

# Skydiving™

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\$2.00

## Audible Altimeter Readied for Market

A small Denmark company is preparing to market an audible altimeter that will compete head-on with the Paralert from SSE, Inc., of Pennsauken, N.J. The company, owned by two jumpers who are members of the Danish RW team, has built several prototypes of the altimeter. The prototypes have been jumped extensively since early 1980, and test jumpers told *Skydiving* they were impressed by both the size and performance of the device.

The company calls their product the "Dytter," which roughly translates to "beeper" in English.

Compared to the Paralert, the Dytter is quite compact: it is the size of a matchbox and measures about 2" long, 1 1/2" wide and 1/2" thick. An integral speaker means that the unit is mounted on or in the jumper's helmet over his ear. The company will supply the Dytter with a separate speaker, however.

The Dytter may be calibrated on the ground before the jump or in the aircraft during the climb to altitude. The Paralert, on the other hand, must be calibrated on the drop zone prior to the jump.

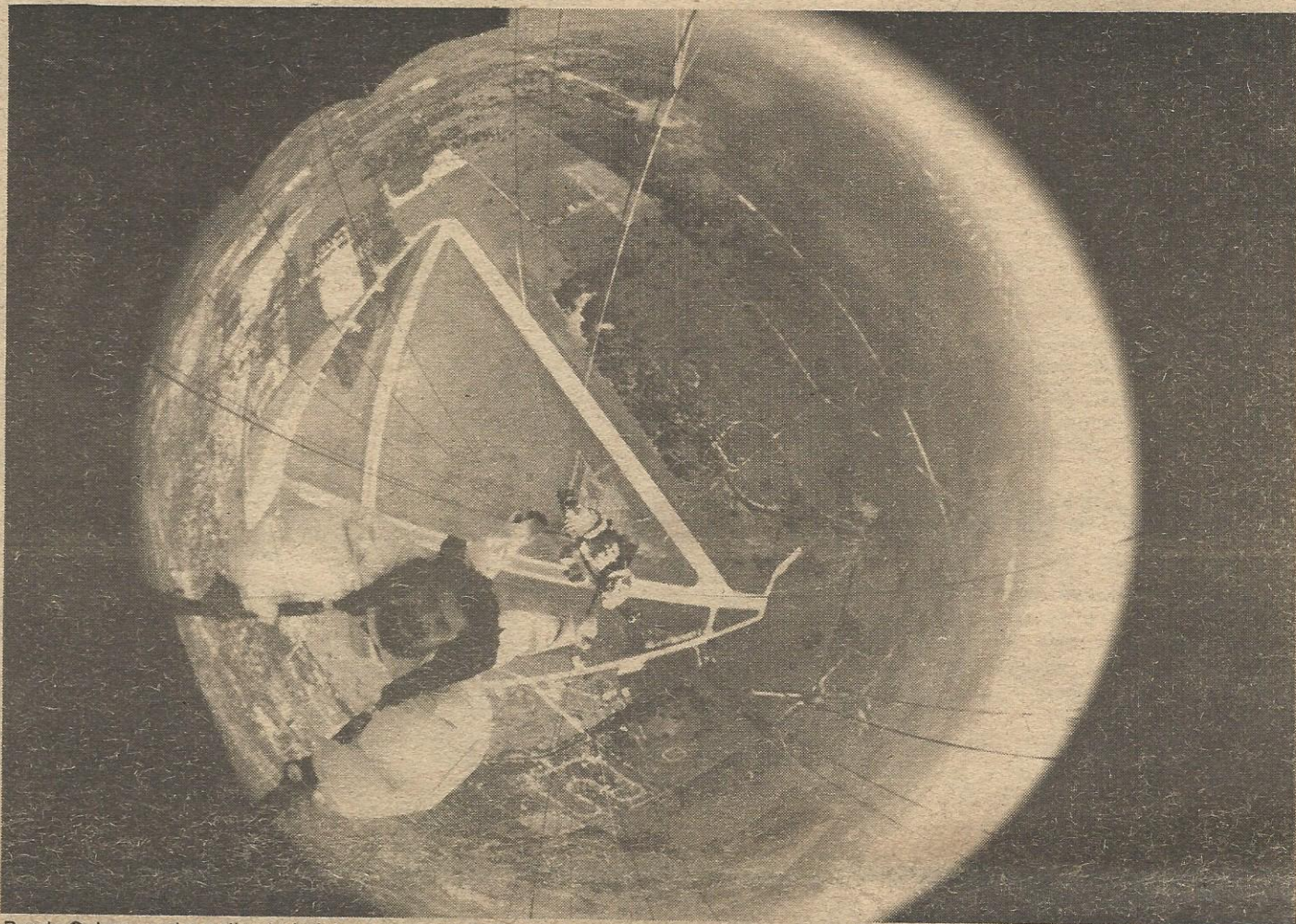
The Dytter also "sounds off" as the jumper climbs through the preset alarm altitude in the aircraft. The manufacturers say this self-test feature allows the skydiver to double check the calibration and function of the Dytter. The Paralert sounds off during calibration only.

The Dytter is claimed to have an accuracy tolerance of  $\pm 50$  feet. The alarm sounds for four seconds.

The unit is powered by four silver oxide batteries that the manufacturer says will last five years between replacements.

*Skydiving* has not had the opportunity to jump the Dytter, nor has it been able to get any feel for the unit's reliability, although several European owners are quite enthusiastic about it. The Paralert has become quite popular since it was first introduced about two years ago, and the device seems to be at least as rugged and

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Randy Quiroz used a pulley to hoist a camera up to the top canopy of this biplane to take this striking photograph over Zephyrhills, Fla.

## Z-Hills Turkey Meet Hit by Poor Weather

Uncooperative weather plagued the 12th annual Zephyrhills Turkey Meet, as nearly 600 competitors from all over the world spent much of the time on the ground sulking under low clouds and shivering in cold winds. But the weather, which prevented jumping for about five days of the nine-day meet, cleared for the last two. DZ operator Jim Hooper and his staff took advantage of the break and were able to complete the competition.

The meet consisted of four relative

work events: 8-way FAI sequential, 16-way sequential, and 10- and 20-way speed stars. The judges used a ground-based video unit to help with the scoring, and the device proved its value several times during the meet.

Practically every team in all four events was formed on site immediately prior to the meet. And, with the exception of the Symbiosis 8-way team from Great Britain, most teams were able to squeeze in only one or two practice jumps, if that many. So although the competition was keen, scores were pretty unimpressive. (In the 20-way event, for instance, the winning team was unable to build back-to-back 20-way stars in the two-round event, the worst performance in that event in many years.)

B.J. Worth and several other members of the world champion Mirror Image 8-way team made the trip to Florida from the West Coast. Worth captained a team in every event, and his teams won three of them. But they finished second in the 8-way event behind a throw-together team that simply "out skydived" them.

Hooper said over 5,000 individual jumps were made from the four DC-3s on the line. Most of the jumps were made in about three days.

Poor weather crimped fun jumping as well as competition. There were no noteworthy big formations or canopy stacks completed, although there were plenty of quality loads.

And, as in the last few years, there were very few injuries or near misses.

The meet was visited by two high-level FAA officials who flew down to Zephyrhills from Washington, D.C. in an FAA business jet that also carried two employees of the U.S. Parachute Association. In spite of the poor weather that day, Hooper and the USPA representatives made a real effort to insure the visitors left with a fair and favorable impression of a big parachute meet.

A significant percentage of competitors wore conservative jumpsuits with little or no wings. The jumpers said such suits helped in the sequential events by allowing them to fly closer and more precisely, and in the speed star events by reducing tension in the star that leads lost grips.

Para-Flite of Pennsauken, N.J., brought several new canopies that are built from Harris F-111 fabric to reduce weight and bulk. The midsize Cruislite generated the most interest in Zephyrhills. A descendent of the Cruisair, the Cruislite has 220 sq. ft. of surface area but a volume comparable to the Pioneer Merlin or the GQ Security Unit. Several jumpers who had the opportunity to jump the Cruislite were impressed by its flying and landing characteristics.

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## Dause Moves to Hearne, Tex.

Bill Dause, the last operator of Pope Valley Parachute Center before a real estate deal closed the California DZ, has started a center near the town of Hearne, Tex. He brought his two DC-3s, Twin Beech and Cessna 180 to Herne last September and is already busy training students and flying experienced jumpers.

Only 15-20 skydivers jumped at Hearne for the first two months of Dause's operation, but Beth McMillian says a "regular crowd of 35-50 jumpers, mostly from Houston, Austin and San Antonio are converging on Hearne" each weekend.

McMillian said the DZ is located on Hearne Municipal Airport and "is hard to find without a good map." She said camping is allowed on the airport and decent motels are only two miles away. And although the center is open from Wednesday through Sunday, "most experienced jumpers are there only on weekends."

She said the atmosphere is "only good vibes" with Dause working hard to organize loads for newcomers and keeping the aircraft flying as much as possible. Dause earned a similar reputation at Pope

Valley, running a "no frills" drop zone and putting his energy into getting jumpers in the air.

