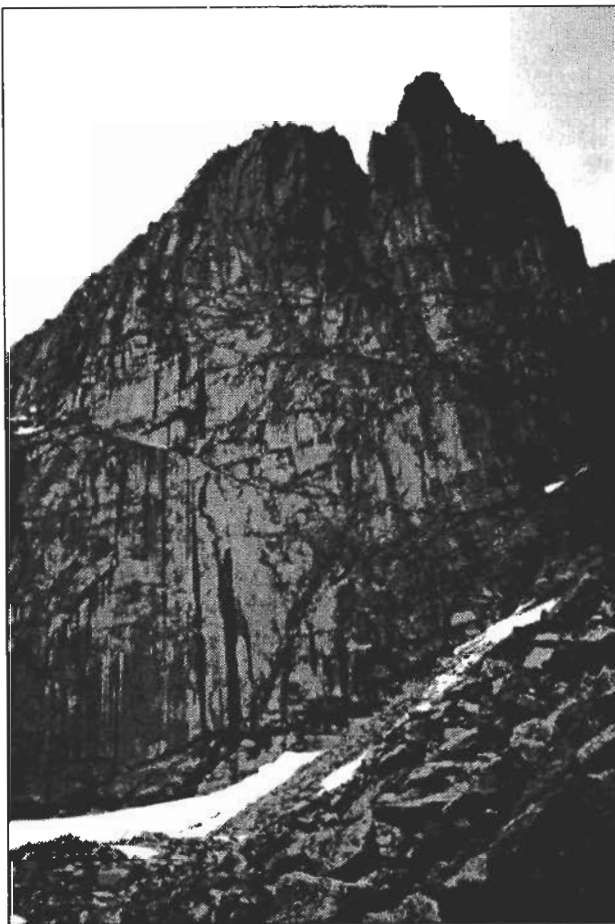
It took about two hours each way, the going proved quite a bit steeper than expected. The terrain was very rough, with huge granite boulders strewn about the landscape, many precariously balanced. The glaciation in the Winds is incredible; apparently the last major glaciers retreated only 6,000 years ago. I finally reached the landing area, a large snow field just above an unnamed lake, on which large ice chunks

floated. The snow field was reasonably flat towards the bottom (but much steeper near the cliff), and looked like a fairly natural place to land. It was however at an altitude of 8000. The cliff towered above me and certainly looked like a good prospect. Though you can't really tell until you get up on top and do some rock drops.

Satisfied with the landing area I hiked back to camp. Seven of us cooked up some spaghetti and settled in for the evening. The weather seemed to be getting worse. I planned to leave camp at 5.30 the next morning, estimating that it would take three hours to hike to the top. It's always important to jump as early as possible before the winds get up, especially in these high peaks. However, in the morning it was raining steadily, so we stayed in camp for the day.

The following morning the weather was clear, so I set out with my trusty base rig (containing Super Raven 3, mesh

slider and 38" pilot chute). I also had large fanny pack on my stomach, containing water, trail mix, a whistle, radio, my Casio stop watch (for timing rock drops), 48" pilot chute (in case the vertical was less than expected), toilet paper (which doubles as a wind streamer), garbage bag (to keep stuff dry), de-ice salt (in case the launch point was icy), camera and topo map.



East Temple Peak.

Rob and John were going to be climbing on Lost Temple Spire, so I planned to talk to them on the radio every half hour to get wind checks. It was a lonely hike. Past Deep Lake, past Temple Lake, up the saddle between Temple and East Temple. I was as nervous as a cat, and had to stop in order to relieve myself several times. The last 45 minutes were up huge boulders and around small slippery snow fields. Then it started to snow lightly, and I became even more spooked. However, there was almost no wind, and I had BASE jumped in snow before so I continued on.

The top came quickly, with major vertical walls along the north-east side. I crawled to the edge and looked over. I liked what I saw, and began a series of rock drops in order to find just the right launch point. As Rob had said the best spot was fairly obvious. It was a huge flat rock jutting out over the face, sloping up, located roughly 50 yards northwest of the highest point. It makes a good launch rock, with a rough surface. You can lay on the end of it, and look down and time your rock drops and take photos. I was getting 6.5 to 7 second drops. It was really hard to be sure - the rocks went past a buttress in freefall and out of sight, then I heard them hit. Not ideal - it is much better if you can see them hit - no need to estimate the time it takes for the sound to travel. Anyway, it looked like at least 550 feet (6 seconds = 500 feet), dished out, with extremely steep terrain below the impact point. The total height from launch to landing was 1800 feet according to the topo map.

It almost quit snowing and I was able to blow off the little snow that accumulated on the launch rock. I called down on my CB radio to Rob and John (who were now beside Deep Lake in the cirque to the west) and asked for a wind check in that valley. They responded that it was calm. There is also little wind at the launch point. All systems appeared to be go.

I told them I would launch in a few minutes, signed off, put on my helmet, fastened leg straps, and adjusted my fanny pack. I couldn't run up the rock, so planned to stand with one foot on the end, and give a hard push. Pilot chute in hand, I took a few deep breaths, counted 3,2,1, and launched. Nice stable exit. Totally quiet. Fantastic view down the cliff. Pitch after 3 or 3 1/2 seconds. Quick clean on heading opening. Whew! I'm going to live! Right turn with the risers, pop brakes, head for the snow field. I noticed that my risers and steering toggles seemed to be further apart than usual, but no problem. S-turns took me to a landing right where I wanted to be on the lower part of the snow field. Yahoo.

I immediately got out the radio and called Rob and John to let them know that I was down and safe. It turned out they had seen me under canopy for a few seconds in the notch between East Temple and Lost Temple Spire. On checking

my gear, I now noticed that my chest strap was undone.

No wonder my risers had been so far apart under canopy. I had obviously been damn lucky I didn't fall out of my harness on opening so always double check leg straps, chest strap etc. before launch, especially when alone.

The rest was routine. I field packed, and started my hike back. It was beginning to snow again this time with a little sleet and was quite cold, no problem, I had a good coat. I had jumped at nine A.M., got back to camp around eleven, and spent the rest of the afternoon getting looped on some Yukon Jack.

I had recently turned 48, and the East Temple was my 44th base jump. I had hoped to make another jump, but the next day we woke to 3 inches of snow so we elected to leave. My kids had an interesting time, but didn't catch one fish. Rob

and John had done little climbing - the rocks were too wet. I was the lucky one.

We packed up our stuff, stowed it under watertight covers, and headed down to Big Sandy. Our gear wouldn't be picked up by the horses until the next day, since we were leaving a day early. We made it back to the comfortable lodge where we dried out, warmed up and relaxed.

Some additional notes: The Wind River Range is a federal wilderness area. Hang gliding is prohibited, as are re-supply air drops to hikers. However, as far as I can figure, there is no law against BASE jumping. Still, it's best to keep a low profile, we didn't mention to anyone why we were there. The range is very remote and pristine - in 4 days we saw half a dozen people. The weather is foul for much of the year, except for July and August.

It is an incredibly beautiful place, a bit like Yosemite, with dozens of lakes, and awesome granite peaks, including War Bonnet and Cirque of the Towers in the distance. East Temple's north-east face was climbed for the first time only in 1979; it took 3 days, two bivouacs, and a lot of direct aid. I probably made a mistake taking my kids - it's just too much to try to keep track of kids, camping gear, scheduling horses and BASE jumping on one short trip. My thanks to Rob Slater, and also to NOLS instructor Steve Goryl, who first turned me on to the idea of jumping in the Winds. Call me at (303) 650-8221 if you have any similar projects in the works.

... and
spent the
rest of the
afternoon
getting
looped on
some Yukon
Jack.



