

Parachuting:

*Fall out of an airplane?
Some jump at the chance*

By John Drescher

Picture this: you are in a small airplane, 3,000 feet above acres and acres of tobacco farms in rural Franklin County. The side door opens. You adjust your goggles one last time and run your hand across your back, checking your parachute pack for about the 40th time. The man next to you shakes your hand and wishes you luck. You creep closer and closer to the edge, take a deep breath—and jump.

Sound fun? Hundreds of people think so, says Paul Fayard of Franklin County Sport Center. The Sport Center, located on Highway 56 in Louisburg, is the only parachuting center in the area certified by the U.S. Parachuting Association.

Fayard and the staff at the Sport Center train beginning parachuters and aid those who have jumped previously. First-timers pay a \$55 fee, which covers the use of the equipment, training and the actual jump itself. Prices go down considerably the more the parachuter jumps. The second jump is only \$12.

First-timers get five to six hours of training, depending on the individual. The object, Fayard said, is to train the student "enough so he can enjoy the jump on a personalized basis."

Training starts with orientation with the equipment and continues by explaining how to enter the aircraft and become comfortable in it. Next, students are taught how to exit the plane and what to expect once they do exit, said Fayard. Students are taught how to steer, land and prepare for unusual landing conditions.

Beginning parachuters do not pull the rip cord that releases the parachute. A static line is pulled by the jumpmaster in the plane, although Fayard said that there is a dummy rip cord that students can practice with. A back-up chute is used if the main chute does not open properly.

Parachuters must jump a minimum of five times before they can jump without a static line and pull their own rip cord. Parachuters must also be critiqued by the jumpmaster. Their last three jumps must be successful in all phases as judged by the jumpmaster for them to jump without the static cord.

"It's really not that difficult," Fayard said. "It's just a matter of getting your head (mind) to catch up with your body."

In seven years, there has been one death at the Sport Center. The jumper was an experienced parachuter, Fayard said, who did "several things wrong he knew better not to do." The jumper's first chute did not open, and instead of pulling his back-up chute he tried to fix his first chute. By the time he finally did pull his second chute, it was too late, Fayard said.

Most parachuting centers in North Carolina, other than the ones at Louisburg, Midland and Raeford, are small "fly-by-night, out-of-the-trunk" operations, Fayard said.

The Franklin County Sport Center has 11 instructors, who give on-the-ground training, and 15 jumpmasters, who control activity inside the aircraft and critique the students. The Sport Center is open from 10 a.m. until dark on weekdays and from 8 a.m. until dark on weekends.



DTH file photo

Gaynor Collester (above left) of the Chapel Hill Cycle Shop with bike outfitted for cross-country touring. Equipment for safety and comfort includes a light-weight luggage rack and panniers or saddle bags. A safety helmet also can be worn.



Staff photo by Jack Mohr

Bicycling:

By Sarah West

Bicycling, a long-standing mode of transportation for the American preteen, is taking on an expanded role. With gas prices spiraling even higher, bicycles provide a more economical means of getting around for all ages. Bicycling has also become increasingly popular as a sport.

According to Grady Ballenger of The Chapel Hill Cycle Shop, there is a big interest in cross-country touring on bikes. Ballenger, who does a lot of touring himself, advocates it as a good way to meet people.

"When you come into a small town on a bicycle, you are less of an intruder than if you were in a car. You can talk to people more easily—and people are more interested in you, too."

Gaynor Collester, who works at The Chapel Hill Cycle Shop, says Chapel Hill is a good location for bikers because of the surrounding countryside. "Within a 10-minute ride, you'll find some good roads with very little traffic."

Bikers interested in long-distance touring should check out the cross-North Carolina trail from Murphy to Manteo as well as the cross-America trail. Maps of the North Carolina trail, which runs through Chapel Hill and

Carrboro, can be obtained by writing to Curtis Yates at the Department of Transportation in Raleigh.

The cross-America trail was established as part of the Bicentennial by a group from Montana. Ballenger went on the trail with a group of five from Chapel Hill. Starting in Oregon, he stopped in Colorado, although others in the group biked all the way to Williamsburg, Va.

Ballenger's group carried tarps and stoves on their bikes, camping out along the way. They averaged a distance of 80 miles a day, but Ballenger says he prefers to take it more slowly to goof off and enjoy the country-side.

Collester says it takes only a short time for the average individual to build up to 60-80 miles a day. In addition to getting in shape before embarking on a long tour, a basic knowledge of bicycle maintenance is necessary, Collester says.

"You might be out in the middle of nowhere and have a problem with your bike," he says.

Ballenger stresses that only first-rate components should be on your bike if you're planning a tour. He warns that skimping on gears or other parts can lead to serious problems on the road.

"For instance, you need a good luggage rack that can

*High gas price spurs rise in pedal power;
racing, touring, socializing are other lures*

hold 40 pounds of equipment. You don't want one that's going to shake from side to side," he says.