The center's phone number is (713) 279-6693. McMillian said a jump from 12,500 feet costs \$11.

## Parachutist Rates Up

Parachutist magazine, the official publication of the U.S. Parachute Association, will raise its advertising rates effective with the January, 1981, issue.

In a letter to advertisers, the association said that the ever-rising cost of printing and postage made the price increase necessary. On an average, the rates went up about 15% compared to the last price increase a year before. A full page black-and-white ad will cost \$470 at the one-time rate.

The 15% rate hike compares to the 8.5% increase the consumer magazine industry as a whole will post in 1981. The 8.5% figure is a forecast by a magazine trade journal.

## Cedar Valley Hosts TRAC Meet

Cedar Valley Drop Zone, near Salt Lake City, was host to the 1st Annual Beehive TRAC meet September 27-28. The 4-way meet drew nine teams from several states and 30-plus fun jumpers who spent the weekend jumping out of a Beech Queen Air.

Weather for the meet was clear and windy, according to John and Helen Gray, organizers of the meet. The Queen Air, rarely used by skydivers, jump plane worked out well.

"It was hauling 12 jumpers to 9,000

feet in about 12 minutes. With the 5,000 foot altitude here, that was 14,000 feet MSL. The Queen Air is a twin engine aircraft with tricycle gear.

Wind and little practice resulted in less-than-memorable accuracy scores for the event, but in relative work, four teams tied for second, just one point off the winning pace of *Shawn's Muff Divers*.

John Gray said the purpose of the meet was to get the people of the sprawling Mountain region together.

## Three Firms Compete at Z'Hills

Equipment manufacturers and dealers are preparing to take advantage of the expected influx of foreign jumpers to Zephyrhills, Fla., in connection with the 1981 World Parachuting Championships of RW.

The Jump Shack, headquartered in Farmington Hills, Mich., opened a store in downtown Zephyrhills about a year ago, before the world meet was awarded to the parachute center nearby. Called the Jump Shack South, the store offers equipment sales and repairs.

The Jump Shack South had an agreement with Zephyrhills Parachute Center that specified that a percentage of the

store's proceeds would go to the center in exchange for being allowed to be the only equipment dealer operating at the drop zone.

The agreement soured last fall, however, when DZ operator Jim Hooper and Jump Shack principal John Sherman butted heads over the relationship.

Soon after the argument, Hooper made similar arrangements with Mike Cerasoli, owner of Sky Supplies in Deland, Fla. But unlike the Jump Shack, Sky Supplies was encouraged to open a combination store-loft on the drop zone itself. (The Jump Shack South is located in downtown Zephyrhills, about two miles from the airport and drop zone.)

Sky Supplies operated out of the parachute center's loft during the Turkey Meet in late November, but it plans to move into a temporary building until the parachute center completes a new building at the airport next summer.

National Parachute Supply of Flemington, N.J., opened up a store in downtown Zephyrhills in early November and hired Jack Brake to manage it. Brake, past U.S. individual champion, recently resigned from Para-Flite.

Observers expect that the three firms will compete strongly for the business of jumpers who will be visiting Zephyrhills in substantial numbers in the next year. The business is expected to be especially lucrative because many foreign jumpers buy rigs and canopies upon arrival in the U.S. All three of the companies invite visiting jumpers to order such gear in advance, so it will be assembled and waiting for them when they drive into the little town of Zephyrhills.



Julie Conway-Common of Ormond Beach, Fla., earns her WSCR award in an all-woman 10-way over DeLand, Fla., on Sept. 6, 1980. It was Common's 15th jump; she attended DeLand Sport Parachute Club's freefall first jump course. The syllabus of the course includes such maneuvers as 360-degree turn and redocks with the freefall instructors as early as the fourth jump. Common is at the 3 o'clock position in this star, wearing a Strong Student Tandem. Photo by Bill Sutton.

## Jumper Pulls Wrong Handle in Freefall; Injured on Landing

A tree landing resulted in serious injuries to a jumper in southern Florida over Homestead Airport on October 5. The incident began when the jumper pulled the handle of her single-point canopy release system instead of the handle of her hand deploy pilot chute, according to Dan Cuoco, a witness.

Cataldo was making her 101st jump, a 5-way RW attempt for a Cessna 182. The RW was unsuccessful and Cataldo tracked away to pull. But she pulled her breakaway handle instead of the plastic knob of her hand deploy pilot chute. She later told Cuoco that since she wasn't sure in freefall if she'd pulled the breakaway handle far enough to activate the 3-Ring releases, she elected to pull her reserve.

Cataldo said she didn't look at the pilot chute handle before trying to pull it and that she knew she'd made a mistake immediately.

The reserve deployed normally, but a suitable landing area was hard to find — Cataldo said she had a choice between power lines, a house or a 50-foot pine tree. She picked the tree and her reserve caught there for about three seconds before it released and dropped her to the ground, breaking her femur and pelvis. She was in traction for a month and is expected to heal completely.

Cataldo was wearing her new Sky Supplies Rapid Transit System. Her hand deploy pilot chute was mounted on the right leg strap, several inches from the soft fabric handle of the breakaway system.

Cataldo certainly isn't the first jumper to pull the wrong handle. Most jumpmasters have watched novices on early jumps pull their reserve ripcords instead of their dummy main ripcords, and instructors usually stress that jumpers of all levels should look before pulling anything.

But it has become apparent in the last year or so that the mistake is made fairly often, especially by jumpers who are mak-

## Mexicans Visit U.S.

Eight members of the parachute club of the University of Mexico in Mexico City arrived at the Marana Skydiving Center for a week of intensive training. A spokesman for the center said each member of the team planned to make about 50 jumps and work on style, accuracy and 4-way RW.

Marana is the site of the 1980 National Collegiate Parachute Championships.

ing the transition to tandem systems, or who are jumping a new rig that differs from their previous one.

Two intermediate jumpers died last summer in separate incidents at DeLand, Fla., that apparently pulled their breakaway handles in freefall after routine RW jumps. Witnesses said it appeared that neither made no attempt to deploy their reserves, in spite of adequate time and functioning gear. In both cases, the breakaway handle was mounted within a few inches of the handle of the pull-out pilot chute on the main lift web and both handles had a similar appearance and feel.

These incidents and several others have prompted discussion by equipment manufacturers on the best location and configuration of ripcords and breakaway handles. The situation has received little attention in the past, probably due to the fact that single-point release systems were the exception rather than the rule. The widespread use of tandem systems with three handles positioned at various places on the main lift webs makes it more likely that such incidents will happen with greater frequency.

## Skydiving

Parachuting's Newsmagazine

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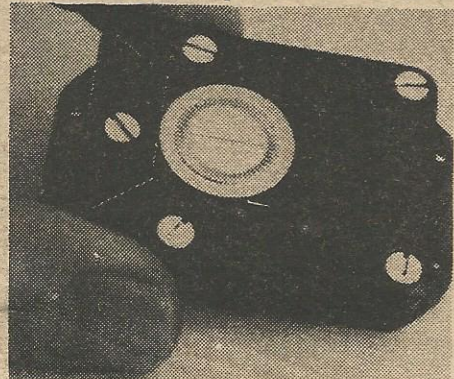
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## Audible Altimeter

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reliable as a conventional altimeter.

Promotional literature provided by the manufacturer indicates that Dytter is significantly more expensive than the Paralart: \$120 compared to about \$90.



The Dytter audible altimeter, a prototype version.

## Skydiver Killed Trying 'Arch Jump'

An experienced skydiver made a jump onto the top of the St. Louis Gateway Arch in Missouri on November 22 and was killed when he slid down the northern leg of the 630-foot high stainless steel monument.

Kenneth Swyers, 33, of the nearby town of Overland, had about 1,600 jumps. According to witnesses, he landed successfully on the flat top of the arch. But

the wind caught his ram-air and blew him toward the north leg. (The Gateway Arch resembles a huge version of the ones that are trademarks of the McDonald's restaurant chain. It stands near the Mississippi River in downtown St. Louis.

Swyers slid down the leg. His reserve was deployed sometime during his ride down the steeper-and-steeper metal surface, but it did not inflate. The legs of the

arch are essentially vertical as they approach the ground, and Swyers was dead when onlookers reached the impact site.

It is not known, according to newspaper accounts of the accident, whether Swyers intended to land on the top and then use his reserve to get to the ground, or whether he planned to descend through a trap door on the top of the arch.

There was also speculation that Swyers intended to simply fly his canopy through the legs of the arch, but that stunt would have been relatively easy—and it would have been difficult to land on the apex of the monument by accident.

The FAA and other authorities are trying to locate the aircraft and pilot that flew Swyers for the jump. Not only was the stunt a violation of several federal laws, the local government is quite strict about aerial activities near the big landmark.

The death received a full-page headline with two photographs on the front page of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

## AvGas Prices Drop

The average price of aviation fuel was a penny lower in October than it was in September, but continued reductions aren't expected. The average for all three types of fuel—Jet A, 100 octane avgas and 80 octane avgas—was \$1.60 per gallon at several hundred selected FBOs across the country. But the reduction was attributed mostly to the elimination of Federal taxes that resulted from Congress' failure to pass legislation that would continue such taxes past September 30.