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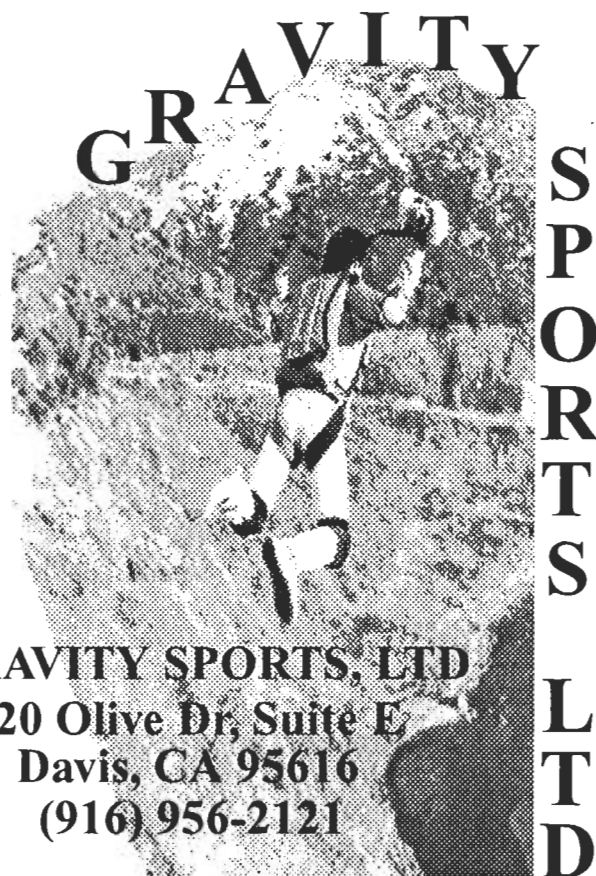
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MEDIA RAPE

By Nick Di Giovanni

My answering machine clicked and the message went, "Hi, I'm Bob Baxter with CBS News in New York. Would you please call me back collect at . . ."

Sure Bob.

"Hi, what can I do for you?"

"Hello, we're a brand new news magazine show with Connie Chung that's premiering soon called *Eye to Eye*.

Never heard of it.

"Yes."

"Well we're doing a piece on, you know, these new thrill sports people are getting into."

By new he means, new to him.

"Yes."

"We'd like to do a piece on what you fellows do."

He's not sure what we do is called.

"BASE jumping?"

"Yes exactly, BASE jumping, now right up front I want to tell you we have standards at CBS news, we can't shoot anything staged."

Like your poor brothers at NBC who got caught staging the exploding truck.

"I can appreciate that Bob."

"We don't want you setting up a jump just for us. We just want to follow you when you do what you do."

They aren't paying money.

"I understand you fellows look down on other jumpers who publicize the jumps they make?"

"In a way Bob, but there is good and bad publicity and we aren't adverse to a small amount of the good kind."

"Well, we'd like to send a camera team along on one of your jumps. We don't want anything special, you don't need to go all out, just let us follow you on a simple jump."

"Any BASE jump is like a fire, Bob. There's nothing simple about it."

"That so?"

Gee Bob, don't live up to my every expectation.

"Bob, there's a matter of payment."

"CBS doesn't pay for news."

What news?

"Okay, what will the angle of this piece be?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, what's the hook?"

"Well, like I said, it's about the new thrill sports of the 90's."

Bob, you lying sack of TV producer.

"Bob, you must understand we are talking about diminishing returns here. The more we publicize what we do, the less we are able to do it. So, I'm sorry, but I don't think I can help you."

C-ya . . . Click . . .

What happens is Bob will eventually find some BASE jumper who will help him and we'll come out looking good or we'll come out looking bad. It's a crap shoot.

Handling the media is difficult. It calls for expertise because they will use you and they will use BASE jumping. The temptation to get on TV is something we may all exhibit, but it may be best to get advice from jumpers who have been there before.

Left alone the directors\writers\producers will accentuate the danger of BASE jumping to the point of being silly, BASE jumping, to any whuffo, already looks dangerous enough. Yet, like doctors who don't get emotionally involved, the media types are just seeing another patient. You need to keep control, and usually your only weapon is to say I'll walk if you guys don't play right. This of course only works when there aren't five BASE jumpers lined up behind you with lower standards.

Over the last ten years BASE jumpers have learned several valuable lessons about the media. Usually the hard way. Choose these media projects with care, the sites and reputations you save may very well be your own.

"He's not
sure what we
do is called."



THE LIST

By NIGEL SLEE, BASE 28

Last week a paragliding instructor in my hang gliding/paragliding club died. My first reaction was sadness rather than shock. I've become hardened by this sort of news. I took a deep breath, shrugged my shoulders, and carried on with the day. Good memories of this man kept popping up in my mind over the next couple of days. And then it hit me.

I imagined what his death meant to the rest of the club. These people hadn't yet encountered death. I could still remember with shock and disbelief when my skydiving instructor died shortly after I started jumping. I felt I had to do something for these paraglider people so I sat down and wrote them a open letter about death.

Working on the letter, I started jotting down names of all the good people with whom I've had the privilege to share special

times who are now gone. These weren't all jumping accidents, there are aircraft crashes, other sporting accidents, and a few suicides. A snap shot memory of each flickered through my mind. Good times. Good people. It was a sobering thought, but I knew, I could have easily been on such a list. I can scarcely believe I'm still here and not just a name scribbled on someone else's scrap of paper.

Looking at the names, I also felt guilt. I didn't go to any of the funerals and I'd never written anything in tribute to them. Two names really stuck out on the list.

In 1982 my good friend Frank Donellan, BASE 12, died on a BASE jump in London. I wish I'd bothered to check his pin. He was a lovely man. Mischievous, inspiring and always good company. He was the energy behind the start of BASE jumping in the U.K. We were dry sticks and he was the flame. At the time of the accident I was too shocked and too young to say or do anything useful. Miss you Frank, you'd love to see what the guys are doing nowadays.

And Carl Boenish. I count myself very fortunate to have received a share of his generous hospitality, wisdom and friendship. He was a great man. I never heard him say a bad word about anyone. I remember reading J.D. Walker and Rick Harrison's fine honest letters in *Skydiving* after Carl's death and felt ashamed for not coming up with something myself.

Nigel has already made a big contribution to safety by editing "Jump" a BASE magazine published once a year in England. It's always been the only source of information for British jumpers.

ED.



Nigel Snee's letter prompted us to go back into our files for this list of BASE fatalities. We cannot say this is a 100% accurate list, and it is presented here only for its educational value. Please contact us with corrections, deletions or additions. We'd also appreciate hearing from anyone with details of the one unconfirmed fatality.



01. Frank Donnellan, 1981.

Building jump, impact.

London, England.

Total malfunction on static line jump.

First "modern" BASE fatality.

02. Larry Jackson, 1982.

Cliff jump, object strike.

Black Canyon, Colorado U.S.A.

First U.S.A BASE fatality.

03. Jimmy Tyler, BASE 13, August 4, 1982.

Cliff jump, object strike.

Half Dome, Yosemite, California U.S.A.

First Yosemite Fatality

04. Carl Boenish, - BASE 4, 1984.

Cliff jump, object strike.

Troll Wall, Norway.

Carl organized the first jumps from El Cap using modern gear and techniques. He is considered the "father" of modern BASE jumping.

05. Jeb Williams, 1986.

Antenna jump, total malfunction, impact.

Tennessee, U.S.A.

Began the outcry about skydiving pilot chutes (too small) and bridles (too short) being used for BASE jumping.

06. Marilyn Ettma, 1986.

Cliff jump, object strike.

England.

No other details.

07. Rick Stanley, 1987.

Bridge jump, drowning.

New River Gorge Bridge, Fayetteville, West Virginia U.S.A.

Line Over (without lineover modification) resulted in uncontrolled decent into river.

This jump did not occur on Bridge Day.

08. Ray "Fossie Bear" Foster, 1987.

Cliff Jump, object strike.

Troll Wall, Norway.

Ray Foster was an experienced skydiver on his first BASE jump.

09. Michael Gibbard, 1987.

Cliff jump, total malfunction, impact.

Cheddar Gorge, England.

Static line malfunction.

10. Steve Gyrsting, 1987.

Bridge jump, impact.

New River Gorge bridge, Fayetteville, West Virginia U.S.A.

Steve used a stock skydiving pilot chute and bridle and the pilot chute never inflated.

First fatality to occur on Bridge Day.

11. Marlen Burford, 1988.

Building jump, landing incident.

Miami, Florida U.S.A.

Marlen hit a seawall under canopy at high speed. High winds were reported.

12. Mitch Reno, 1988.

Cliff jump, impact.

Half Dome, Yosemite, California U.S.A.

Over delayed, impact on line stretch.

Second Yosemite fatality.

13. David Dunblazier, 1989.

Royal Gorge bridge, Canyon City, Colorado U.S.A.

Hit gorge wall with multiple line twists.

14. Dick Pedley, 1989.

Building jump, BASE 263, object strike.

Century City, California U.S.A.

Off heading deployment and building strike.

15. Jean-Marc Bovine, 1990.

Cliff Jump, object strike.

Angel Falls, Venezuela.

Short delay, off heading deployment and wall strike.

16. Mr. Heron (first name unknown), 1990.

Bridge jump, total malfunction, impact.

France.

Associates believe Mr. Heron's bridle became lodged under the bottom right corner of his rig.

