

CHUTE

CONTINUED FROM D1

holding my nose and puffing out my cheeks.

Beautiful. We're laughing and talking about what we can see from our vantage point 4,000 feet off the ground.

I'm holding with Jody onto the toggle lines that reach up to the parachute and control its direction. Pull right, swoop right. Pull left, swoop left. A gust of wind sets us twirling. It's wonderful, exhilarating. I'm not tired anymore. My exhausting 14-hour workday drops away as I float away from the plane.

I practice pulling both lines, to flair the parachute to slow us for landing.

Suddenly, for the first time, we're close enough to the ground to be able to see that the distance between us and the ground is narrowing. We're still traveling 40 mph as we rush toward it.

PULL! We haul on the toggle lines to "flair" the parachute,

'It's windy. And clear — we can see the Fermi nuclear plant in Monroe, the Huron Towers in Ann Arbor, Lake Erie and the city of Toledo.'

My feet hit, and I drop to my knees and then my side. Jody's pulled on top of me by our harnesses.

I'm laughing! Not because we made it down — but because we were up.

Just about 4½ minutes have passed — and nothing looks the same.

For information about tandem
parachuting, contact Parachuting Service Inc.