Many FBOs feel next year's new Congress will reimpose all aviation user taxes and make them retroactive to October 1.

The Iran-Iraq war is having an effect on the price of oil on the world market. Disruption of supplies from the two combatants is reducing the overall world supply and driving prices up.

## Cessna 206 Damaged by Makeshift Door

A Cessna 206 jump aircraft had its right rear stabilizer damaged on October 11 over Loveland, Colo., when a wooden jump door broke apart as it was being moved aside on jump run and pieces struck the tail.

According to jumpers in the plane, the door buckled outward and shattered as the jumpmaster pulled it inward in preparation for a student's jump. The jumpmaster was left holding a 2 by 3 foot piece of the door as the rest flew outside, striking the stabilizer's leading edge, then flipping underneath and spinning away. The student and all four experienced jumpers exited the aircraft at 4,500 feet as a precautionary measure, and the pilot landed the plane safely.

Skies West DZ operator Bob

Moorehead said the door had been used for over a year and that wear and tear from continual use probably caused the failure of the wood. He added that more frequent replacement of such doors would probably prevent similar incidents in the future.

Unlike the 180-series Cessnas, the 206's door is behind the wing. This location prevents the use of a hinged in-flight door that swings up. So some aircraft operators use pieces of plywood as in-flight doors, and the makeshift units are effective in keeping the cabin warm during the climb to altitude. It is doubtful that the FAA would be very enthusiastic about the use of such doors, since it is quite fussy about modifying aircraft in any way whatsoever.



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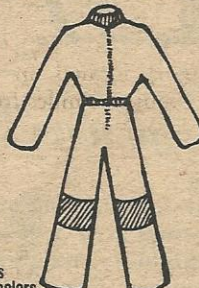
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# Dirt Diving: The Key to Better RW Jumps

by Robin Heid

Dirt diving is an important ritual in skydiving. From the earliest days of jumping, when pre-jump briefings usually consisted of base/pin designations and a rather loosely ordered lineup (with at least two hotdogs in the back jockeying to go last), dirt diving has evolved into intricate and sometimes tedious repetitions of the maneuvers to be attempted on a jump.

But while the need for more detailed pre-jump practice has grown because of the complexity of today's skydives, the actual content of those dirt dives has been largely ignored. Most jumpers recognize the need to make dirt dives. But, the components of the practice, however, are often overlooked.

So skydivers just go through the motions, not only neglecting things they should practice, but sometimes actively

reinforcing behavior that will make their jump more difficult to complete.

There are a few points about dirt diving to remember that can make your dirt diving more effective and thus, make your skydives better.

## I'm Late, I'm Late . . .

Many skydives degenerate into frantic free-for-all action. Everyone seems to be hurrying around, going nowhere fast. There are many reasons for this, but one of the most common occurs before the load even leaves the ground.

When most skydivers dirt dive, they act like they're off to the races, clicking through maneuvers more quickly than any team has ever done in aerial competition. This is not only an unrealistic expectation, it's bad planning. If you rush

through your dive to the ground, chances are you're going to rush through it in the air—after all, that's what you practiced, right?

Instead, learn to *slow down*. Practice your dive at a speed even slower than you think it will take place. This will help foster calmness and deliberateness and probably result in a smoother skydive. It will also give you time to look around a little and make note of jumpsuit and rig colors, and their respective positions in the formation. These are helpful details often overlooked during high-speed dirt dives.

And if you're late for a load, don't rush through three dirt dives when you only have time for one. Do one, but do it well. You'll be better off.

## Slam, Bam, Thank You Ma'am . . .

Funnels often occur when a formation begins to waffle or spin somewhere during the course of the dive. Hot approaches and hard docks are often the cause, and again, the problem usually starts on the ground.

Dirt divers crunch into formations with painful regularity—slamming knees into hands, pivoting themselves into position by using another jumper as a fulcrum, and in general, just blasting in without a thought about the fragility of a freefall formation. Then they go upstairs and do their dive and become surprised and frustrated when it goes to hell because "somebody took it out."

If you dirt dive improper techniques, you'll reproduce those techniques in the air. After all, that's what dirt diving is for. So next time you practice, do your docks the same way you want them to be on the jump—precise, controlled, and without momentum.

## As Ye Drop, So Shall Ye Reap. . .

A lot of skydivers find themselves 20 feet away from the action an instant after they drop a grip during a transition. It's a problem that happens frequently, and it stems, more often than not, from the dirt dive. In dirt dives, jumpers seem to feel the only acceptable grip release simulation is one where they push off briskly when



Visions, 1980 8-way champs, dirt diving.

they drop their grip. On the ground, this movement is of little significance, but in the air, it creates momentum away from the center of the formation. When you release a grip, it should be just that—a release. There should be no other movement which might prevent you from beginning your next maneuver from a neutral position.

## The Eyes Have It . . .

During dirt dives, jumpers can usually be seen watching the hockey game over by the Coke machine, appraising the pretty whuffo who just showed up with her one-jump boyfriend, or just sort of staring out in space. No one seems to be watching the jump action very closely.

What the dirt diver *should* be doing is paying attention to the ebb and flow of the jump, watching for the position and point in time an incoming jumper will be when he can first make eye contact with him.

Eye contact is as much a part of the skydive as the moves themselves, a really critical part, too, because many moves can't be made if there is no eye contact. Which brings up another point . . .

Sunglasses are aviator chic, of course. Every pilot owns at least one pair of shades and skydivers seem to follow this tradition with dark goggles. But dark goggles are impossible to see through if you're outside lookin' in, and this can disrupt the eye contact necessary for good skydiving. Use clear lenses instead. Your jump partners will appreciate it.

## Do It Again. . . And Again. . . And Again. . .

After you've practiced the dive as many times as you think necessary, do it at least five more times.

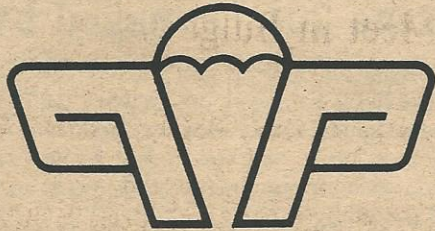

By going through it so many times, you get a chance to see details you might have missed during the early dirt dives; potential traffic problems, an easier way to make a transition, or a better exit order. And it's these little things that often make the difference between a rough, chaotic skydive and a smooth, orderly one.

Dirt dives are the cheapest form of skydiving around, yet they are easily the most valuable. Unlike real jumps, you can ask questions during the course of the dive, and even stop in the middle and start over if something isn't working right. You can make your moves over and over again until the flow is smooth and the communication between you and the other people on the load are just right. You can add things, drop things, amend things until the plan is as complete as you can make it.

If you're still not exactly sure how the components of a good dirt dive all go together, walk around the DZ this weekend and watch some of the better jumpers go through their dirt dives—and ask questions. Contrary to popular belief, most skydivers are more than willing to share their knowledge with others, and you can benefit greatly by talking to the people who dirt dive well.

When all is said and done, however, remembering one small item will put it all together—*what you practice on the ground, you'll do in the air.*


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# Firefly vs. Kestrel: Two Little Ram-Airs Compared

Django Enterprises of Atlanta recently began deliveries of a smaller version of its popular Pegasus 7-cell main canopy. Called the Firefly, the new canopy is the smallest packing canopy currently on the market, and reports from skydivers who have jumped the canopy have been positive, although several critical comments were received by *Skydiving*.

One member of *Skydiving's* staff had the opportunity to make two jumps on the Firefly, and his impressions coincided with those of others he talked with. The 150-pound jumper deployed the canopy at about 3,000 feet after a typical RW jump from 10,500 feet. Landings were made onto concrete in a steady 5-8 mph wind.

The Firefly opened quickly but comfortably with no problems with line twists or

collapsed end cells. Other jumpers say this deployment is typical of the Pegasus line, with no "snivels" and no discomfort.

The canopy did not surge appreciably when the deployment brakes were released. The jumper noted that toggle pressures were very light and the canopy was very responsive — turns were fast and flat. But the canopy had a very short toggle travel; pulling both toggles to slightly below the shoulders caused the canopy to stall very sharply and rock back quickly. Such a stall close to the ground would cause the jumper to land on his back instead of his feet.

Holding a toggle down for several seconds causes the Firefly to quickly begin spiraling very rapidly, faster than any other modern canopy this jumper has

jumped. The spiral is very dramatic.

The Firefly is not a particularly fast canopy, especially when compared to the Pioneer Merlin, Kestrel or Para-Flite Cruisair. But the glide angle, compared to other canopies on the load was flat — the Firefly glides well.

The landing was made after a gentle turn into the wind. The quick stall of the canopy wasn't a problem, as the jumper simply depressed the toggles only enough to stop his forward speed and did not try to fully stall the canopy, as the moderate breeze made a full-stall landing unnecessary. The touch down was quite satisfactory.

The Firefly shows another Pegasus trait in that a stall from full flight prior to landing doesn't flatten out the glide path.