17. Bobbie Morris Jr., 1990.

Building jump, total malfunction, impact.

Mellon Bank Building, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania U.S.A.

Fouled bridle or pilot chute malfunction.

18. Darrin Newton, 1992.

Building jump, object strike.

Hilton Hotel, London, England.

Off heading deployment and building strike.

19. Jonathan Bowlin, BASE 76, May 9, 1993.

Cliff jump, U.S.A.

Off heading deployment, canopy entanglement with another jumper.

20. Joe Shaw, May 1993

Cliff jump, off heading deployment and cliff strike.

Bungonia Gorge, Australia.

21. Susan Oatley, Sept 25, 1993

Cliff jump, cliff strike in freefall.

El Capitan, Yosemite Nat'l Park.

1st El Cap fatality.

Jess (last name unknown) year unknown.

Antenna jump, impact.

Tennessee U.S.A.

No details, unconfirmed.

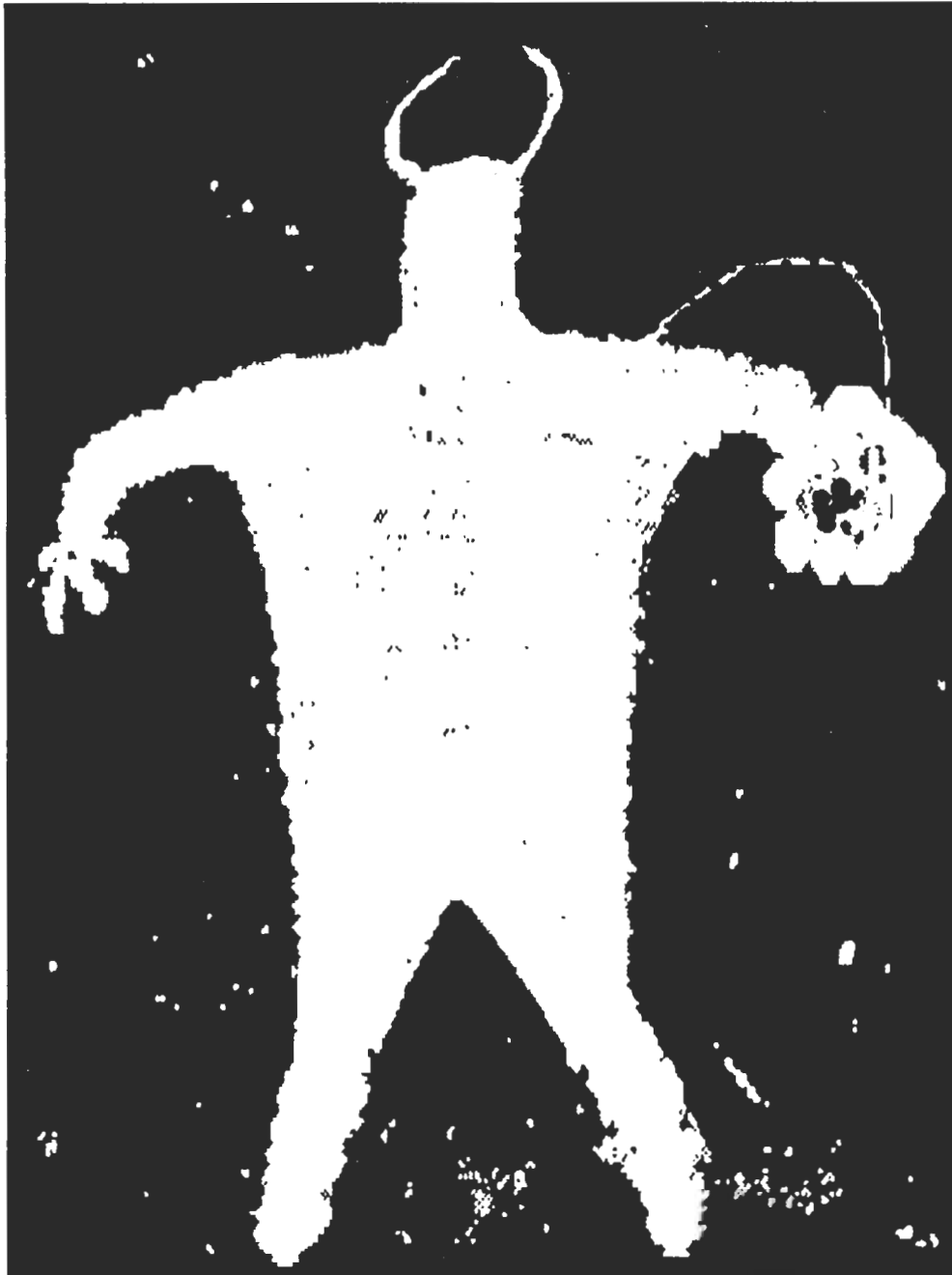
"AS SOON AS THERE IS LIFE
THERE IS DANGER"

... RALPH WALDO EMERSON



SUBTERMINAL . . .

PHOTOS FROM THE FIELD



Taggers thousands of years before spray paint left this Petroglyph on the cliff walls of Freedom Canyon, U.S.A. Is it a shield or a pilot chute?

Photo by Lumpy Rutherford

SUBTERMINAL . . .



"There goes my nite vision!"

SUBTERMINAL . . .



The corner of this building presents a good opportunity for this BASE jumper and his direct bag.

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"Oh, what the hell John, what the hell."

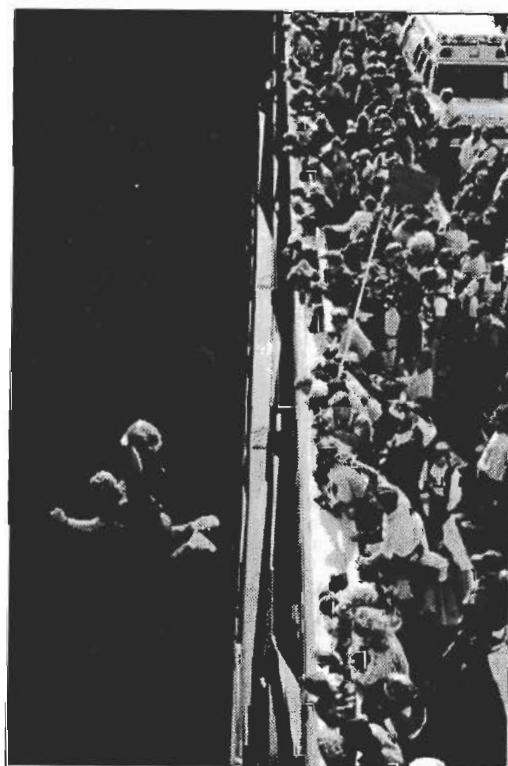
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BATTER UP!

By Nick Di Giovanni

For the most part accident reports published in The JOURNAL have been written by someone other than the accident victim. Not this one. I snapped my right tibia and fibula and also fractured my left heel on a bridge jump. It has given me an unfortunate insight into the accident process.

Photos by Mark O'Brien

It's like my leg's caught in a bear trap suspended over a barbecue and every ten minutes someone sticks a fork in to see if I'm done. With prejudice



born of dumb luck I've always subconsciously looked

upon others in plaster as lessor mortals. Now, I am one.

We were in New Zealand for six weeks as Anne Helliwell was conducting seminars at drop zones throughout both the North and South Islands. The seminars were primarily aimed at riggers, AFF JM/Is and tandem masters, but I found New Zealand jumpers hungry for BASE information. I volunteered to answer questions, show videos and let them handle my BASE equipment at the end of Anne's presentations. Even jumpers not interested in actually making a BASE jump showed a civilized curiosity, and they ya-hoed and wowed themselves into a frenzy during the videos. The Kiwis have their stuff in one bag.

I inquired into local sites.

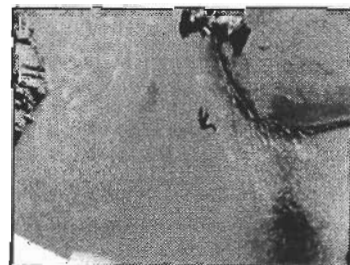
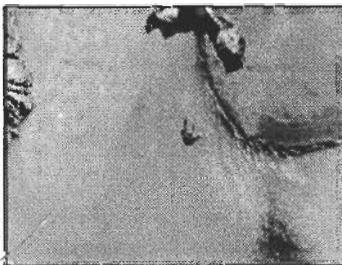
"Up in the Fiordlands, mate, around Milford Sound," one said, "there's a cliff, a 4000 footer into water, but you need a helicopter to get up in there and a boat to get out." I've heard of this cliff before from stateside New Zealanders, but alas, no helicopter and no boat.