Ballenger also advocates wearing a safety helmet as a guard against head injuries.

Most of the bicycles sold at the Cycle Shop are set up for touring, and have a wide range of gears. Owner Dave Witten says the best bikes to buy for touring are the Trek, which is an American bike and the Fuji, made in Japan.

"The Trek is a high-priced, handmade touring bike and isn't sold widely," Witten says. "The only decent mass-produced American bikes are made by Schwinn, and they were made in Japan until a few years ago."

Racing bikes are constructed and equipped differently than touring bikes, Collester says. Those interested in competitive cycling should check out the Carolina Velo Club, which is dedicated to the sport. There are local races in Carrboro, as well as in Raleigh and Durham.

Witten says he feels that interest in competitive cycling has declined and that bikes are being taken more seriously as a means of transportation. Witten himself cycles the five miles in to work each day. As Ballenger puts it, "With gas at \$1.25 a gallon, bikes are definitely a prime method of transportation."

er by remembering rules while afloat

door or indoor pool," Colvard says. Under, get out because there's the shock."

the ocean is a harsher environment. outgoing current rather than tiring," Colvard says. "If you get tangled up to say calm and slowly untangle crashing movements only get you

of the marine life and know what to fish stings and so on."

other safety precautions need to be gers in boats must have U.S. Coast personal floatation devices," says superintendent of the Crabtree and State Park near Raleigh.

North Carolina you are not required you must have one available for boating, always keep that vest on," says Colvard. "Also anyone that is should have basic swimming skills survival float."

lving a person who is in trouble in ownning is one that should be great caution, Billings says. Often to dive in and rush to the person's

aid. However, this is often the worst action to take, and may result in the loss of two lives.

Billings stresses that unless you are skilled in lifesaving techniques, it is best not to attempt a rescue. Instead, you should throw or hold out an object for the person in trouble to grasp.

A significant number of water and boating drownings are the result of combining drinking with water activities. "Don't mix drinking and water sports," says Sparky Carpenter, social research assistant at the Center for Alcohol Studies. "It causes weakness and makes you physically incapable of what you normally would be able to do."

"You could eventually become confused or disoriented in the water," says Carpenter. "The potential risk is there even with small levels of alcohol because of your increased activity."

Whether you are swimming or boating, you should have some sort of emergency plan. "The most important thing is to find out where the nearest phone is and know what numbers to call for help," Billings says. "Decide who would go for help and what your procedure will be."

Summer sports are fun, but only if they're safe. "Just use common sense at all times," Billings says, "and remember, we are our brother's keeper."



Joe Coates friction climbing

Rock climbing: From the white Cliffs to the mountains

By Jack Mohr

When asked why he climbs rocks Owen Silver replied, "It's like Sisyphus pushing the rock up the hill—a climber pushes himself up the rock face to the summit. At the summit, the pause is an exhilarating feeling of personal achievement."

Rock climbing is a sport in which the climber seeks personal challenge. Terry O'Brien of The Trail Shop says that an individual does not have to be physically strong to be a climber, although he should be in good physical condition.

"Climbers must have a good mental and emotional outlook, though," O'Brien says. "They have to be honest with themselves about their own ability."

O'Brien says that climbers tended to be individualistic people. "They are usually good planners, and attentive to details," he says.

Learning to climb requires training and supervision by an experienced climber. The best way to get into climbing is to try "bouldering." Bouldering involves practicing the types of moves used to scale cliffs but carrying them out on large rocks or rock walls near the ground. When bouldering, as when rock climbing, a friend is needed to help prevent falls. Bouldering is an excellent way to stay in shape for more serious climbing. It can be a lot of fun and is challenging as well. Some of the best climbers in the world spend hours honing their skills on boulders.

Places to boulder locally include the Forest Theatre and at an outcropping of rocks in Duke Forest. The outcropping's located off the trail which originates at Gate 26 off Rigsbee Road.

There are three basic styles of climbing—face, friction and crack climbing. Face climbing, O'Brien says, involves taking advantage of hand- and footholds in the rock surface. "In face climbing, it's often difficult to see above you because of the steepness of the incline."

Friction climbing involves climbing a rock face which has nothing to hold on to. "You rely on the friction of your feet and hands," O'Brien says. "It's a lot like ballet—it's all footwork."

In crack climbing the climber ascends by wedging his feet or hands into cracks in the rock.

O'Brien advises would-be climbers to climb with a partner. "When you solo climb, you lose the protection inherent in having someone else there. Solo climbing is strictly for experts."

Many climbs are made more safe because bolts, or metal rings, are left in the rock face by the first climbers to make the ascent. These bolts, O'Brien says, allow successive climbers to attach ropes, providing them with a good protection system.

The best way to avoid accidents while climbing, O'Brien says, is to climb within your potential. "Every time a person makes a climb that is not within his potential, he's just building up the potential for an accident."