

Flying above water in US not just for the birds

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JetLev

(AP) — Jenna Lee didn't get as high as she wanted, and it wasn't for lack of trying.

In fact, the 23-year-old Brick Township woman was perfectly sober as she tried to soar over the surface of Barnegat Bay.

She was using a JetLev, a mechanical contraption seemingly right out of "The Jetsons" that lets users hover above and fly over the surface of the [water](#). It's become one of this summer's must-do attractions at the Jersey shore for anyone with \$130 and a half-hour to kill.

"It was awesome!" she exclaimed after climbing back aboard the pontoon boat that carried her to the flight site over the bay near the

Route 37 bridge in Ocean County.

The contraption gained some notoriety a few weeks ago when cast members of MTV's "Jersey Shore," who were filming in neighboring Seaside Heights, tried them out. A photo of Jenny "JWoww" Farley hovering above the bay appeared in the New York City tabloids.

Started in 2004 by Raymond Li, a Chinese-born Canadian, the JetLev went through years of testing and revision and hit the market a few months ago. Anthony Manasia, an employee of Jersey Shore Watercraft Rentals, which owns two of the devices, said they cost \$100,000 apiece.

JetLev, based in Dania Beach, Florida, says it has about 100 units in use at 20 centers around America.

The Berkeley, New Jersey, rental facility charges \$130 for a half-hour flight, or \$75 for 15 minutes.

The device resembles a backpack with handles and two powerful jet nozzles, connected by a long black hose to a 10-foot (3-meter) boat that trails behind the user in the water and forces water through the hose and out the nozzles, creating the lift that propels the wearer into the air. A supervisor on a nearby vessel controls the speed of the jets, and thus the height of the flier.

As most users do, Lee started out slowly. It's a matter of getting a feel for the unit's handling: how gently to lift one's arms, or how steeply to lean to the right or left in order to make a turn. Once, she powered up at too steep an angle and was about to flip over backward, so Manasia, who was working the controls, cut the power, bringing her splashing down into the bay — which in itself was enjoyable, she said.

Manasia spoke instructions from a wireless microphone into a speaker in

her helmet: "Lift your hands 6 to 8 inches above the surface of the water. Lean to the right. Stop kicking your feet."

Gradually, she became more comfortable with it, and was able to propel herself above the water, making long sweeping circles as friends cheered her on.

"As long as he's talking to you through the helmet, you'll get the feel of it," Lee said. "You definitely need to spend the first few minutes learning. It's not something you just hop on and go. I lifted my arms too much and it sent it over backward, and I was like: 'OK, don't do that!' "

She's already making plans to fly again.

"I want to go up alongside the bridge, and do a lot of messed-up stuff," she said.

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