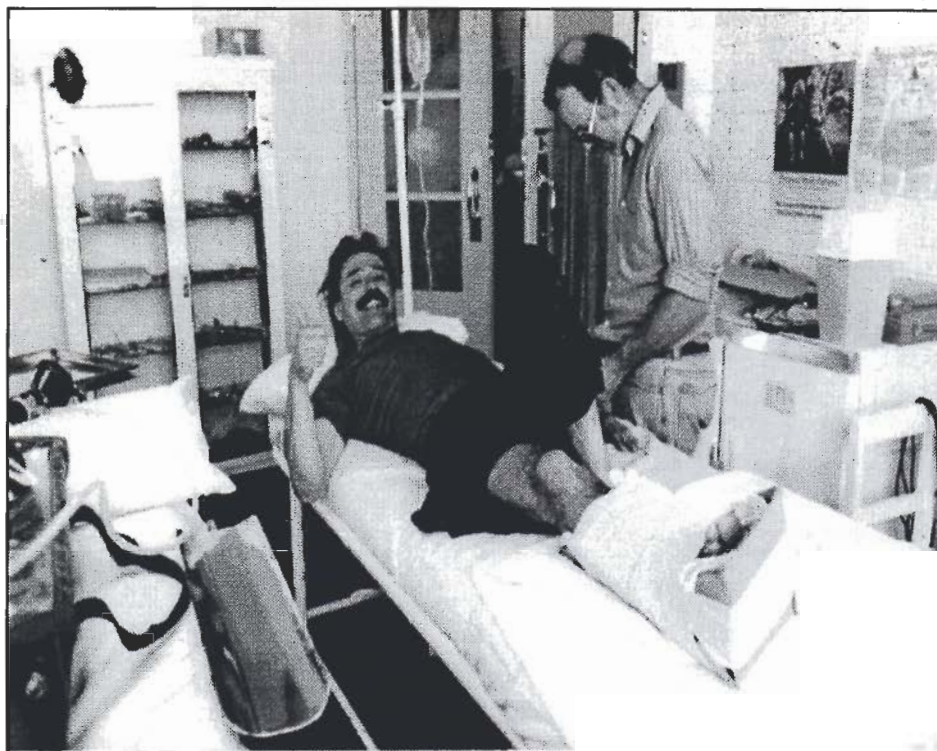
On leaving for the next drop zone we passed through Christchurch, a city of artists and old architecture. In the midst of the old there sprung up a new something. Something with a tall crane attached to it. It looked to be 250-ft or so and sat on a street wide enough to land on. This crane, on closer inspection, was attached to the side of the Christchurch Constabulary, I walked around the police station anyway, just for a look see.

Around the side of the building looking over possible LZs the photograph flashed in my mind. I saw my glidepath under canopy silently gliding passed a rather large sign tacked to the side of the building. Police Station it screamed. Anne's voice broke my photogasm.

"I don't think this one's a good idea." Anne said in that pleasing voice of hers.

Hm, she'd never said that before. We had three more seminars to perform, trouble with the law (I don't imagine New Zealander's fussing over a BASE jump) or an injury would be inconvenient.





Must have been Nic Feteris, BASE 71. I was doomed to action. I didn't hear it either, but the sound we all just missed was my legs breaking.

"Mind if I have a go at it?"

In typical New Zealand fashion he replied, "Help yourself mate, what can we do to help?"

"Is there a way out of there?"

"About a half mile up-river there's a trail back up to the top." Wouldn't matter though, I'd never walk out of that gorge.

I walked across and looked over. The Waiau ran under the bridge to my left. It was deep in the middle and swift. The edges were shallow and rocky. A rock shore line was in front of that, and then the sweetest looking sandbar. I (gulp) quickly calculated the jump could only go two ways. My direct bagged Fury would do something weird and spin me into the

water, or it wouldn't and I'd fly over the rocks and land in the soft sand. Even if it was a little downwind.

I dropped a wind drift indicator over the side and watched it slowly angle away a few feet before taking off downwind at a good clip. My mind cheered as it sailed passed the rocks, and also suggested the wind was a problem. But I was on vacation, I was in a hurry, I've done this sort of thing before, (Gulp.) Why, despite the warning bells going off in my head, I didn't consider further how the tailwind would effect the opening of my canopy was something I still fail to understand.

The jet boat pulled away with a load of tourists, they'd be gone forty-five minutes or so and no one except bungee master Mike and his partner were around. Didn't really need to hide my actions but old habits die hard. I snaked into my rig and mounted the rail. Anne held my bag, while Mark manned our still camera. I waited out a couple of gusts and pushed off into the small void.

Opening shock came quickly and I looked up at a clean bottom surface inflation and down to see I was heading straight for the rocks. I wasn't too concerned as I looked up again expecting to see my Fury finish its pressurization and lift to begin. The lift I needed to get me over the rocks.

"What?" (Really the first thing you say, not, Oh shit!) The canopy was out of position in front of me and it wasn't pressurizing. I never saw the canopy again as here came the rocks. It was too late for turns, too late for corrective action, too late for regrets. Out of feeble hope I hauled in the rear risers. I knew she

Yet, the clincher was I'm always one or two, it don't feel rights, away from not making any BASE jump. I passed. I don't, I thought, gulp BASE jumps.

We finished our last seminar in Queenstown on the bottom of the South Island and headed north. Bungee operations grow like weeds in New Zealand, and so they should as bungee jumping was pioneered here. In fact it is part of packaged deal for tourists tramping the country. The drill for bus junketing tourists includes making a bungee jump, a tandem skydive, and getting a ride in a jet boat.

One such bungee operation is in the small hamlet of Hamner Springs (*Hammer Springs*). Ah, beautiful New Zealand is a land of a million bridges. Unfortunately, most are about 20-ft high. But here's one spanning the Waiau river and after seeing low bridge after low bridge, it looked to me like the Royal Gorge. It was 120-feet.

Below a jet boat operator was hauling Japanese tourists up and down the river while two bungee jumpmaster were in the center of the bridge retrieving an hysterical tourist. We walked up and talked to them. Mark O'Brien and Anne discussed bungee jumping in general while I re-conned the area. "Anybody ever jumped this bridge with a parachute?" I ask.

"There was this Aussie fellow, Mike said, "named Nic something, he looked at it and thought it a bit too low."

**Comedy
was good,
but I
needed
morphine.**

The FOX

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wouldn't flare it was really more an involuntary attempt to climb up the lines to escape the rushing rocks. It was over in one sickening violent moment.

Man, both legs dusted, I heard 'em snap. In order to save the fuselage I sheared off the landing gear. My wind was gone, my head was reeling, my ears were ringing in monstrous echoes. In the distance I heard Anne calling from some dream-world that had nothing to do with where I was now. I could neither move nor answer and hoped my doing nothing would bring her. Anne was also an RN. She'd save me, if I could just hang on. I wondered if I was bleeding.

The shock of impact began to wear off, and the waves of pain fully broadsided me. I tried sitting up. My arms were working and so was my back. The impact was as hard as I've ever hit anything, I looked around for a rock to bite on and glanced over my shoulder. Anne was climbing down a dangerous line trying to get to me. Seeing what was below her position I knew she'd never make it. I didn't want to, but I yelled her off. Damn, I was going to be here a while.

I tried lifting my left leg. It looked all right and the foot moved. My right leg wasn't doing anything except killing me. My long pants shielded my view of the damage, but reaching down I picked it up and watched in morbid fascination at how my foot dangled at a right angle to my leg. Skin and muscle were the only things holding that attached. What the hell happened? The wind? Christ the wind. It came to me. Gulp!

I tried to make myself more comfortable. Reaching down in my confused state I strained to remember if I should loosen my shoe laces or not, screw it, loosening them was doing something and doing something, anything, was better than just laying there.

"I was about to find out if a black cutaway handle on a black rig with a black shirt underneath was black watery death."

I gave up on the laces as part of my Fury that was laying in the water began to inflate. Realizing it wasn't over yet, I was spun around and almost half in the water already. Here's where I find out if a black cutaway handle on a black rig with a black shirt underneath is black watery death. I found and pulled the handle just as the canopy started picking up steam and the movement almost put me out. I looked around, how long?

In the distance I heard the sound of the jetboat returning. These boats draw only six inches of water and they stopped right next to me. I looked up still dazed to see a dozen Japanese tourists firing away with their cameras. "Oh bungee no good!" I heard one say.