Most mid-size 7-cell canopies, including the Cruisair, Merlin and GQ Security Unit, land well from full speed by both slowing down and gliding flatter. Pegasus canopies, perhaps because of their moderate forward speed and flat glide angle, do not land this way. Although only positive comments are heard about Pegasus' landings the Firefly lands harder than its bigger brother.



Pioneer Kestrel. Five cells, low aspect wing.

Jumpers who bought a Pegasus typically say they like the canopy because "it's so smooth" and because of its exceptionally low bulk. They also mention its good opening characteristics. In other words, they feel it is an excellent all-around parachute that does everything well.

Skydivers who jump a Pegasus but end up buying something else say they don't like the canopy's moderate forward speed and unexciting landings.

The Firefly is new — only a few have been shipped — but interest in the canopy is keen in the Southern U.S. The standard Pegasus is especially popular among foreign jumpers who have the opportunity to test jump the canopy while visiting Zephyrhills, Fla.

The Firefly is built from a fabric similar to Harris F-111, a lightweight coated rip-stop. The canopy is lightly reinforced (the tail, for instance, is only partially reinforced), but complaints about the durability of Pegasus canopies have been few and far between, at least in central Florida. Workmanship appears to be good.

Until the Firefly, the Pioneer Kestrel was the smallest-packing ram-air. The Kestrel, however, is a 5-cell design, and skydivers seem reluctant to embrace 5-cell canopies after either experiencing or watching the hard landings suffered under the out-of-production Para-Flite Strato-Flyer.

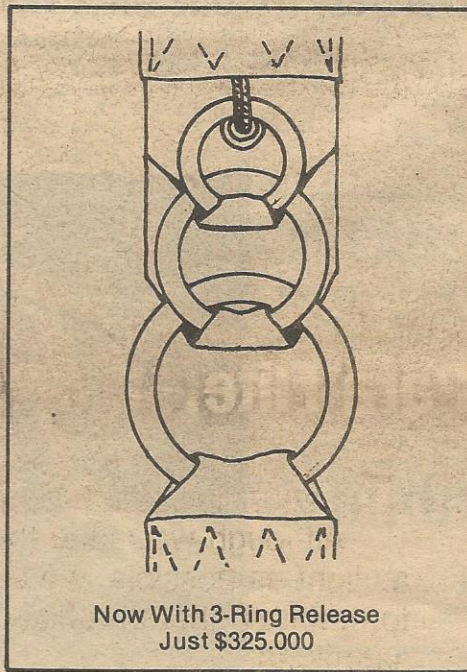
The Kestrel and the Firefly have practically identical surface areas. Measuring the bottom skin reveals the Kestrel has a

(continued on page 20)

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Para-Flite manufactures a complete line of ram-air main and reserve parachutes, including the Cruislite, Strato-Cloud, XL Cloud, Safety-Star and Safety-Flyer. Although F-111 is now the standard fabric for most Para-Flite canopies, heavier fabrics (1.25 and 1.5 oz/yd) are available on special order. Pilot Chute Controlled Reefing is also offered as an option to the standard slider deployment. ©1980 Para-Flite, Inc. Cruislite, Cruisair, XL Cloud, Safety-Star and Safety-Flyer are trademarks.

Although we made the Cruislite as light as possible, we also reinforced it so that durability was not sacrificed.

The Cruislite has 220 sq. ft. of surface area, 10% more than the Cruisair. Landings are soft in practically any conditions, even for heavier jumpers.

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The Cruislite is built with crossports. The ribs are reinforced at key points to increase strength and durability and maximize the efficiency of the airfoil.

### **Some things we didn't change.**

Improvements in construction and design are important, but you're more interested in how the Cruislite performs.

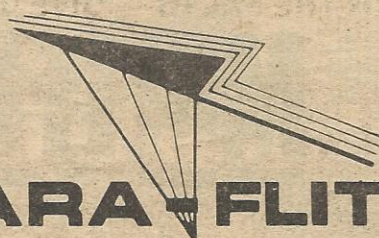
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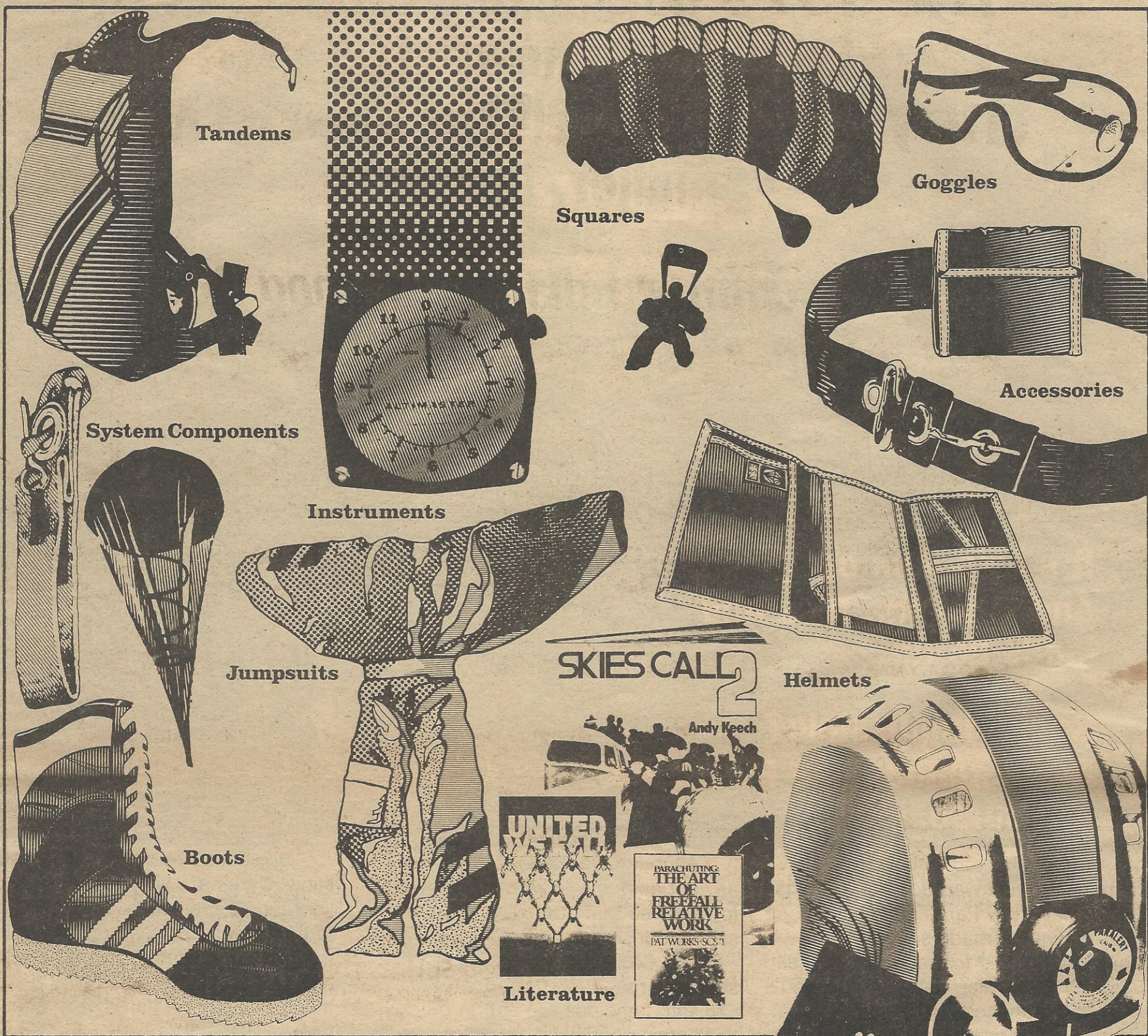
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# Norway Discourages Cliff Jumping

The Norwegian Sport Parachuting Association in early December explained how jumping from the Trollveggen cliff in that country has caused "great harm" to the association. The organization asked skydivers not to jump from the 5,500 foot cliff and warned its members that the association might suspend or expell those who did.

A group of Finnish jumpers made the first skydives from the Trollveggen last August. Since then about thirty jumpers from several countries have made the leap.

A skydiver who has jumped from both El Capitan in California and the Trollveggen said the Norwegian cliff is safer because it is considerably higher. Most freefalls from El Capitan end with an open

canopy about 1,000 feet above the ground.

But there have been several injuries resulting from Trollveggen jumps. The most widely publicized involved a jumper who slammed down onto a ledge under a deploying canopy. The ledge was about 600 feet up from the valley, and witnesses assumed the skydiver was killed. A rescue helicopter was dispatched to recover the body, but the crew found the jumper alive although suffering from a broken leg.

The Norwegian Sport Parachuting Association said the incident "invoked a sharp reaction from the commanding general of the Royal Norwegian Air Force." It also explained that the situation in Norway is different from that in the United States.

"Contrary to the conditions existing in the U.S., where it has proven possible to achieve public and legislative acceptance of cliff jumping, the public reaction in Norway has been negative to the extreme . . . both in [the] news media and among the authorities to the extent that our normal parachuting activity has been ridiculed. In short, the public reaction to cliff jumping has caused our organization great harm."

