

# Skydivers jumping for fun

by Pat Sytnick

Ever wonder what it feels like to jump out of an airplane and fly like a bird?

For \$225 and one free Saturday, the U of A skydiving club will let you find out and rent equipment for a year.

Starting in late April, the club is offering beginner's training which includes your first jump the same day.

"He starts by talking about the equipment then about the emergency procedures and (parachute) control" says club president Jeffery Atvars. "Even if the million-to-one chance of a malfunction occurs, you will be prepared to deal with it."

If you are worried about safety consider this: your chances of being hurt are much higher when you are in your car driving to the jump than

when you are actually jumping.

The training is intensive and is followed by three hours of drills, test cases and practise parachute rolls until you are ready to jump. The first jump occurs at about 3,000 feet and takes about two and a half minutes.

According to Dave Ross, an avid jumper, "Just before the jump, in the airplane you say to yourself, 'I must be crazy! What am I doing here?' But when it's your turn to jump you just get numb, your fear is blocked out and you only think about what you've been told to do." You climb out of the plane, hang onto the strut and let go when your instructor says "go". You don't even have to open your parachute, it's done for you by your instructor.

"Then you feel a tug (when your parachute opens), open your eyes

and see a great view. You feel like you're floating and suspended," says Ross.

In an article written for the Gateway last year, another regular jumper, Cheryl Kerr, wrote that she felt mixed emotions of peace ("It's so quiet up there"), joy ("You're thrilled you've really done it") and freedom ("It's like being a bird").

When you land, it's impossible to hurt yourself if you roll like you've been taught. However, once you've done a few more jumps and learned how to steer the parachute you can land on your feet and walk away, says Ross.

He thinks skydiving changes a person and says you may confuse your friends because they may not understand why you do it.

When asked just exactly why he does it, he explains, "Everyone dreams they want to fly and with a



bit of experience you can manoeuvre yourself and actually fly for close to a minute every time you jump."

All jumps done by the U of A group take place at the Edmonton Skydiving Ranch at the Barrhead Johnson airport, which is about a one hour drive northwest of Edmonton.

The second jump is free but successive jumps, done from a progressively higher altitude cost about \$18 each.

If you want to join the club or get more information call David Ross at 436-6223 or send a message via the MTS computer system to "skydive" or id equals SKYD.



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