The un-real scene occupied me for a moment and the pain returned. The jet boat pilot sized things up quickly, disembarked his passengers and brought Anne and the bungee crew over to me. While Anne checked me over and immobilized my legs I asked a smiling Mark O'Brien if it was a compound fracture.

"No mate, I'd have throw-up already if it was."

Comedy was good, but I needed morphine. As they lifted me onto the bow of the jetboat, two thoughts ran through my mind. One was the BASE jump I had just made wasn't worth it. The second was did I ever really want to BASE jump again? In retrospect that particular BASE jump wasn't worth it, but the bit about wondering if I'd ever make BASE jump again only lasted about two days.

What happened? The tailwind was stronger on the bottom because the gorge bowed in toward the center directly under the bridge. This created a venturi effect and bumped the wind to a significantly higher level than the 4 or 5 mph it was blowing on top. It was enough to delay recovery from the pendulum effect of opening until I ran out of altitude.



The Christchurch Police station. Should have done it.

"THE HITCHIKER"

MIKE ALLEN ON LINE

There was something about Mike Allen you couldn't quite put your finger on. It was a power. And it was a good thing. Mike Allen, BASE 163, was killed while driving between drop zones on a notoriously dangerous two lane Florida road in March of 1992. Mike and I saw each other on various BASE road trips although we lived on opposite sides of the country.

Yet, we managed to keep in touch by a computer bulletin board called GENie. I had started a BASE jumping topic on this board, and Mike helped keep it going. Through the virtual reality of electronic communication Mike left us a legacy.

I always considered Mike the best type of BASE jumper. He didn't BASE jump with an attitude. He didn't BASE jump to impress himself or others and he had a knack for educating in a very disarming way. He BASE jumped with a sense of wonder and amazement that made people listen and respect him.

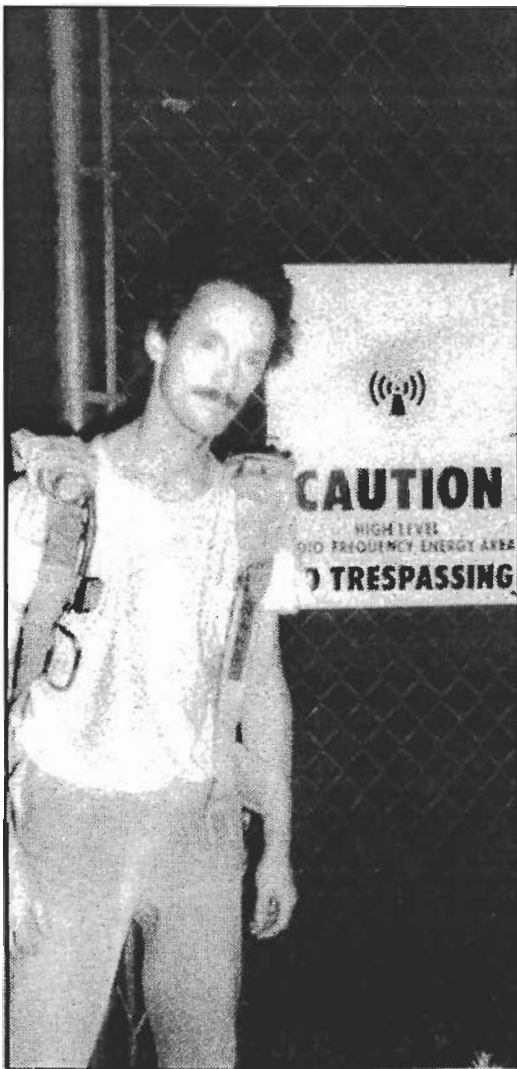
This power was brilliantly illustrated as Mike was picked up while hitchhiking down a dark Texas highway. He had just returned from touring India and had come away with a love for Indian culture and religion. Mike and the driver, a man in his thirties, discussed India and the things Mike learned there.

Mike must have gotten through to the driver as this fellow later started a religion in Texas that became wildly successful and made him a millionaire. Mike was later invited down to a palatial church and introduced to the flock as the mythical hitchhiker who brought "the message" and inspired their leader. He was welcomed and awarded all due respect accorded to prophets.

What follows are selected messages that Mike posted to GENie, a commercial computer bulletin board. Some are addressed to me, and some to others, however this is a public board, open to all for reading and replies.

M.ALLEN28 is Mike Allen's E-mail name on GENie. There are 27 other people named Mike Allen on this system.

Aviation RT
Category 11, Topic 21
Message 39 Thu Apr 24, 1991
M.ALLEN28
20:11 EDT



Mike Allen Goes R*A*D*I*A*C*T*I*V*E*

Yessir Mr. FOJ,

I'm alive and breathing. And this old gravity keeps bringin' me down. I didn't see much activity on this topic the last month, I was wondering how many actually participate. Must be some really elite topical sub-species, for sure. I did read several reams of material that hath spewed forth upon my floor that the BASE sub-genus generated since this topics inception and I found it all quite amusing. For what it's worth, I'll throw in my 2-cents from time to time, if some something sparks my neurons. So, that's it for now REMEMBER, PRACTICE SAFE BASE, ALWAYS WEAR PROTECTION, AND KNOW YOUR PARTNERS, (Good advice for the 90s). Drop me a line or two!

C-YA
Mike

Ah, the moon is so big and bright tonight. It gives me a warm feeling in my heart to know people from all corners of the globe are jumping off of stuff. What a wonderful nutty world.

M.ALLEN28

Congratulations Sir!!! The Harbor One Awards Committee has advised me that your award application will be processed shortly. Verification of your BASElog by a licensed BASE examiner

and \$20 will be required. If you want a Harbor One PRO rating, ten consecutive stand-up landings in the parking lot with no arrests are mandatory.

Cheers Dude!!!

Mike Allen

I guess you heard about the guy who jumped the World Trade Center yesterday in New York City. He threw the crowd a kiss, and did a nice exit, but a rather short delay, and landed in Battery Park a block or two away. My what is our world coming to?

Mike

Ahoy maytee, and all that other Jolly Roger talk. Sounds like you had a great time navigating your way off those BIG SECRET CLIFFS. As you know, me and my local fixed-object aviation chapter have been practicing our flying quite diligently off a variety of short runway type launch points, I just love good aviation. I'm glad you're working on the latest FOJ and of course look forward to the next exciting issue. Sounds like you guys had a blast on that last road trip. I'm sure we'll read about it in the next issue of The Fixed Object Journal. (Plug) Later!

M.ALLEN28

Yeah, Nick maybe you ought to file a waiver with the FEDERAL BUREAU OF CRANE AND BUILDING JUMPING, or some such agency. Maybe they can stop traffic, and tell security to lay off. Who governs us anyway? Gee, I'll have to check with Jean [Boenish] on that. What? You mean to say NOBODY controls our sport? OK, NOW I'M INSECURE!

"Pleasant Subterminal Dreams"
Mike!

Hey Nick, (This is Rick Payne, using Mike Allen's computer),

Randy and I just did the first 2 BASE jumps on Marathon key here in Florida. We had a great time. There's still a bag hanging on top of the launch point. The object was between 280 and 350-ft, but we still haven't come to an agreement on the exact altitude. But, we sure did have a good time. Yahoo! And that wasn't all the fun we had at the time... we slammed the corner near the bottom and now both need new parachutes!!!! CLIMB HIGH PULL LOW, SAY HELLO TO EVERYONE. From yours truly, (Yosemite's most wanted)

BOOGIE TILL YA BOUNCE! I WILL!!!!
Rick Payne

Hey, Rick Payne has instructed me to tell you that you owe a case of beer on that FIRST round BASE jump!

Cheers, Mike Allen

P.S. Green Bottles, Ok?

Welcome to the BB, it just so happens that Nick (who started this topic), puts out the best BASE magazine this side of Calcutta. I'm sure he'll get back to you on how to subscribe. Other than that, there isn't much current BASE information out there. That's why this board has lots of potential for useful dialog on the subject. It's been kind of slow right now. If Nick or I aren't writing stuff, there isn't much up here. BASE jumping is not exactly mainstream. So, other than El Cap, what else have you been jumping? El Cap is a premium BASE jump! I have 5 El Cap jumps. Where do you skydive? Good luck with your BASE jumping. Let me know if you need any specific information.

Mike Allen

Looks like Mark "THE KING" Hewitt will break the 500 mark in BASE jumps this weekend. Mr. Stein's not far behind. Payne's at 340. Did I miss anybody? I'm at a respectable 132. (I'm pacing myself).

Gotta go rack up just one more!