Cliff jumps in Norway are outside the jurisdiction of the country's existing parachuting regulations, and neither civil authorities or the national aero club presently control or regulate it.

But the Norwegian association is taking steps to discourage the activity in an attempt to prevent further damage to the image of parachuting in that country. The letter stated that the association does not condemn cliff jumping as such, but that the activity in Norway must be halted "to protect the broad interests of the Norwe-

gian parachuting community from the adverse effects of damning publicity."

Also, parachuting in Norway is quite dependent on the country's air force, as military bases are commonly used as drop zones by all jumpers. That is why the

(continued on page 18)

## TV Tower Jumped

A jumper said he and a friend jumped off a 1900-foot TV tower on the Florida-Alabama line on September 28.

Bill Cafer of Pensacola, Fla., said he and an unnamed other jumper made the jump through a solid layer of clouds. "It was quite an experience for both of us. By the time we got to the top (about 1750 feet) we were thoroughly soaked, and then realized that what we had [thought] was early morning fog was in fact a large cloud layer with tops that came to about 30 meters below our feet. There was no sense waiting, since the cloud was getting thicker."

The two jumped off and into the cloud. "We came out of the soup at about 300 feet" under canopy. Cafer did not mention what steps, if any, he and his partner took to avoid striking the guy wires that support the tower.

Cafer said "a patch is in the design stage" and "nothing over 1000 feet is safe anymore."

Several residents near the big transmitting tower told authorities they saw at least one canopy descend out of the cloud.



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# From the Loft

This column is written by Bob Stroud, a Master Parachute Rigger and DPRE from Edmond, Okla., who has extensive sport parachute rigging — and jumping experience. Bob will be happy to answer your equipment and rigging questions. Address them to Bob Stroud, c/o Skydiving, P. O. Box 189, Deltona, Fla. 32725.

## Check that slider

Riggers should remind jumpers to inspect the sliders of their main canopies. If the slider is incorrectly designed or built, the grommets may pull out of the fabric. The results of such a failure would be a damage to the suspension lines or a hard opening, or both. I've seen sliders with grommets that were set wrong. I've also received a reliable report from a jumper who experienced a very hard opening when his slider split along the reinforcing webbing. This particular slider did not

have diagonal reinforcing tapes.

Also, check the grommets periodically for nicks and burrs, especially after an opening when the slider "clinks" down on the links. Although dents in the grommets don't seem to cause much damage, nicks and burrs will fray lines. Fine sandpaper or emery cloth will quickly smooth up brass grommets.

## And check that Comet

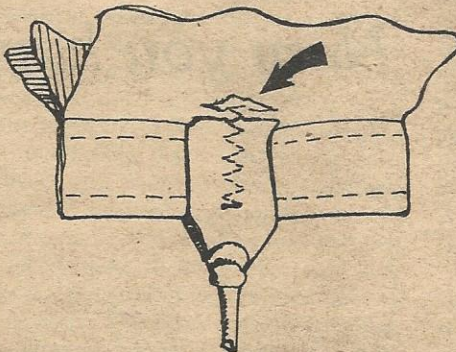
I recently had the opportunity to inspect a Comet main canopy (built by Comet International) that blew a seam on opening. A bottom panel that joined a load-bearing rib tore along the seam for a distance of about four feet. The damaged canopy was landed without any problem, although the damage was expensive to repair.

Inspection revealed that the line attachment points — bits of tape that are folded over the seam and sewn with a double-throw zig-zag stitch — were the

reason for the failure. The zig-zag stitches extended well beyond the ends of the tapes and into the canopy fabric. When the canopy inflates and the fabric is loaded, these sewn-together areas become weak spots that receive a significant load. As a result, a tear is likely to begin at the spot and continue along the seam.

Further inspection revealed that several other attachment points had small tears that are likely to get larger.

Riggers might advise the owners of these canopies to inspect the line attachment points for damage.



Sketch of the line attachment point of a Comet. The tears described in the text were associated with the zig-zag stitching.

## More on plastic ripcords

The Relative Workshop is still offering to replace reserve ripcords with nylon plastic handles that were sold with Wonderhogs built by the company. Owners should send their nylon-handled ripcords and the serial number of their Wonderhog (which is written on the TSO tag sewn to the inside of the top of the backpad) to the company at 1050 Flightline, DeLand, FL 32720.

The Relative Workshop will promptly send the owner a new ripcord with a Martin-Baker type metal handle. There is

no charge for the replacement, providing the above-mentioned information is provided.

The company started the replacement program several months ago after it received reports of nylon handles breaking during use. The nylon handles, which are tan in color and have a round cross section, have been used on rigs built by several manufacturers.

A similar handle, made of a translucent tan fiberglass with a flattened cross section, isn't affected by this replacement program.

The Relative Workshop will sell Wonderhog reserve ripcords to jumpers who have plastic reserve ripcords that were not supplied as original equipment on their rigs. (Some jumpers replaced the blast handles on their rigs with plastic Martin-Baker handles obtained from another source.) The company charges \$5 to replace such a ripcord.

## Flite Mask Offered

Skylite Aerosports of Elsinore, Calif., has started marketing a soft neoprene mask for cold weather skydiving. Called the Flite Mask, the device is built of a very thin layer of neoprene foam sandwiched between two layers of fabric. It is designed to cover the exposed parts of the face and neck, protecting them from the windblast of freefall.



Jumper wearing a Flite Mask.

The company says the Flite Mask doesn't interfere with the fit of a skydiver's goggles or helmet. It is offered in three sizes, and the one tried by *Skydiving* fit snugly and comfortably. It takes just a few seconds to put on, and a Velcro closure seemed to work well. It doesn't restrict vision in any way whatsoever, and weighs only 1 1/2 ozs.

The Flite Mask is sold by Skylite dealers for about \$10. More information is available from Skylite Aerosports, 15475 Lincoln, Elsinore, CA 92330.



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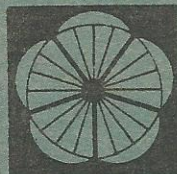
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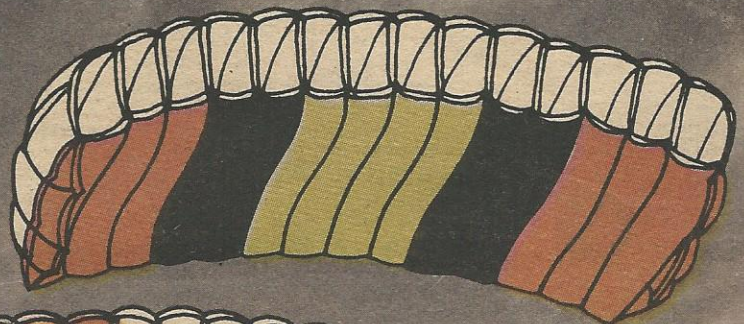
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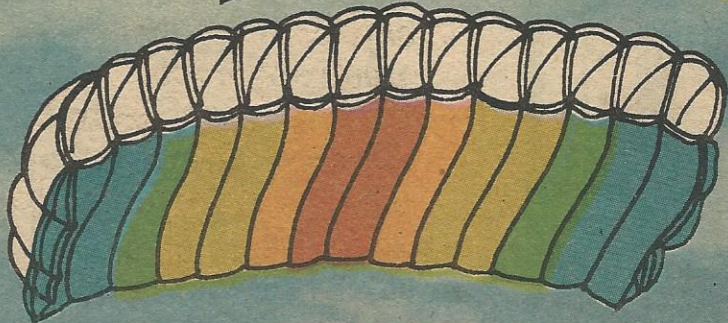
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# Fixed-Object Jumps Causing Problems

Skydivers are continuing to make low-level parachute jumps from a variety of bridges, towers and cliffs in spite of several serious injuries from such jumps. The news media, including national tv networks and newspapers, are avidly reporting both successful and unsuccessful "fixed object" jumps, and the resulting publicity—which is typically negative—is causing concern among parachuting leaders.

Bill Ottley, executive directive of the

U.S. Parachute Association, expressed his concern in a recent memo to the association's board of directors. He was responding to a news report that a member was arrested while attempting to climb the Sears tower in Chicago for a jump from the top of the world's tallest building. The negative publicity generated by the foiled attempt caused Ottley to write, "Clearly another blow has been struck in the ongoing campaign to reduce skydivers from their hard-won roles as athletes and restore them to their earlier, carefree days, when the public nationwide viewed us exclusively as suicidally inclined nuts and cranks."

The "image problem" created by such jumps seems to be a major concern of the USPA, as is safety. Joe Svec, USPA southwestern conference director, relieved Phil Mayfield of his duties as a USPA area safety officer the day after Mayfield jumped from a 1100-foot tv tower in Texas. Svec wrote Mayfield to tell him he has "stepped outside of the boundaries of common sense and safety that I feel are

necessary to be an effective Area Safety Officer. Although the jump didn't involve an airplane and I'm sure you feel [you] didn't violate any USPA safety regulations, I feel your actions violated the spirit of the pledge you signed as an ASO."

Svec went on to express his concern about the adverse publicity generated by such "stunts." He ended his letter by saying "I only hope some kid doesn't kill himself trying to emulate you."

