

Bungee jumping comes to IMAX

Tech Museum festival shows intense films

By Laramie Treviño

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

After more than 500 leaps and a few world records, the co-founder of the first bungee-jumping company in the United States is looking forward to taking in a movie to see if it reflects his

THE ARTS thrills gone by.

"Adrenaline

Rush: The Science of Risk," a 40-minute film directed by Marc Fard, is an exploration of one's inner self in association with endeavors of courage and danger. It's also among the 13 films in the lineup for the second annual International Tech Museum of Innovation IMAX Film Festival that runs Thursday through Sept. 7.

"I'm interested to see how I relate to the movie - to see if that's my experience," says Peter Kockelman of Mountain View. In 1988, the mechanical engineer and his computer engineer brother, John, started Bungee Adventures, a company that rigged more than 50,000 jumps during the years the duo operated it.

And while Kockelman's sky-high antics have involved gorges, cranes, very tall buildings and hot-air balloons - and on numerous occasions his head swinging 15 feet from the choppy waters beneath the Golden Gate Bridge - he's intrigued by the biological aspects of risk that will be touched on in "Adrenaline Rush." "It's nothing I've studied," he says.

Kockelman said that on the hundreds of occasions where he "committed" to a jump, "My heart was beating so fast I thought it was going to explode." He finds the 13,000-watt, 44-speaker, 85-foot-high domed screen of the Tech's IMAX theater suits his larger-than-life style. "It's the only medium that can showcase these incredible activities to make it feel like you're there," he said.

The nerd factor isn't ignored by the film, for viewers will visit Thomas Edison's laboratory and



Green Screen Films, Chicago

"Adrenaline Rush: The Science of Risk," about bungee jumpers, is part of the IMAX Film Festival.

of Alfred Nobel. Although they are not directly connected with the festival, the Kockelmans are among those Peninsula residents with a special interest in some specific films on the festival schedule.

Adventure, travel, nature, world music and wildlife are among other subjects viewers can choose from the IMAX marquee. Fans of the Lipizzan, a breed of horse whose lore can be linked to the prophet Mohammed, can catch a screening of "The Majestic White Horses," a 40-minute film directed by Kurt J. Mrkwicka. Viewers can watch them trot, side-step and perform their signature "Airs Above the Ground," originally battle movements, in the ballroom-like Winter Riding School in Vienna, a crystal-chandeliered Baroque hall. There are only 3,000 Lipizzans in the world, and the film shares dramatic nuggets of their storied past, such as their World War II rescue over enemy lines by a coalition of forces that included Gen. George Patton.

The Lipizzans are trained in dressage, a style of riding popular on the Peninsula and throughout the West Coast, says Cynthia Brownlee, barn manager at the Stanford Equestrian Center.

At the beginning stages of a Lipizzan's extensive training, "It's like watching cement dry," Brownlee says. She draws on a ballet dancer's grace in describing the way

IMAX Film Festival

Film festival screenings are scheduled from 10 a.m.-9 p.m. Thursday-Sept. 7 at the Hackworth IMAX Dome Theater at the Tech Museum of Innovation, 201 S. Market St., San Jose. Admission is \$7 per show with museum admission. Advance purchase is recommended and visitors are advised to arrive 20 minutes before show time. For IMAX program details, call (408) 294-8324 or visit www.thetech.org.

The Tech Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. Admission to museum galleries is free during Community Weekend this Saturday and Sunday.

the horse develops strength and flexibility in using "some or all" of its body and feet in what evolves as "gorgeous" maneuvers.

Brownlee was a member of a sold-out audience at a private screening of the film earlier this year at the Tech's IMAX theater.

"Everybody had been dying to see that film for a long time - everybody loves the Lipizzans and the film got a lot of people interested besides dressage riders," says Jennifer Roth of Carmel Valley. At Roth's Across the Diagonal Farm, Andreas Hausberger, a senior rider from the Spanish Riding School of Vienna who plays a role in the film,

breeds and sells Lipizzans.

Other bits of adventure people can find at the festival include:

► Feats of flight are showcased in "Straight Up: Helicopters in Action," directed by David Douglas. Bay Area pilots from the U.S. Coast Guard and American Helicopter Society will introduce the film and participate in a question-answer discussion during the festival. Along with scenes of firefighting, drug intervention and heroic action, the film includes footage from the wind tunnels at NASA Ames Research Center Moffett Field in Mountain View, says Daniel P. Casey, of the NASA/Army Rotorcraft Division. Although local pilots aren't featured to his knowledge, Casey says response has been enthusiastic from the 3,000 colleagues on his mailing list.

► Saddam Hussein's assault on the environment is eerily depicted in "Fires of Kuwait." Following the Gulf War in 1991, Hussein ordered Iraq's departing forces to ignite more than 600 oil wells. Forty nations supported the five-month effort - the largest non-military mobilization in history - to halt the conflagrations from 5 million barrels a day. Directed by David Douglas, the 36-minute film was nominated for the 1992 Academy Award in the documentary category.

E-mail comments to