M.ALLEN28

I think I'm getting burned out on jumping these Florida towers. Maybe I'm getting R*A*D*I*O*A*C*T*I*V*E. I'm developing a taste for microwaved foods. It's a bad sign. So, I think I'll head on out to sunny California and jump her monolithic protrusions. Or maybe launch off some quint little coastal bridge and land in the surf. Or plummet off a glassy building in downtown Los Angeles waving to myself in the mirrored windows as I whiz by in freefall. It would be great. I need to relax a bit anyway so what the hell, I'm leaving Thursday. I feel a BASE mission coming on...!

Yee Ha!

M.ALLEN28

Hey BASE cadets,

I've just gotten back on-line out here in California, "The Land of Big Things to Jump Off Of," and after sorting through all my junk E-mail (junky mail) the first thing I did was cruise over here to see what's been a-happening. I'm just back from Yosemite where I helped film hang glider pilots launching off Glacier Point. It was quite spectacular to see, and though I envied the pilots for their legal status, I was also reminded how unfair the system is to us BASE jumpers. I don't want to fault the hang glider pilots in any way, they seem to have their act together. But, the fact of the matter is, BASE jumping (at least in Yosemite) is not any more "dangerous" or "high risk" than hang gliding. There has never been a fatality off El Cap, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't even know of any serious injuries there. [The two jumpers who first jumped El Cap back in 1960s with round parachutes were both injured, but these took place before the advent of modern day BASE jumping. There also have been at least two injury

jumps from El Cap since Mike wrote this message, ED]. I see a few inconsistencies in the National Park's bottom line in regards to BASE jumping. There have been too many years of animosity between park officials and BASE jumpers, and there does not seem to be any change in sight. So the jumping will continue, and so will the cat and mouse games. I certainly don't recommend jumping illegally, but until there is an option, I certainly can understand why people would take that risk. 'Nuff said.

Best sub-terminal wishes
Mike Allen

Yes, I was out there in granite land, and I sure didn't take anything for granite. I want to know why hang gliding is ok and BASE jumping is not. (I hate hypocrisy).

M.ALLEN28

I saw a lot more BASE rigs this year at Bridge Day. And that says to me that BASE jumping is continuing to develop its own identity as a sport. But on the other hand, I must also report that there were still a few small skydiving pilot chutes, and as usual a few misguided individuals. By the way, *The Extreme Edge* is being released as a Laser disc by Pioneer. Now I'm immortal.

Mike A.

I used to jump Rick Payne's black Raven III several years ago and found it to be a fine BASE canopy. It was as consistent as any canopy as far as on-heading openings go, if your talking slider down, I think it would do quirky things only with the slider up. Rick had deeper brake setting installed, and I'd would occasionally see the canopy stall on opening. I think he eventually destroyed that canopy on a fence below a 250-ft tower down in the Keys. By the way, I normally jump a Glidepath Maverick, but I just bought a pink and baby blue Raven II as my new BASE canopy. Real stealth colors, eh? Hey, the price was right. It's the old style Raven, it's an entirely different animal from the ones they are making today. They newer ones are more high performance, which also means they open faster/harder. I'm not sure we would need that feature! I like my openings just fine they way they are...

Later-Mike A.

**"Now, I'm
going to go
and try it,
no reserve
of course!
Gee, I'm
just starting
to get used
to that..."**

I'm about to go out and try my stowless tailpocket, so I'll give you a first hand report after the jump. I packed up the Raven in my BASE rig for the first time, which felt kind of weird, but looked ok. I put those stowless stows in the pocket, and that kind of felt strange, since I was used to the rubber bands. Now, I'm going to go and try it, no reserve of course! Gee, I'm just starting to get used to that, but it does make one feel a tad naked

According to Moe Viletto, my advisor in these matters, the lines are to be S-folded exactly as if you had rubber bands in there. While putting the lines in the tail pocket the main thing is that tension is maintained on the lines. (This is nothing new.) By the way THE BEST packing video I've seen is Moe Viletto's. It's free, if you buy one of his rigs, or you can buy it outright. He does a kind of pro pack on the ground, real neat and his openings are the proof of the pudding.

I'm not quite sure doing his pack job yet, I'm still in transition! Also, Moe's very knowledgeable about Ravens and Precision parachute products as he used to build them. You ought to tap his brain sometime if you can nail him down. If you've already talked to him, kindly disregard.

Mike

The new BASE rig worked like a charm! We went out and abused our local tower 3 times and the parachutes opened on heading 3 out of three. I got lots of great still photos of everyone's exits, but none of my own. Still haven't figured out how to shoot myself! Anyway, we had a whole bunch of good clean American fun, and the stowless tailpocket is definitely the ticket. I guess I'm in some kind of BASE nirvana. So my son, what is the sound of one man falling

(We'll save you a slot!)

Later Mike

It's not confirmed yet, but I think ABC is going to run the show Thursday at 9:00 P.M. Eastern time. You should, as they say, check your local listings. The program is called, *Extreme Edge*. I hope it's worth watching. My fingers are crossed.

Mike (I hope they made us look good) Allen

Ah, yes, lowering our standards just a bit? Awesome! Sounds like fun. I'll almost bet I've even jumped that bridge Nah, you say your bridge is 400-ft, I haven't done that one unless the water levels dropped another 200-ft. I like the road accessibility of bridges. Yeah, I'm basically lazy, and if I can get a little altitude without too much work, that's fine with me. I like to ride to the exit point! Hey FULL MOON tonight! (Better go pack) . . .

Mike

Odds are you'd be three hundred something if you get a BASE number now. BASE in '92? The numbers are gowning, but certainly not in leaps and bounds, and that's a healthy

thing. I'd say as far as estimating object heights, I myself usually go by the sectionals, and my eyeball though I know that can be deceiving. A lot of people do rock drops, but I rather frown on that, after getting a lesson in etiquette from my brother who happens to be a climber. It's a definite no-no in climbing areas for obvious reasons. We used kite string and measured our 170-ft bridge Mark Twain style. Worked fine, but it could present problems on the higher or windier stuff! Laser measurements will be the tool of smart BASE jumpers in the future.

M.allen28

I asked a couple of people, but I don't have any leads on BASE jumping in Singapore, but it's likely that someone has jumped one of those buildings you mentioned at one time or another. There is an active contingent of Japanese skydiver/BASE jumpers so at least we know there's BASE jumping in the orient. Nick Di Giovanni would probably know for sure, but he seems to be off line right now. Yeah, I'd certainly advise your friend to seek professional advice.

Mike

Yes, I sure did see that Greatest Stunts show. It was a repeat. I thought Jake Lombard's bicycle ride off Angel Falls looked like fun, but it wasn't much of a stunt. The bike was rather inconsequential. I had the opportunity to chat with Jake Lombard about that stunt last summer when I was in Santa Barbara. He was on his way to go surfing up the coast and stopped in town to have breakfast with us. He readily admitted that it didn't quite come off the way he planned, but he's an avid bicyclist and skydiver. (And skier, climber, and stuntman and so on). He wanted to somehow work in the two sports. I just heard he rode a bike out the tailgate of some plane a couple of weeks ago just for kicks, so he's still trying. But, that *Greatest Stunts* show as well as *The Ultimate Challenge*, and *Stuntmasters*, all have the same format of cutting back and forth to build up the various segments. The only problem was, more often than not, the payoff wasn't worth the wait. A lot of these stunts turned out to be a little on the hokey side.

Mike

I just noticed in the Guinness Book that the tallest hotel in the world (the one you mentioned) is precisely 741-ft tall. It's the Westin Stamford in Raffles City, Singapore. But, what's confusing is both the Westin Detroit Plaza, and the Westin Peachtree Atlanta are listed at 748-ft. Go figure!

Mike

I dunno if it's half good or even worth watching, but for what it's worth, MTV Sports is running the Bridge Day segment this Saturday. Check your TV Guide, AND THERE'S FEMALE MUD WRESTLING TOO! That's right, now there's some quality entertainment for your viewing dollar.

Mike

Opps, MAJOR CORRECTION on that last transmission. There is NO female mud wrestling on that MTV Sports program. I know, because I got a sneak preview today. There's only some rather lame shots of people (all male) playing mud football. Sorry. However, the BASE segment is worth watching.

Mike Allen

Yeah Gary, you missed a FUN (I don't want to rub it in) WEEKEND. That big old DC-3 looked like some kind of a friendly bird with a face and everything. They don't build 'em like that any more. Every time I jump that plane I can just feel its history. Well, better stop here, This IS A BASE TOPIC!

Mike

"We used kite string and measured our 170-ft bridge Mark Twain style."