Mayfield's response expressed dismay

that Svec, "of all people should be admonishing me or anyone about doing dangerous or illegal 'stunts.' Correct me if I'm wrong, but your first jump off El Capitan was an illegal one. It was also much more dangerous than you may have publicized due to the fact that you had no idea where you were supposed to go off. Consequently, you picked a spot at random, hoping there were no outcroppings of rock below, and jumped, opening very close to the wall after barely clearing it in freefall. At least this is what you recounted to me earlier this year." Mayfield asked Svec to explain how the tower jump "exceeds the boundaries of common sense

(continued on page 18)

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## Results of Z'Hills Turkey Meet

### 8-Way Sequential (15 teams)

1. **Toxic Shock** — Bungee Wallace, Mike Cerasoli, Mike Truffer, Ron Ardizzone, Kathi Embry, Bill Wenger, Roger Ponce de Leon, Dave Janscar. (Average score: 4.6 pts.)

2. **Still at Large** — B.J. Worth, Jerry Bird, Jim Captain, Steve Mayes, Mike Sandberg, Jeff Barboni, Mike Eakins, Jim Baker. (Average score: 4.3 pts.)

3. **Center Stage** — Ron Johnson, Carl Daugherty, Jack Wallace, Van Widemann, Peter Wheeler, Perry Engstrom, Brian Jefferies, John Robbins. (Average score: 3.6 pts.)

### 16-Way Sequential (5 teams)

1. **Nuke the Whalers** — B.J. Worth, Dave Janscar, Mike Truffer, Bill Wenger, Jim Baker, Mike Eakins, Jim Captain, Garry Cater, Jeff Barboni, Roger Ponce de Leon, Mike Cerasoli, Jack Brake, Ron Ardizzone, Don Caltvdt, Jerry Bird, Steve Mayes.

2. **First Offense** — Dane Kenny, Karl Arneberg, Joannie Murphy, Pal Bergen, Fred Keery, Sandy Spence, Sheila Whitten, Billy Somerville, Kathy McCormac, Jeff Sander, Rob Colpus, Jim Keery, Rodolpho Gerstil, Chris Milliken, Tony Urangolo.

### 20-Way Speed Stars (9 teams)

1. **Geek City Flailers** — B.J. Worth, Roger Ponce de Leon, Don Caltvdt, Dave Arquist, Steve Mayes, Jeff Barboni, Jim Baker, Mike Eakins, Tom Mele, Jack Brake, Dave Sichler, Bill Wenger, Mike Cerasoli, Jerry Bird, Jim

Captain, Cynthia Frueh, Daniel O'Brian, Garry Carter, Bungee Wallace, Mike Sandberg.

2. **Lime Light** — Carl Daugherty, Vicki Christensen, Al Brown, Van Widemann, Al Kidd, Pam Fowler, Cheryl McGovern, Ron Johnson, Perry Engstrom, Karen Bruce, Matt O'Gwynn, Mike Millhorn, Greg Wirth, Kathi Embrey, Doug Smith, Mike Johnston, John Robbins, Mike Arbour, Peter Wheeler, Brian Jefferies.

### 10-Man Speed Stars (14 teams)

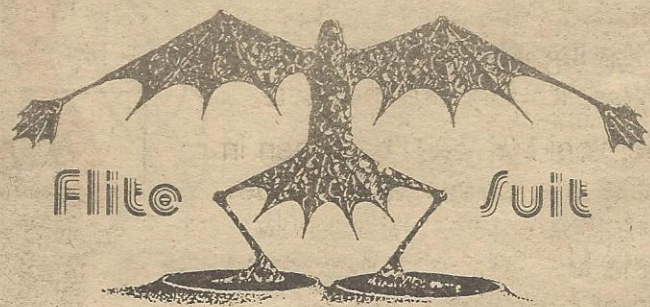
1. **Pegasus** — B.J. Worth, Jerry Bird, Garry Carter, Roger Ponce de Leon, Jack Brake, Jeff Barboni, Jim Captain, Steve Mayes, Jim Baker, Mike Sandberg. (Average time: 13.3 secs.)

2. **Sunshine** — John Robbins, Mary Jefferies, Peter Wheeler, Brian Jefferies, Van Widemann, Bob Nixon, Ken Coleman, Cheryl McGovern, Martha Scott, Lincoln Salvador. (Average time: 17.4 secs.)

3. **Symbiosis** — Dane Kenny, Jim Keery, Fred Keery, Rob Colpus, Jeff Sanders, Tony Urangolo, Billy Somerville, Jackie Smith, Kathleen McCormac, Sandy Spence. (Average time: 17.7 secs.)

4. **Quickest** — Mike Cerasoli, Ron Johnson, Kathi Embrey, Pam Fowler, Sheila Whitten, Karen Bruce, Candi Prosser, Dave Janscar, Mike Truffer, Carl Daugherty. (Average time: 20.3 secs.)

5. **Return of Son, etc.** — Mike Millhorn, Scotty Carbone, Richard Haughton, Bill Wenger, Matt O'Gwynn, Mike Arbour, Boidin Rene, Luc Verhelle, Marc Cuylaerts, Dan Weinberg. (Average time: 20.5 secs.)



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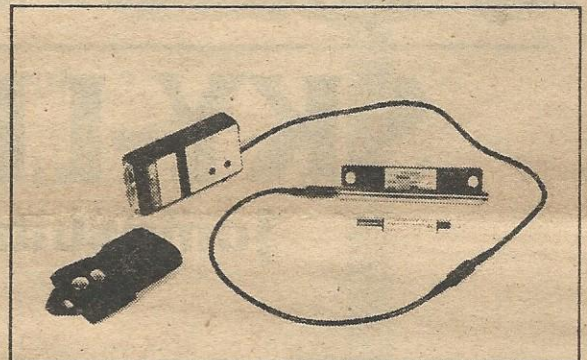
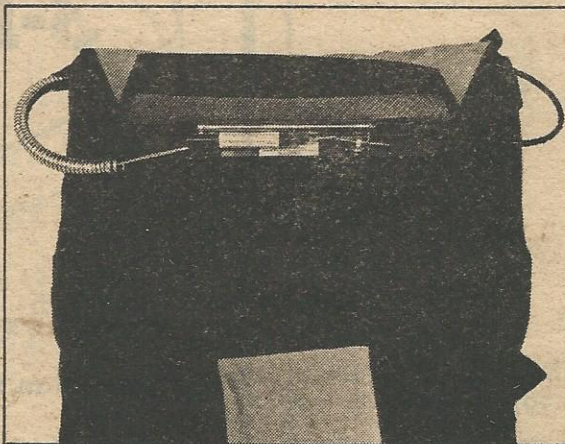
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## Norway Protests

(continued from page 10)

association was so concerned about the reaction of the air force's commanding general.

The sport in the United States is suffer-

ing in a similar fashion. Compared to jumps from airplanes, there have been relatively few jumps off cliffs, bridges and towers, but the jumps have received wide publicity, especially if a jumper was injured. These few jumps seem to have overshadowed regular sport parachuting in the public's eye. Several longtime

leaders of the sport in the U.S. feel such jumps are not worth the price they cost in adverse publicity.

The Norwegian letter clearly stated that the association did not enjoy having to curtail jumping from the Trollveggen. The letter, which was signed by Eilif Ness and Torolf Paulshus, said "we sincerely hope that our situation will be understood by the individual candidate cliff jumpers,

and that they will abstain from engaging in these kind of activities in the name of consideration for their fellow parachutists. If, in the future, these activities in the Norwegian mountains should become acceptable and legalized, we should be the first to inform you.

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## Fixed-Object Jumps Causing Problems

(continued from page 16)

and safety" while Svec's jump was "safe, legal and worthy of emulation."

Mayfield called Svec's letter a "holier-than-thou sermon," and was motivated "to garner attention to yourself . . . than to weed out unconscientious ASOs."

The intensity of Svec's and Mayfield's argument reflects the mixed feelings many skydivers feel about fixed-object jumps. Jumpers in favor of such jumps point out that all parachuting involves risk, and that it's inconsistent to let people risk their necks jumping out of airplanes but not off of tall objects. They say the adverse publicity, although certainly regrettable, is no worse than that resulting from "the bounce of a first jump student."

Some USPA officials, including those that have fought for the legalization of jumping from El Capitan, disagree as Otley's comments prove.

The official publication of the big and powerful national Audubon Society published an even-handed report of the controversy that surrounds jumping from El Capitan in its official publication. The society, a non-profit organization that lobbies for the protection of the environment, is against jumping from El Cap, citing the danger to nesting peregrine falcons and the hazards to the participants. It is likely

that the resumption of skydiving from the big cliff would be opposed by the society.

The USPA has taken steps to punish members who violate its rules and create trouble for the association. It kicked out or suspended eighteen members two months ago; most of the axed members had apparently violated USPA or National Park Service rules regarding driving in Yosemite National Park or jumping from El Capitan.

One suspended member, jeanni McCombs, had been a member of USPA for twenty years and been a member of past U.S. Parachute Teams. She feels she was not treated fairly by the organization and that she's "upset and disappointed . . . I was suspended for walking in the park."

