



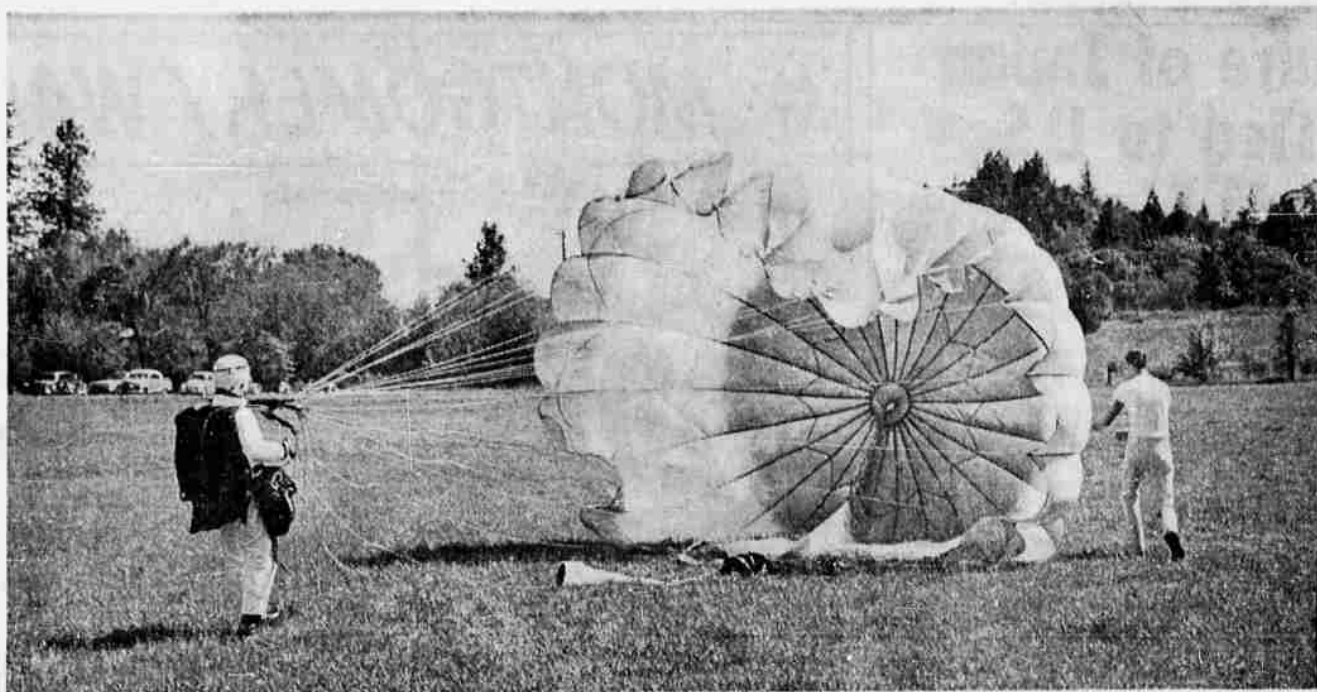
Candy-striped parachutes are easy for the ground observer to spot when watching members of the Skydivers group make their jumps. A jumper may free fall down to 2,000 feet, at which time he must open his parachute. The jumpers sometimes fly to heights of 15,000 feet before leaving the plane. (Knackstedt photo)



Members of the Skydivers prepare to fly to a suitable height for jumping, as one of the group demonstrates the proper form for leaving the plane when in the air. The right hand door is removed to allow the men to leave the plane easily. All four places in the plane are provided with safety belts, and for the man in the right front seat, there is a hold strap. (Knackstedt photo)



Morton Gossett, one of the two licensed parachute riggers in the Skydivers, carefully folds his own parachute as he prepares to pack it for another jump. Careful packing of the parachutes is necessary for safety when jumping. The other rigger in the group is Lee Gossett. (Knackstedt photo)



After landing in a grassy green field about six air miles north of Medford, the skydiver, dressed in full jumping attire, faces the task of collapsing his parachute and "field-packing" it. (Knackstedt photo)

Skydivers Practice Safety in Jumping

By SANDRA ARANT
Mail Tribune Staff Writer

Parachute jumping, one of the fastest growing sports in the United States, requires top physical conditioning and stable nerves.

Although many people are intrigued by the danger involved in jumping from an airplane from heights between 2,500 and 15,000 feet, this factor is secondary to members of the Skydivers, local jumping group. These men are interested in the competitive aspects of the sport.

As an independent group, the Skydivers are in charge of training their members, packing their own parachutes, and maintaining their own safety factors. The club meets each Sunday morning, year round at Valley Aviation, Inc., at the Medford municipal airport. Although they jump most Sundays, during the hot summer months they may jump only every other Sunday.

Medical Certificate Necessary

Young men must be at least 18 years of age to participate in jumping activities, and each member must have a medical certificate from a qualified physician. A new skydiver must go through a ground training period of at least four week ends before he is allowed in the plane. During this period he learns how to fall, how to pack his parachute, and other information essential for the safety of the jumper.

He is then taken for an orientation ride in the airplane. At this time he learns proper jumping position, how the jumper leaves the plane, and the general feel of the airplane.

