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& Photographs by Gren Ivy

ing yet extremely relaxing."

Former NU wrestler, Ryan Tobin, picked up sky diving this summer because he had some free time. He has made 11 jumps and is now a weekend regular at Crete.

"I do as many different things as I can," Tobin said. "I am a sports enthusiast, but this one tops them all."

Meanwhile, Anderson said he went skydiving with a group of friends when he graduated from UNL and, during the past four years, he has become addicted.

Anderson said he likes the friendliness of fellow sky divers.

"You can go about anywhere in the country and people will walk up to you and introduce themselves," Anderson said.

No fear

While the sport of sky diving may sound dangerous, modern technology has made it one of the safest sports for people of all ages, Janousek said.

In 39 years, the Lincoln Sport and Parachute Club has only had one fatality, which occurred in 1974.

Janousek said there were close to 25 sky diving fatalities per year in the United States, but that number comes out of nearly 3 million sky dives.

"Usually 80 per cent are because of bad decision-making or human error," Janousek said.

Even if the main parachute doesn't open, there is an emergency chute.

Dave Schwartz, vice president of Lincoln Sport Parachute Club, experienced a failure by his main parachute only once.

"You always prepare for each jump like your chute is going to fail," said Schwartz. "When it happened, I just reacted and didn't think about it. When you get on the ground you have more time to worry."

And if a person passes out or gets knocked out, there is an electric monitor that automatically opens the parachute at 1,000 feet.

Jumpers also carry altimeters so they know when to open the parachutes.

These pieces of equipment are



Photos
(counter clockwise from top left)

LONNIE ANDERSON OF LINCOLN clings to the airplane wing before making his free-fall jump from 3,000 feet Saturday at the Crete Municipal Airport.

ANDERSON, left, and the rest of his jumping group prepare for take-off. Pilot Rob Ator is a professional pilot who also likes skydiving.

ANDERSON REPACKS his parachute after his first skydive Saturday morning. Skydivers can pack their own parachutes, but the emergency parachute must be packed by a certified rigger.

BOB BROCKMAN PACKS up his parachute after landing. It takes an experienced skydiver about eight to 10 minutes to repack a parachute.

just two of the things that Janousek said have improved safety.

Rectangular parachutes are another improvement. They handle better, have more reliable openings and are easier to land than round ones, Janousek said.

"It's night and day difference," he said.

The rectangular parachutes also have made for a smoother jump. Contrary to popular belief, sky diving doesn't jerk the body too much, Janousek said.

"It's like a sudden deceleration to a stop sign," he said. "You notice it, but it's not enough to be uncomfortable."

Up, Up and Away...

Once people get up enough guts to sky dive, they still have a certain step-by-step process to go through before they can become licensed sky divers.

First, to get a license, a potential diver must be age 19 or older.

Both the Lincoln Sport and Parachute Club and Crete Skydiving Center also require jumpers to make five static-line or tandem jumps with an experienced sky diving instructor.

And nearly every sky diver said the second jump was the worst, but after that, each jump got easier.

"The second one, you know what is going to happen and wonder why you are doing it again," said Mike Blacksher, president of Lincoln Sport Parachute Club and a 24-year veteran of the sport.

Once sky divers make five jumps, they can become licensed and then are able to make free-fall dives on their own.

Then the diver must choose a group to jump with.

Janousek said the difference between the two local sky diving groups is that Lincoln Sport Parachute Club is a club and Crete Skydiving Center is a business.

While Crete Skydiving Center may be a business, Rob Ator, a pilot and drop zone instructor at Crete

Skydiving Center, said the goal of their business was to create a club atmosphere.

"It comes down to a matter of preference for where you want to jump," Ator said.

The Crete Skydiving Center charges \$180 for tandem skydives, \$155 for a static-line course and each static-line jump after is \$50. Free fall rates for students are \$40 per jump. Once licensed, rates are \$27 for free fall or formation jumps.

All prices include gear rental. Rates at the Lincoln Sport and Parachute Club for non-members are \$140 for the first static-line jump and six-hour training course.

Each additional static-line jump is \$40. Once licensed, each free fall jump is \$28. All prices include gear rental.

Wherever sky divers decide to jump, one thing is guaranteed, Anderson said. Jumps will always be exciting.

"My adrenaline still really gets pumping when the door opens,"