The organization, however, seems adamant about the suspensions. When it heard that McCombs and one other suspended member had jumped at Yolo Drop Zone, a USPA affiliated center in California, it directed Bob Bonitz, Pacific conference director, to investigate the situation. Previously USPA had circulated a letter to all its affiliated centers, asked the DZ's help in insuring the suspended or expelled members are kept from jumping at the facilities.

Such heavy-handed actions prove that USPA isn't afraid to take controversial and significant steps to police its members. But they also may be eroding the support for the organization. Several jumpers told *Skydiving* such actions only create a "we vs. them" atmosphere that tears at the fabric of the national organization.

## Correction

There were 26 paid staff members at the 1980 U.S. national parachuting championships. *Skydiving's* previous figure was too high, according to meet director Jack Bergman.



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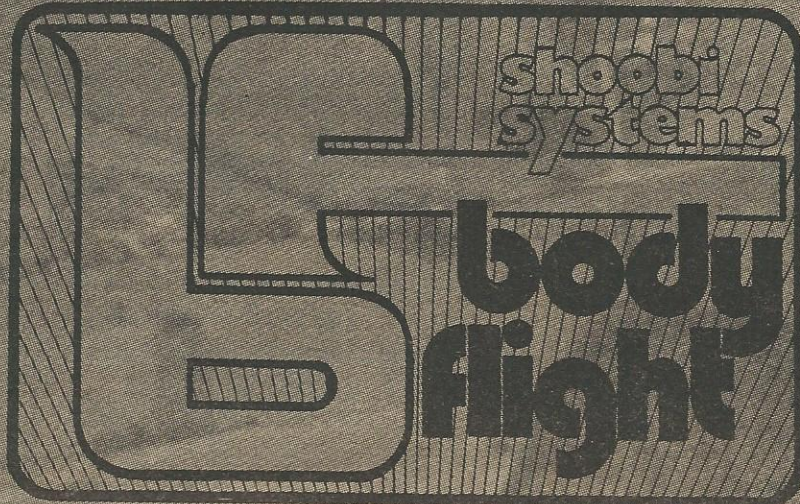
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## Firefly vs. Kestrel

(continued from page 6.)

15'3" wing span and 10'5" chord, or about 156 sq. ft. of bottom skin surface area. The Firefly has a greater wing span — 18'2" — but its narrower chord results in an identical 156 sq. ft. reading.

*Skydiving* measures the bottom surface of a ram-air canopy to determine total surface area. This method does not consider the fact that the nose of a ram-air extends past the forward edge of the bottom skin, so the skydiving's surface area figures are smaller than those claimed by the manufacturer. (Pioneer says the Kestrel has 190 sq. ft. and Django says the Firefly has 187 sq. ft.) But the method, applied evenly to all canopies, yields accurate comparative data of the surface area of several ram-airs. Surface area is a big factor in determining how soft a ram-

air will land.

The Strato-Flyer has a bottom surface of 147 sq. ft.

With 3-Ring risers but no bridle, pilot chute or bag, the Firefly weighs about four ounces less than the Kestrel: 7 versus 7 1/4 lbs. The Strato-Flyer weighs 8 1/2 lbs.

Although the bottom surface of the Kestrel has only a few more square feet than the Strato-Flyer, it lands much better than the Flyer. Even landings in no winds are not a problem, providing the flare is initiated from full speed high enough above the ground.

*Skydiving* has been evaluating the Kestrel since it borrowed a prototype version earlier this year. After a total of over 200 jumps on that canopy and several later versions, the 150 pound jumper remained impressed with the canopy.

The Kestrel, built from Harris F-111 fabric, opens softly no matter how it is packed. Several jumpers remarked that

they did not like the comparatively slow openings. (The factory provides a solid slider, and perhaps putting a vent in the center would speed up inflation for those who don't mind the increased opening shock.)

The Kestrel handles much like the old Para-Flite Strato-Star, except that it is considerably faster. Turns are quick, and the toggles have to be depressed past the hips to cause a stall. But toggle pressures are high compared to the Firefly and most other 7-cell canopies.

In full flight, the Kestrel flies without washing side-to-side. It can be flown in a stable sink mode, although its small surface area results in a rate of descent that makes it a poor accuracy canopy. (The fullsize 7-cell canopies can be flown in a sink without increasing the rate of descent to the point where foot placement becomes difficult as the disk rises up quickly.) And,

in a full sink, landing under the Kestrel is hard.

Like the Firefly, the Kestrel asks more of the jumper. Timing of the flare is important, and many jumpers who are used to the quick flares of other modern canopies usually flare the canopy too late and not hard enough.

Because the Kestrel has a fairly thick airfoil and wide chord (its overall shape is more square and less rectangular than the Firefly), the stall is less brisk.

Like other Pioneer canopies, the Kestrel has a high tail — the canopy in full flight has a very flat profile from the side, with little droop in the tail. It has exceptional forward speed and good glide, comparing favorably to most mid-size 7-cell canopies. It will blow by the Firefly.

The Kestrel has I-beam construction with two "crow's feet" reinforcing tapes per line attachment point. Standard line is 600-lb. Dacron, although a 400-lb. line is being field tested. *Skydiving* put about 25 jumps on a Kestrel with Kevlar lines. Although pack volume and weight were reduced considerably, and performance improved noticeably, the line broke several times during deployment.

While the Kestrel and Firefly have the small canopy market to themselves right now, that situation will most likely change. GQ Security is working on a 5-cell version of its Unit, and Para-Flite has been testing small 5-cell canopies that are based on the technology used in the Cruisair and XL Cloud. And Comet International, a Southern California company that builds two Pegasus-like canopies called Comets, will probably jump into the market if it decides the demand for high performance small canopies is great enough.

Other competition will continue to come from existing designs, particularly the mid-size 7-cell canopies.

And talking to jumpers quickly makes it obvious that different skydivers want different qualities in the gear they jump. One jumper will rave about a canopy's high forward speed, but his friend will reject the same canopy for sluggish turns. Anyone in the market for a new canopy should put evaluation jumps on several comparable canopies before laying out any cash.

## Southern Cross DC-3

Southern Cross Parachute Center at Chambersburg, Penn., added a DC-3 to its flight line, and again jumpers in the mid-Atlantic states have access to a fulltime DC-3.

Owner George Kabeller told *Skydiving* that the aircraft is the "cleanest DC-3 in the country." Although that claim might be a bit of an overstatement, his aircraft is in good shape, having been owned by the President of Mexico.

Southern Cross also has a cargo door Twin Beech and a Cessna 182. All three aircraft are available seven days a week. The center also installed a 30-meter pea gravel target for "accuracy types," as Kabeller explained.

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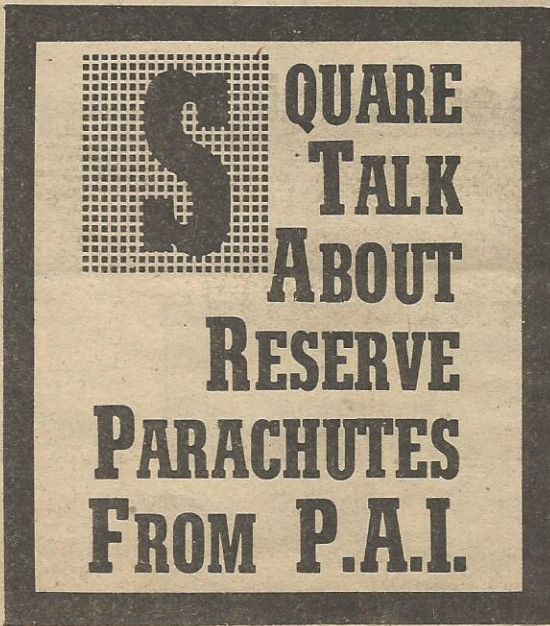
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# Books

**The Right Stuff.** By Tom Wolfe. Bantam Books, 1979. 367 Pages. \$3.50

Tom Wolfe has written a series of outstanding books providing penetrating looks into the American character and psyche. He started with *The Electric Koolaid Acid Test* back in the '60s and has just published his latest, *The Right Stuff*. In it, Wolfe explores the world of fighter pilots, test pilots, and astronauts, chronicling the first successful supersonic flights and, later, the Mercury program which sent Americans into space. It is a detailed, factual account of the pilots, planes, and programs that made that moment unique in history.

But it is history with a difference. Instead of just recording events, Wolfe gets down to the essence of the whole enterprise. He focuses on the hearts and minds—and souls—of the men who made it possible, the men who lived on the edge day after day, and who operated their test aircraft on the "outside edge of the flight envelope."

For whuffos and other earthbound readers, it is strange stuff; thought patterns and attitudes about life and living—and death and dying—so different from the average person's perception as to be almost alien in character.

Yet, for skydivers, *The Right Stuff* has a familiar ring about it. It describes, in clinical detail and with unflinching accuracy, the way we feel during a skydive, a malfunction, and while we watch a friend die. The people in the book are fighter pilots, of course, but the feelings and attitudes are the same. From the arrogant superiority they experience as they fly over a thousand ground-bound souls to the matter-of-fact rationalizations they spout as they discuss the death of another pilot ("Hell, I wouldn't have done that—that was

stupid"), Wolfe's test pilots are dead ringers for the skydivers populating drop zones all over the world.