Forgive me John, For I Hath Sinned! Please don't make me do no D-Bags! You KNOW it's a slow topic when I start rappin the skydive jive. Though, you must admit this has got to be the most esoteric sub-genus in the electronics neighborhood. I mean, how many computer types jump off stuff? BTW, John, I think they used one of your music selections in that MTV thing the other night.

Mike

This was on the local News tonight: "What an adrenaline rush!" So said one of two guys who parachuted off Tampa's Bank Plaza Building. Roy Stevens made that exclamation as he and Jack Burke were being led away by police. "We like stealing altitude," the handcuffed Stevens continued, "is that a crime?" Yes, in this case the charge is trespassing. (I know you'd get a kick out of that one, John).

M.ALLEN28

I need some urban altitude for sure. Things been a little slow here, can't live on the edge all the time you know! Mark

Hewitt's gonna be down this weekend so we might hop off something, if the opportunity presents itself. I agree with Mr. Starr, what the hell! Besides, what's BASE jump without video?

Mike

Well, I don't have any objectivity here, because I was in it, but *The Extreme Edge* was aired. Over-all I thought the show was good. I do think the editing was pretty poor at times like the sun going this way and that way many times on the same jump. It's sunny, then cloudy, then sunny again. Being an tape editor myself, that stuff bugs me. Some of the cuts were awkward maybe purposely for the raw look, but there were a few places I would have tried for smoother transitions.

And yes-longer cuts where appropriate. This comes from there perception that the audience has no attention span, "Keep it moving or you lose them!" I wonder what John Q Public thought? What kind of reaction occurred in people when they saw that stuff. That's what counts. Did we raise anyones heartbeat or blood pressure by a single point? Did we take people to *The Extreme Edge*. Maybe that's expecting a bit much from TV, but I think its a worth while effort. At any rate, I had a blast shooting it, and I think that was evident! Now, if we can get them to go for a nice high cliff jump. I'm SURE the American public would like that too, wouldn't they? Mike.

That was the last time I heard from Mike. To say the least, members of the board were stunned and it caused something rather unusual to happen. It prompted the Lurkers (folks who read, but seldom post messages) to write.

Hi, I'm one of the lurkers here and I just had to come out of the woodwork to say I'm sure going to miss reading messages from Mike. I enjoyed his sense of humor and comments about his BASE experiences.

I don't know specifics of the accident other than it was a head-on collision with a truck. Word is he will be cremated and his ashes scattered in a ceremony at Clewiston some time soon. Mike and I were E-mail pals on this system. While I was

in Florida he gave me a rig to jump and his services as a cameraman. Helluva nice guy, with a helluva sense of humor. We got cheated folks, plain and simple.

Mike's a permanent at Air Adventures now. They scattered his ashes Sunday afternoon in Clewiston. I jumped with him a bunch and he almost talked me into BASE jumping. I'm lucky enough to have some video tapes he made for me, and I don't know who's gonna take his place. What a shame! And they say jumping is dangerous! he'll definitely be missed.

I guess now that Mike is gone, this topic is going to get even slower. Let's try and keep it as active as we possibly can. This is an excellent clearing house for information on BASE equipment techniques, etc. We should not allow it to die.

I don't jump, and don't think I could, but I looked forward to hearing from Mike Allen, and I want to express my condolences to his family and all who knew him.

What you fellows do is certainly daring, but even as one who'd never attempt a BASE jump, let alone an airplane jump, I see the beauty in your sport. I'm sorry we lost Mike Allen as I enjoyed his writings.

On behalf of GENie management, I'd like to express our feelings on the loss of Mike Allen. We are saddened by the lose, and want all his family and friends to know, that while we never met, Mike was a part of our electronic family and he'll be missed.



FACES OF BASE

A LOOK AT WHO BASE JUMPS?

Anne Helliwell, BASE 222

Loft Manager, Square One Parachute Sales and Service
Safety and Training Advisor
Tandem Master (Strong & RWS)
AFF
Master Rigger
Camera Person
R.N

Age: 33

Born: Nelson, New Zealand

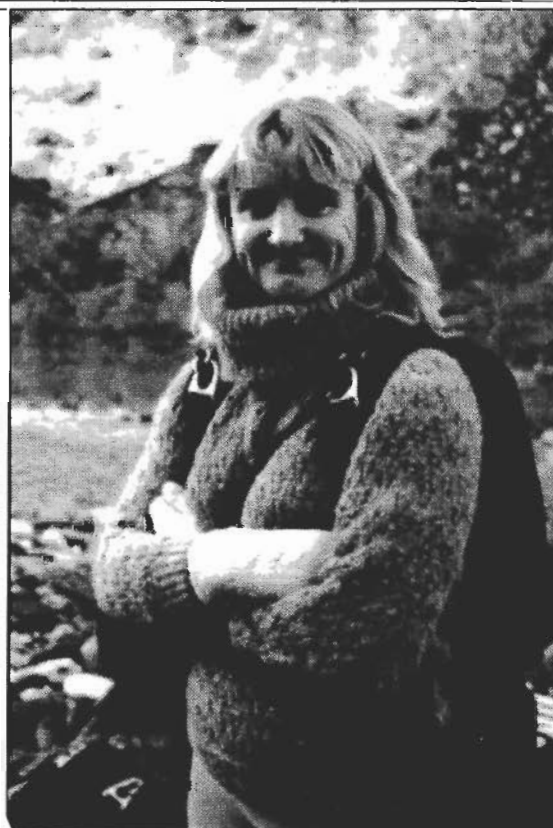
Occupation : Professional Skydiver

First BASE Jump: 1982

Favorite BASE jump: "El Cap with my man."

Quote: "BASE jumping, I find, is a natural playground for the skills I've accuired over my career."

Profiles of people who BASE jump. Send your profile by answering the above questions and enclosing a close-up photograph. All types need apply.



MEDIA RAPE

PART DEUX

By NICK DI GIOVANNI

My computer tells me I wrote the preceding Media Rape piece over a month ago. Last week *Eye to Eye* aired on CBS and the worst happened. Even after I heard they'd found a jumper to help them, I never imagined it would be this bad.

Once again we were hung out to dry. Did the jumper involved do it for glory or money?

Eye to Eye was turned down by several experienced BASE jumpers, and finally anted up a reported 1,000 dollars. The result was a setback for BASE jumping. The only thing left, because this sorry episode is such a classic example of media rape, is to use it as an educational tool.

The fellow involved is a local BASE jumper and he isn't a bad guy, but he allowed himself to be duped. I'm sure he thought he'd be presented in a better light, and could exercise some control, but it got away from him and the rest of us will pay the price for his ignorance.

The angle, or hook, that Bob Baxter of CBS wouldn't tell me about was HOW MUCH \$\$\$\$ IT COST TAXPAYERS TO RESCUE PEOPLE INVOLVED (in what the show termed) FOOLHARDY THRILL SPORTS. Extreme skiing, free solo climbing, and BASE jumping were used as examples. (How about the thousandfold amount it costs us all in medical insurance caring for hardened artery couch potatoes who sit and watch this type of dribble on TV).

Climbers, I'm sure, will be as angry as BASE jumpers over this trash masquerading as news as they took the brunt of it. Okay, how many climbers have been rescued in the National Parks? Hundreds, thousands? How many BASE rescues have there been? Only a half dozen I know about. Yet, they make no differentiation between climbing, extreme skiing or BASE jumping, they just lumped us all together. At one point the "on-air talent" asked our unsuspecting hero, (once rescued himself in Yosemite) what he thought of taxpayer money being used to pay for his rescue. His answer was basically an antagonistic, "I pay my taxes." Oh Lordy.

CBS later spliced in comments of the Ranger who rescued him (and who was injured in the process) and in what can only be termed a post production ambush interview the Ranger said, "I'm not too high on BASE jumpers," and you could tell he meant it.

We'd have fared better with, "Yes, I realize it costs money, and I appreciate they were there for me. And you are right, it is a real problem, but I'm not sure what the answer is." He could have mentioned that BASE jumping being banned in the park causes jumpers to take more unnecessary chances. He could have been a bit more diplomatic.

The worst part is operations in the park have been fairly smooth. The word is out in the BASE community that Yosemite isn't something you do on a lark.

New jumpers get help from experienced jumpers, most non-BASE orientated skydivers who've wanted to jump in the park have done it. The BASE jumpers doing the park now, know how, they avoid the crowds, they avoid injury and they avoid detection. Considering the number of jumps being made the safety record speaks for itself. It's outstanding.