The new jumper is then ready for his first jump. He and two other men climb into the Cessna 182 piloted by Al Monroe, and fly to jumping level. On the first jump, made in a static line parachute, the jumper may leave the plane about 2,500 feet.

Parachute Opens Automatically

The static line parachute opens automatically when the man leaves the plane. The ripcord of the chute is attached to the plane by a nylon rope about five feet long. As the man jumps, the pull of the cord trips the ripcord, then either breaks or slips the knot.

The beginning jumper makes a minimum of five static line jumps. Out of these five, he must make at least three dummy ripcord pulls, developing the action he must use in free fall jumps.

After the static line jumps, he is ready for his first free fall jump. As he gains in experience, he may jump

from higher altitudes and begin competitive air maneuvers.

When making jumps at over 2,000 feet the skydiver must be equipped with reliable instruments, an altimeter and stop watch. The safety of the skydiver is protected at all times. The club follows all rules of the Parachute club of America, national jumping organization. Only regulation equipment is used.

The jumper is provided with a reserve parachute, just in case the large one doesn't open. The reserve chutes are packed and inspected by Morton Gossett, and his brother, Lee Gossett, licensed riggers for the group. This must be done every 90 days.

Other Jumping Equipment

In addition, jumping equipment includes boots, jump suit, helmet, gloves, goggles, and other protective equipment. Initial cost of equipment for the sport jumper usually runs about \$110, including the cost of the parachute.

The parachutes are 28 feet in diameter, and are made of durable nylon. The shroud lines are made of nylon. The parachutes are obtained from surplus government stock, and are usually dyed by the jumpers themselves. Modifications are made in the chutes for guidance purposes. These include gores, which can be used to determine direction, to make the parachutist stand still in the air, or to move him backward.

Ready to Compete in Air

As the skydivers attain proficiency, they are ready to compete and practice air maneuvers. There are many of these, usually accomplished during free fall time. Included are such exercises as rolls, figure eights, and the passing of a baton from one man to another. The maneuvers take place before the parachute is opened.

After the parachute opens, the jumpers may practice hitting a pre-marked target area. To do this, they must make use of the guidelines attached to the shroud lines of the chute.

Not only do the members of the group compete among themselves, but they also enter in competition with other groups around the country. When asked, they may also perform in exhibition.

Although the idea of falling through space is alien to most people, the danger found in the sport is nearly eliminated through use of safety parachutes, safety training, and careful packing of regular parachutes.

It is a sport filled with excitement, is colorful, and is excellent physical training for the men who participate.

State Parks Better Attended This Year

Salem—Oregon's state parks are being better attended this year than ever before as thousands of tourists visit the state and join Oregonians at camp grounds and picnic tables.

The Oregon state highway department has several suggestions for new camping and picnicking spots for those who have found their favorite park too crowded to enjoy.

Several parks not so often visited but noted for their attractions include Cape Arago and Shore Acres State parks on the coast, Thomas Condon-John Day State park in central Oregon, Owyhee State park in eastern Oregon, Collier Memorial park and Logging Museum in southeastern Oregon and Sodaville Springs State park in the Willamette valley.

Cape Arago State park, 14 miles west of Coos Bay, contains 134 acres on the Cape Arago promontory. Cape Arago features three separate beaches complete with parking, picnic and restroom facilities and a shelter building. Tables, stoves, a good water supply, and fishing, make this a fine recreational park.

The nearby Shore Acres State park contains 637 acres and a rare garden gathered by a retired ship owner many years ago. In this garden are 3,500 different varieties of trees, shrubs, and flowering plants. Shore Acres provides an unusual and spectacular shoreline, including a rock formation leaning at a 45 degree angle seaward. The park offers picnic tables, stoves, water, comfort stations and fishing. This park and Cape Arago are reached by Cape Arago highway off Highway 101 at North Bend and through Empire.

Thomas Condon-John Day State park is noted more for its famous fossil beds than for its picnicking facilities. Basic facilities are offered for camping as well as picnic tables, fireplaces, fresh water, and comfort stations. This park is a photographer's paradise with its pre-historic and unusual rock formations and spectacularly rugged terrain. The John Day river offers fishing for the sportsman. The park is about 40 miles west of John Day on Highway 26.

Collier Memorial State park and Logging Museum, 34 miles north of Klamath Falls on Highway 97, contains 200 acres. Visitors will find camping facilities, fishing, picnic tables, electric stoves, shelters and sanitary facilities, plus a museum displaying equipment used in old-time logging camps. Fishing sites are found in nearby Spring creek and Williamson river. Trails are located throughout the park.

Owyhee State park, growing in popularity daily, offers fine picnic, camping and boating facilities. The highway department and Malheur county joined forces and recently completed the oiling of the road into the park. Owyhee is located off Highway 201 about 35 miles southwest of Nyssa.

Sodaville Mineral Springs has the distinction of being Oregon's first dedicated public park, and was once the site of a college and two large resort hotels. Named for the soda mineral water springs, Sodaville still attracts a following of believers in the mystic powers of the waters. The park has picnic tables, fresh water and restrooms. It is located two miles off Highway 20, 10 miles southeast of Sandy.



Collier State Park and Logging Museum, 34 miles north of Klamath Falls, features relics of logging timber operations in addition to camping and picnicking facilities. The museum with red sawdust is located about 10 miles north of Crater Lake junction. State Highway Department Photo