*The Right Stuff* is good history, too. The 1950s were exciting years for aviation, as jet fighters and rocket planes explored the upper reaches of the atmosphere and the space that lies beyond.

It also describes the political motivations behind the Mercury program and the now difficult-to-recall fervor which gripped America as it tried to beat Russia into space.

There are few writings around which accurately convey the joy and power that comes with living near the edge. This is one of them.

—Robin Heid

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# Letters

## Night RW Record

On September 20th we did a rejump of the night 27-way cluster. This time we got pictures with all the grips there and both judges agree it is without a doubt the official world's record. It built smoothly in 51 seconds and was held for 5.

It was Jerry Ryan who helped me send the letters for the first dive. Al Navarro worked with the base on both dives and Al Krueger led the briefs and debriefs. The judges were Steve Hamilton and Bill Pyle; the cameramen Norm Kent and Ray Cottingham.

Participating were: Diana Rowland, Al Navarro, Jerry Ryan, Vic Ayers, Mark Sechler, Tim Long, Peter Hammond, Dillon Smith, John Ruhwedel, John Downing, Pat Davis, Bobby Smith, Allen Richter, Al Krueger, Dave Keith, Robert Waltzer, Jim Edwards, Pat Swovelin, Richard Brune, Steve Parker, Ken Crabtree, Mike Sheerin, Dawn Arbogast, Chris Deli, Bob Harer, Dennis Ray and Kathy McCormac.

Many thanks to all who helped.

**Diana Rowland**  
Hemet, Calif.

## Parachuting should be fun

I agree with Dean Frazier in his letter in Issue #13.

Parachuting should be fun. When we fail to adhere to this policy, we fight. This only causes more non-fun.

I was on Jerry Bird's team in 1971, 1972 and 1973. We were in hard competition across the country. I always had fun. When Jerry Bird asked me on the team, I agreed with one stipulation: when it stopped being fun, I would quit. I did just that in 1973.

As Dean Frazier states, cliques and splinter groups non-productive and drop zones have failed because of them. We should always share our knowledge and experience. When the flying gods said "Let there be skydiving," that also said "Let skydiving be fun."

**Bill Stage**  
Quail Valley, Calif.

## More jumps from New River Bridge

Recently [July 1980] I made a jump from the New River Gorge bridge in Oak Hill, W. Va.

I am planning some more news-making jumps and will send them to you as they happen.

**Gregory Lawson**  
Barboursville, Ky.

## All Girl Dives

I am writing this in the hope that all the nice girls that have asked me on their "women, WSCR loads" understand why I have no desire to participate.

It is not because I have doubts as to the success rate of such dives, or do not like girls, but because to me skydiving is a sport where males and females are equals. There is no physical handicap giving females a disadvantage. Everyone has the same opportunity to make it in this sport, some of us will have to work harder. Some are born "skygods," but in any case it has nothing to do with sex.

We all work with the same gear; a Wonderhog or Crusair cannot distinguish between a male or female jumper. So why separate this wonderful sport into two groups? I want no part of it. It is bad enough that we have those highly political loads and their exclusiveness; we really do not need another faction!

Besides how would you (you as a girl) feel if the guys suddenly decided to have only all-male jumps from now on? For my part I might as well pack up and start butterfly collecting. At my DZ there are three capable female skydivers and we are all of the same opinion:

1. We would make ourselves extremely ridiculous with such an attitude. Besides, it being very impractical, stupid and conceited. (I am not talking about cases, for example, four girls practice as a team and do this because their experience level is the same. Their weight class is compatible,

etc. I am discussing those organized women dives that are put on display for the sole purpose of proving to the male population that girls can do just as good).

2. We would have a hard (if not impossible) time filling the plane.

3. We would have to limit ourselves to 3-women's until such time where more girls would appear on the horizon and that could take a while.

I am grateful to all the guys that have asked me on their loads and do not support this kind of attitude. Mixed company to me is always more fun and adds spark. Just think of the social dives! Or the natural challenge that exists between women and men and that adds to a healthy competition amongst us.

I can't restrain myself from adding a PS to this, which might sound catty. The saddest part of all is at the end of such a dive the woman organizer has the nerve to announce the names of the participants and with a snicker those of the three males that were invited along and who went below. That shows no class. Later, the same girls wonder why they don't get asked on male loads.

**Silvia Winiger**  
Flemington, N.J.

## Publish or Perish?

Dear Mr. Truffer:

I don't know if you are a jumper (if not, you should be) but I hope you don't wait as long to pull as you do to publish.

**Jane McIntosh**  
Queens, N.Y.

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SD1

# Editorial

## There's more to worry about than the ground

I had barely been in my printer's shop five seconds when the receptionist asked, "What happened to that guy in St. Louis?"

"What guy in St. Louis?" I replied, although I knew exactly what she was talking about: a skydiver had been killed over the weekend trying a rather unusual jump. I got ready to launch into my standard pitch that jumping is really safer than the media would have you believe, that accidents happen when a jumper is under-trained or under-equipped, or both.

You probably have a similar explanation that you patiently recite when a friend or relative inquires about a fatality.

The receptionist sipped her coffee and went on, "Oh, some sky jumper tried to land on top of the St. Louis arch — you know, that big steel thing — and fell off and got killed. I read it in the papers this morning. What happened?"

I told her that I really didn't know any more than she did, but we could discuss it the next time I stopped in. I asked her if she would get the manager so I could turn in the job I carried under my arm.

She paged the manager and, before turning back to her typewriter, said, "You guys are really crazy. Imagine trying to parachute onto that arch!"

My immediate impulse was to reply and tell her not to judge sport parachuting by one offbeat stunt that failed tragically. But that would have been futile. She was already typing away; her mind was made up.

And I suspect millions of other whuffos who might have thought skydiving and skydivers were almost normal, now had different opinions after hearing about that fatality.

That's the main reason why I think we should cool our attempts to jump off (or onto) any structure that catches our attention. It's not because such jumps are unsafe (with the proper planning and equipment, I know they can be made safely). Nor do I want to deny anyone the thrill and sense of accomplishment that surely must come with a jump off a bridge or tower or whatever.

It's because several of these jumps have done a great job of convincing the public that we are indeed a bunch of wierdos. The backlash from the illegal or unsuccessful fixed object jumps hurts the entire sport. The public's wrath spreads to everyone who jumps for fun and sport. It makes it harder to get a demonstration jump approved, or to get corporate sponsorship for a team, or to keep a drop zone open.

We jumpers have always had a huge problem trying to convince the public that we're sportsmen and not a bunch of crazies. Sure, skydiving is unbelievably exciting and rewarding, and it's riskier than most sports, but it's a whole lot safer than most whuffos believe.

But a recent rash of stunt jumps (some legal, some illegal, some executed flawlessly, others bumbled beyond belief) are hurting what little public acceptance and tolerance we've earned in the last three decades. It is to our advantage to control our impulse to throw ourselves off perfectly good towers and bridges.

—MFT

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(Use additional sheet if required.)



### WINDOW STICKER

This attractive sticker is printed in two colors of bright transparent ink. It looks great applied to inside of any window. A perfect little gift to enclose in a letter to a fellow skydiver. Durable mylar base, 3½ x 4½ in. \$2 each, three for \$5, eight for \$10 postpaid.

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# RELIABILITY • COMFORT • LIGHTWEIGHT

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# Inside the well-rounded Superlite II beats the heart of a competitor.



Wouldn't it be great to have a canopy that packed into today's tiny piggybacks and kept its cool when you flew it in deep brakes? Such a canopy would be truly versatile: you could use it to punch the disk and land softly in no wind, or you could carry it along on important RW loads.

The Pioneer Superlite II is just that kind of parachute. It has seven cells and 230 sq. ft. of surface area, but advanced fabric and construction techniques produce a ram-air that weighs only 8 1/4 lbs. with 3-Ring risers. It has less bulk than any other fullsize ram-air.

Although weight and bulk are down, performance is not. The Superlite will zip you along both fast and far with its good forward speed and glide.



It has a full range of toggle travel — from keepers to hips. Its nice stable sink in deep brakes makes it a deadly accuracy machine.

But don't take our word for it.

Ask Raylene Wilson. A member of the 1980 U.S. Parachute Team, Raylene picked the

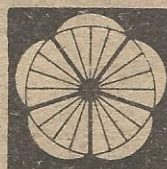
Superlite II for the World Championships of Style and Accuracy in Bulgaria last summer.

Or ask the U.S. Army's Golden Knights. Their RW team were the U.S. 8-way champions in 1978, and the team jumped the Superlite.



The Superlite II isn't a specialized canopy that is full of compromises. It's perfect for all kinds of jumping. Ask the jumpers who make the greatest demands of their gear: competitors.

A Superlite II is waiting for you at your Pioneer dealer.



Manufactured by:  
**Pioneer Parachute Co., Inc.**  
Pioneer Industrial Park  
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