

Geronimo!

By Lindsey Sage
THE BATTALION

Not many people would consider jumping out of a 100 mph airplane at an altitude of 1,300 feet "normal," but for Carol George, a junior recreation, park, and tourism science major, skydiving is a craving that she satisfies almost every weekend.

"You get to the point where you don't think that you are jumping out of a plane," George said.

Although she had always held an interest in skydiving, George did not become active in the sport until college.

"I went with my roommate to MSC Openhouse, and we got flyers for the Aggie Skydivers," George said. "She begged me to go to the informational with her and that pretty much won us over."

George, who now serves as president of the Aggie Skydivers, said the organization is labeled as a social organization. The purpose is to promote and educate the community about skydiving, not to teach one how to skydive. Depending upon the jump technique one chooses to use, a potential jumper must endure anything from a brief run-through to an eight-hour course from the jump site.

George made the first of her 250 jumps at Coulter Field the same day of a plane crash that killed five skydivers.

"At first I was really excited," George said. "Then, in the plane, I started to get scared. I remember sitting there and I looked at my jumpmaster and asked, 'Am I supposed to be this scared?' He said, 'You're about to jump out of an airplane, if you weren't scared something would be wrong with you.'"

Almost three years after that first skydive, George is still jumping strong.

"It is my passion," George said. "I feel that everyone has something they just love, and that's what skydiving is for me," George said. "You're so free, especially when you get up on your skill level."

Many people hold the misconception that skydiving is just about jumping out of an airplane, but, according to George, there is much more to it.

"You have to learn to fly your body and move in the air. There are so many different things you can do," George said. "It depends on what kind of jump you do. The ones that are mainly used here are static line, AFF (accelerate free fall) and tandem."

Static line is when one jumps individually and the parachute deploys automatically. In AFF, one experiences about 40 seconds of free fall under the instruction of two jumpmasters. In tandem, which is most beginners' choice, the jumper is strapped to the jumpmaster during the fall.

According to Todd Spillers, owner of Skydive AggieLand, the list never ends because there is always something different you can do. He also adds free flying, relative work (RW), skyboarding, and canopy relative work (CRW) to the list.

"A lot of people have misconceptions about it," Spillers said. "They imagine the round parachutes and think that you land like a sack of potatoes, which is far from the truth. There are risks involved, but, statistically, you have a higher chance of dying driving out there than you do jumping."

Spillers, who became hooked on skydiving after his first jump six years ago, recently reopened the drop zone after he noticed the tremendous support for it this past year. With the increased interest for skydiving in the area, Spillers said he not only gets his business from students, but from "all walks of life."

Michelle Nicol, a junior animal science major, remembers walking out to the wing for her first jump and seeing the sun behind the tip.

"It was gorgeous," Nicol said. "I really don't remember anything after that though."

Nicol was first attracted to skydiving because it was something different. After she took her first jump two years ago, she discovered that it



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truly was a different world.

"It is a different world when you are falling by the clouds. It is so relaxing," Nicol said. "I still get nervous and get butterflies in my stomach when I go up, but the second I jump, it is all gone."

Recently, Nicol, along with other skydivers from A&M, participated in the National Collegiate Championship in Florida where they received sixth place. With the largest civilian team, A&M competed against other colleges as well as military academies.

"There are so many different ways to compete," Nicol said.

One way is to form figures with your team in the air by turning and grabbing onto the other members. For every figure the team creates in the air, they receive a point. Another form of competition, termed CRW, deals with using canopies in the air to construct various figures.

Nicol said it depends upon the person and the amount of time he will give to reach a competition-worthy level.

For Nicol, skydiving remains a hobby for now, but she acknowledges that for many people it is a way of life.

"It's a big sport for a lot of people. For jumpmasters it is their life and their job," Nicol said. "You don't really see anyone in between when it comes to skydiving. They either are scared to death or on a high and want to do it again. People get addicted really easy because it is such a high adrenaline rush."

George encourages anyone contemplating the possibility of skydiving to try it.

"I would tell anyone who is thinking about it to definitely do it. After the first jump, you know if you will ever do it again," George said. "It is life changing."

VOLUME Control

Music Review V 2.002

Cam'ron
Come Home With Me
Epic Records

After a moderately successful stint on the now-defunct Entertainment label, Harlem lyricist Cam'ron became a free agent late last year and was quickly signed by rapper Jay-Z, who also moonlights as an executive at Roc-A-Fella Records.

