



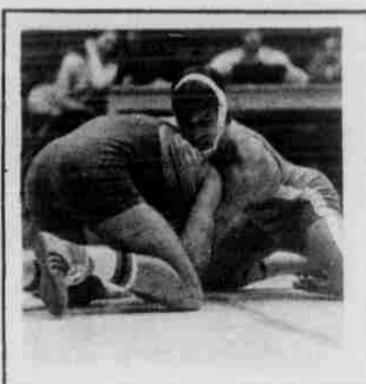
Concerts

Crosby, Stills (pictured) and Nash will appear Saturday in the Greensboro Coliseum. Area concertgoers will also have a chance to see and hear Weather Report and Count Basie and Ella Fitzgerald. Details on page 3.



Weekend sports

Bobby Gay and Bernie Menapace had their work cut out for them against Clemson last Saturday and, with their teammates, face Virginia tomorrow. The wrestling squad opens its season this weekend in Norfolk. Weekender sports are on pages 6, 7 and 8.



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Fear and loathing at 3,000 feet



Terror, fear, bliss — skydiving offers all

By LOU BILIONIS Associate Editor

Sheer terror. Ice cold, paralyzing lock-limbed fright. All turn to bliss — bleary-eyed, uplifting euphoria. And all in four falling seconds.

Sandwiched somewhere in the interim is the gamut of human emotions. The blinding spectrum. Time suspended, but no time to discern. Suffice it to say everything ever felt, ever zapped across the synapse of human experience, tromps across the eyelids in those four seconds.

Outside the realm of whirlwind emotion, well out of reach of that vortex, the four seconds seem rather simple. Falling. The first second sees you stepping off the wheel of a CESSNA cruising at 3,000 feet as you let go of the strut. Head back, arms outstretched and back arched. Perhaps 15 feet closer to terra firma, maybe three seconds later, the faint rippling of nylon and the gentle tug called "opening shock" signal that you're home free. No longer plummeting from an airplane like some stark-raving madman. No longer. The main chute is a fully inflated canopy, a godsend. Graceful descent, unearthly, heavenly quiet and peace-of-mind enter with warm welcome.

You are floating one-half mile above the earth. The horizon takes on a peculiar curvature. Patches of land and bodies of water replace the more usual asphalt and gravel. Man's commonplaces give way to nature's better. You can't — or don't — see cars and buildings at 2,600 feet. All you notice is what seems to belong there.

Please turn to page 2.

Skydiving

Somewhere in Franklin County, there exists the Sport Parachute Center. From personal experience DTH Associate Editor Lou Billionis, right, says the hazards there are "few and easily avoided." Jumping out of the plane is a little different from jumping off those three-foot-tall practice platforms, but it can be done, despite what common sense says. It takes guts, determination and a six-hour course of instruction before the final plummet. The fee for a first-jump course is \$40 and cheaper when learning to jump in numbers. It's not quite like falling out of bed, but one thing's for sure, you're better protected.

