



Free-falls float into fashion for fledgling flying fanatics

Ever on the lookout for new things to do, many UNL students are taking to the skies to experience a new sport — parachuting.

Karen Steele, a junior studying journalism, made her first parachute jump three weeks ago and is now, by her own admission, a confirmed skydiving fan.

"The rush of adrenalin you get is incredible," she said of her first jump. "You just want to run around all day (after the jump.)"

"It's like being in a theater seat in the sky," Kathy Roth, a junior studying speech communications, said. "It's a very peaceful, floating feeling."

Steele, Roth and other UNL students made their first parachute jumps at Brown's Airport in Weeping Water after receiving training from instructors at Lincoln's Blue Sky Jump School, 929 Furnas St.

The training takes about 2.5 hours and is conducted the day before the jump. Dave Beurivage, an instructor at the school, said. Steele said she received about four hours of training before she made the jump.

Training for the first jump costs \$65, with prices decreasing after each successive jump. The school offers training for individuals and groups every Friday evening, but will train at other times by appointment, Beurivage said.

The parachuters jump at about 8 a.m. every Saturday at Weeping Water, Neb., when the weather permits.

The school trains beginning jumpers to fall from the plane by first having them fall to the ground from their feet and then by jumping off picnic tables, Roth said. They also are instructed in emergency procedures, such as avoiding power lines, trees,

or water.

Beurivage claimed accidents rarely occur in parachute jumping, but the most common accidents result from falling improperly.

Equipment for a parachute jump consists of the parachute backpack, a cotton jumpsuit, a pair of high-laced boots and a helmet.

"We use the best equipment on the market today," Beurivage said. "We figure a person has about \$1,500 worth of equipment on them when they walk into the airplane."

The fledgling parachutists first jump from 3,000 feet with a "static line" connecting them to the plane until they jump.

"The first jump is basically 'hop and pop'; that is, the jumper leaves the plane and immediately pulls the string," Beurivage said.

After the first five or six jumps with a static line, a jumper is graduated to "free-fall" jumping without a static line.

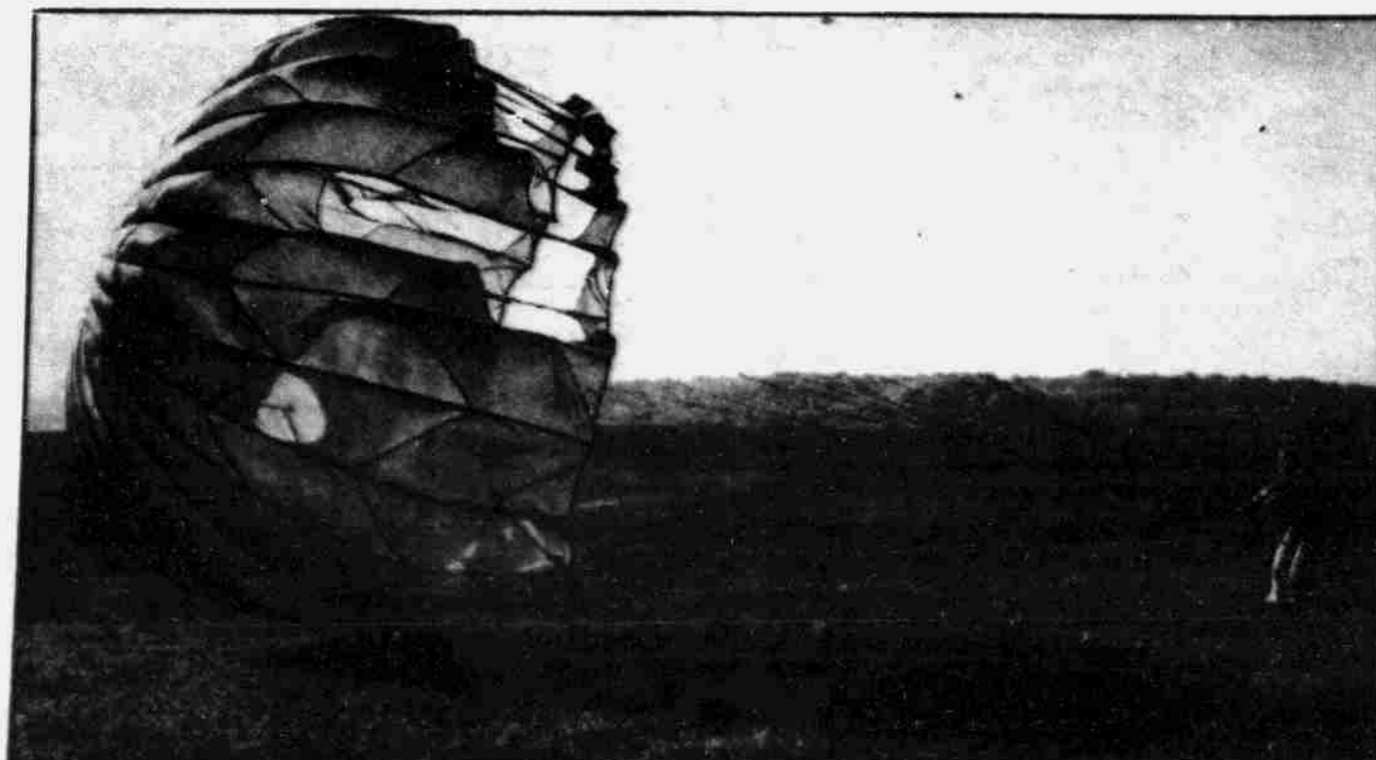
Free-fall chutists jump from 7,500 feet, although some jump from as high as 10,000 feet, Beurivage said. The added height lets the jumper wait from 5 to 20 seconds after the jump before pulling the rip cord.

Parachute backpacks are equipped with a reserve chute which immediately opens if the first chute fails.

Parachutists who have attained free-fall status can become members of the Lincoln Sport Parachute Club, the organization which operates the jump school. Membership costs are \$5.50 per jump.

The Blue Sky Jump School is affiliated with the United States Parachute Association and uses USPA rules and regulations, Beurivage said.

Under USPA regulations, students must be 18 years old to jump.



Clockwise from top: Blue Sky Jump School instructor Jim Hesson (left) teaches student Jamie Burks the finer points of skydiving. Hesson takes the plunge. An unidentified jumper begins to pull in his chute after a successful jump.

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