The move surprised some who worried that bad blood might resurface from Jay's altercation with Entertainment CEO Lance "Un" Rivera in December 2000 when Jay stabbed Rivera after he allegedly bootlegged his music.

With the release of Cam'ron's Roc-A-Fella debut, *Come Home With Me*, it appears that business has won out over any grudges that may remain. Cam'ron drives this point home on quality tracks like "Welcome To New York City," (a duet with Jay-Z) produced by Just Blaze, who's a regular around the Roc-A-Fella crew.

Equally impressive is the creatively titled "The Roc (Just Fire)," a song that enlists Roc-A-Fella veterans Memphis Bleek and Beanie Sigel. Other notable tracks include the party anthem "Oh Boy," a sequel to the drug-trafficking story in the song "Losing Weight Part 2," that Cam began on his last album.

Also memorable is the amusing "Stop Calling," a song that finds Cam being harassed over the phone by the boyfriend of one of his mistresses.

Unfortunately, the remainder of the LP suffers from rushed production and the overall lack of vision that is becoming a hallmark of Roc-A-Fella releases. While there are the obligatory party joints and hardcore tracks, the beats as a whole are inconsistent and leave much to be desired.

"Daydreaming" and "I Just Wanna" lack substance and make lame attempts to be radio-friendly. "Live My Life (Leave Me Alone)" recycles a 2Pac beat and enlists Daz, but fails to live up to its predecessor. "Dead or Alive" fares slightly better, but is followed by the horribly annoying "Boy Boy."

The quickness with which this album was released suggests that many of the tracks were possibly throwaways from the last Jay-Z or Beanie Sigel records.

Guest appearances by fellow Harlem natives McGruff, Jimmy Jones, Juelz Santana and Freeway Zekey can't save the album from mediocrity. Fans anticipating another great Roc-A-Fella LP to follow up *The Blueprint* may be better off saving their money for Jay-Z's next release in November.

—Gabe Patterson



Music Review V 2.002

Thursday
Full Collapse
Victory Records

Full Collapse has been the center of attention in the eclectic post-punk music scene since its release in late 2001.

With the second full-length release from the boys of Thursday, they have managed to provide a blueprint for the future of rock.

Hailing from New Brunswick, N.J., it's no wonder these guys have gained such recognition, as the Garden State seems to breed hardcore, punk and emo bands destined for stardom. In a music scene where the underlying theme for lyrics revolve around the elusive guy-girl relationship, Thursday's song ideas envelop a variety of thought provoking ideas such as abuse, breaking down social barriers and self evaluation.

With their first single "Understanding In A Car Crash," Geoff Rickly, front man for Thursday, sings about how a particular instance can make you rediscover your life. He then moves into the song "Concealer," which deals with the delicate subject of child-abuse and how it can't go ignored.

It is not only the lyrical content that sets this album apart from everything accessible right now.

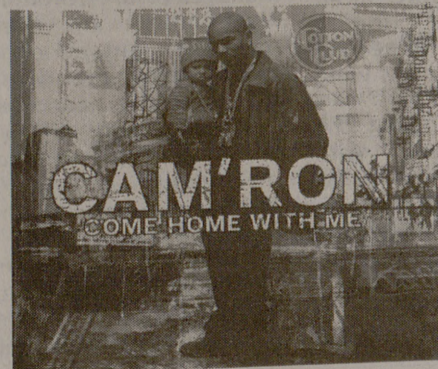
Musically the band has entered another dimension. With a gaining popularity of melodic sounds interwoven with riveting screams, Thursday has become the poster child for a sound which no other band has managed to pull off to the degree Thursday has.

On the fourth track, "Autobiography of a Nation," the song is set in motion with soft guitars and gentle drums, leaving the listener with the anticipation that the song is on the brink of destruction. In a timely fashion, Rickly crosses the threshold with aggression that's strong enough to make your stomach turn.

As Rickly is belting out the lyrics, backing vocals are provided by Tom Schlatter of the band The Assistant and Joe Darone of the band the Rosenbergs, piercing through the song creating a meaning that's ten fold. Needless to say, it's an 'on the edge of your seat' kind of song.

Thursday's sweet aggression is apparent throughout the entire CD. If one is looking for an album with fresh insight and an uncharted sound, Thursday's *Full Collapse* is a foolproof purchase.

—Lycia Shrum



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