Now, because *Eye to Eye* went to Yosemite to interview Rangers on BASE jumpers it has reopened the old wounds and Another generation of Rangers now have a problem with BASE jumpers. It's a damn shame too. At last year's Bridge Day some inroads were made with Rangers, I mean we were actually talking to each other, there was communication and there was hope for the future. Now all that progress is in jeopardy, gone for a lousy thousand bucks. Why do we continue shooting ourselves in the foot like this? Hopefully, the repercussions won't be as great as I imagine, but I'm not optimistic.

The bottom line for BASE jumpers is this. If Tommy Sanders or someone equally trustworthy is making a film and asks you to BASE jump for him, do it. If you get a fat movie part BASE jumping for a lot of money, do it. But, PLEASE PLEASE stay away from the 5 O'clock news types, the newsmagazine shows, and the tabloids as they will eat you for lunch. And if they don't your fellow BASE jumpers will.

"This sorry episode is such a classic example of media rape. . ."



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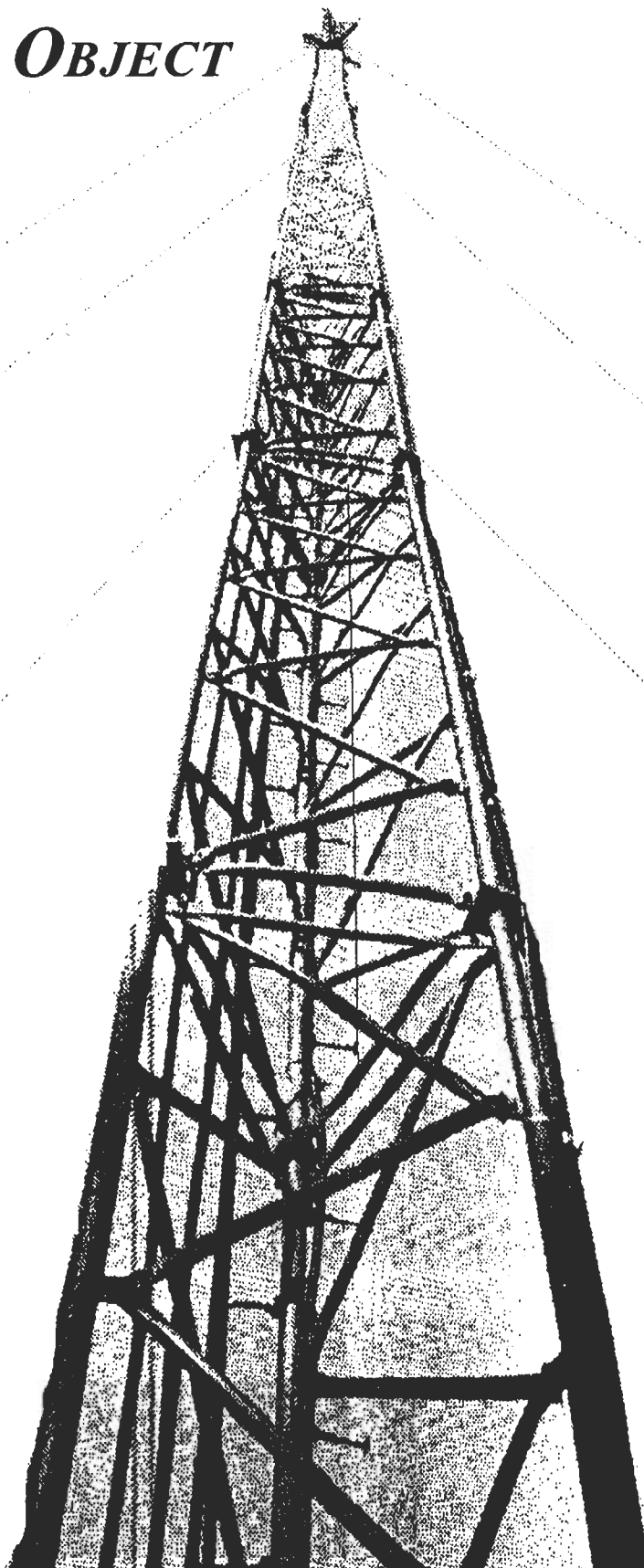
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Last Off . . .

FLIPPIN 'EM BURGERS

By Simon P. Jakeman

Thanks. Your phone call saved me. Those were dark months of winter. The hobbit of Moreno Valley stirred up the badge fags downtown 'till they bayed like blood hounds on the scent of cordura. Then he wouldn't reveal the whereabouts of his private cliff. I was losing it I tell you. The orrinocco burst its banks and re-directed itself through Pine Valley. I was all for gassing up the chain saw and going crazy in MacDonald's. That's when you called and we finally got it all together. Ah, the sweet conspiracy, the list of equipment, the cooler packed tight with Silver Bullets.

There's us pulling out of the Ghetto at four thirty in the morning. Up and over the mountains and down into the desert. Tumbleweed leaping at us from behind the rocks. Dodging road kills. White line fever in the darkness. Trading 50 mph in the fast lane California fish heads in big American cars, for cowboy pick-up trucks. Real pick-up trucks you understand. Not shining Toyota city boy 4x4s with ridiculous tyres and impotent drivers who do the Pee Wee Herman in the back row of the monster truckathon. This is cowboy country. Real man who know how to dance the "Achy Breaky." People wear guns openly here. It's a dangerous place. I've seen the films. These people sleep with their sisters!! Not the right place for my pink and purple beach pants and Texas. This is the Goddam rattlesnake capitol of the world. (Whoohah, better break out the turpentine).

But you were right. What a place. Trembling steelwork leaping out hundreds of feet above a muddy river with a slip of a landing site on one side. This looked like a wet one coming, but after the long drive, we were all too horny to walk away. The walk in was through the valley of lost souls. BASE jumpers with there Sherpas appeared from the trees as we went along. They floated camera gear upstream on inflatable air-beds. Bore rig bags atop their heads like Hindi washwomen returning from the Gangees. There was Lane, in up to his armpits wader, with a small child clinging to his neck, he should get that removed, I know a good surgeon. Ah, what a day we had. We got to the edge first with Lane, Don, and John chasing up the stairs behind us. We had the speed, but they had the style.

BASE jumping with Lane you get the feeling he's seen it all before. It was thrilling to watch him and Don trotting out along those girders to the edge, while I white knuckled the

handrail from the comparative safety of the walkway. By the end of the day they even had Anne doing it. She is a psycho. A real lionheart, but a complete psycho! From there on we gave ourselves over to rockrush and the sounds of peeling Velcro. And of those first five jumps, three of us had toggles stuck on. Now I know that Zoo toggles are a carefully thought out piece of kit. I just don't think the thinking should have stopped when it did. Yeah, yeah okay, I hear all you togglemiesters out there saying, "Well, you just have to use them properly." HELLO, at 200 feet I don't want to reach, locate the front part of the toggle, peel the pin down, blah, blah, blah. I want to flail my hands up as usual and be immediately piloting my canopy. Zoo toggles, why not get capewells while your at it.

Off heading openings left and right, water landings, despite the cries of it'll never happen to me, line twists, we got it all didn't we. By the end of the trip I was a garrulous troglodyte squatting under the girders and croaking banal one liners like a freshman at Bridge Day. John Starr did more legwork than any of us. Running all over the place with his tripods and cameras. Snapping up the goodies like a shark in a swimming pool. Jana and Dana took stills. Now, you know I'm scared of heights, and seeing those good women running around up there without rigs chilled my chicken-ass bones. Course, it was them I was scared for . . . not!

It was worth it to see Don and Lane with their groovy step off exits. Light gleaming of their body armour. Hearing the Velcro peel a hundred feet below us in the silence. Perfect, perfect. And Anne, out there on the girders, facing her demons. So cool, so in control. Rising away from the cliffs and telling us it's no problem. Well, you made my heart stop ma'am. And you, your 20 second delays from 300-feet! Scare me some more why don't you. Me, well I guess my new packing method works so I'm happy, 5 people, 2 days, 22 jumps no problem. I liked it! I like it! Cheap accommodations, excellent breakfasts from Wanda, it just doesn't get any better than this.

Now it's Thursday and my canopy has finally dried out. I'm ready for downtown. My window cleaning contact tells me the security guys on the Hyatt have been given permission to shoot! (After a certain groups last visit). We'd better arm ourselves. It's only fair. Hanging with the cowboy dudes taught me a lot. I've had it with these Barny Fifying rentacops. You wanna play rough, okay. Say hello to my little friend!!! Yours forever, Jake!

P.S. Don, would you ask Dana to pick me up a bacon cheeseburger? Lots of relish, no onions, thanks bro!





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