

DZ^o OPERATOR

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SUPER CASA BOOGIE

June 4 - 6, 1999



Imagine climbing to altitude with up to 29 other people aboard this beautiful, fast-climbing, tailgate unloading aircraft. Imagine further the learning experience of skydiving with two of the most prominent contemporary skydiving pioneers: **Mike Michigan** and **Olav Zipser**.

These gentlemen are visiting Laurel for the express purpose of sharing their latest techniques of the new wave in skydiving: *freelying*.

freelying is all the rage these days, and in keeping with the image of maintaining its image of occupying the vanguard position of the evolution of this amazing sport, **Skydive Delmarva** is sponsoring this event. Carolina Skysports, Inc., out of Louisburg, NC is providing the CASA for the fifth consecutive year. It will again be teamed with the local King Air, 195DP, affectionately known as 'Delta Pop'. *continued page 2*

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The Freefall Academy

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To appreciate the uniqueness of having Olav and Michigan on the drop zone together, working with all qualified registrants, you must know something about their credentials.

Michigan lays claim to inventing 'freestyle' skydiving, whereby the break was made from the old discipline of 'belly flying'. The term 'belly flying' is now used for all the previous relative work activities where the participants were primarily belly-to-earth during the freefall phase of the skydive. Back in the early '80's, to jump by yourself had a pejorative connotation; implying that no one wanted to jump with you. But, thanks to Mike, the community has progressed to the level of appreciation of 'freestyle', whereby the individual could gain some status by applying unconventional maneuvering; under control, of course! Michigan had already conquered the world in the 'belly flying' discipline by earning a gold medal as a member of Mirror Image at the 1981 World Championships 8-way sequential event.

Mike says that he began developing his aerial gymnastics after witnessing a video of 'aerial ballet' performed by Patti Wycliffe and shot by Ray Cottingham, one of the early accomplished freefall videographers. He began to experiment at Eloy, AZ in '84 and later discovered that Deana Kent was also performing freestyle. Deana was a prominent female skydiver for years on the national and international scene.

Excerpts from Mike's bio: "In 1988, filmmaker Norman Kent included some of Michigan's new 'freestyle' in his short film on skydiving, FROM WINGS CAME FLIGHT. While only a small part of the finished film profiled Michigan, the segment fired the imagination of

skydivers world-wide and established Mike as a leading performer of freestyle. Since then, Michigan has practiced freestyle as his chosen art form almost exclusively, giving seminars as far away as Europe and Japan.

The organized 'sport' of 'freestyle skydiving' came about in 1990 when Michigan sought to develop a format for his novel performance art form that would be 'tele-genic'. He spearheaded a development team comprised of a freelance TV producer and event organizers. This group developed a competitive format that included the equally unique concept of the athlete/camera-man as a team member with the performer. Mike now performs '**formation tracking**' as a new concept.

The sport is itself a reflection of Michigan's own personal free spirit. Carefree and down-to-earth, his approach is straightforward, yet introspective. Michigan takes his adventures seriously, but with a distinctly laid-back approach."

Other credentials:

- ESPN expert analyst for 1991 Freestyle Skydiving Championships.

- owns Michigan Enterprises, Flagler Beach, FL, manufacturing the 'Michigan Suit' since 1984.

- participated in the Opening Ceremonies skydiving segment for the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

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Olav puts a slightly different spin on the concept of ‘unconventional’. He is credited as being the father of ‘*freelying*’.

Freeflying is a skydiving discipline that stresses radical 3-dimensional maneuvering, not only alone, but in concert with other skydivers. These guys spend a lot of time using their heads, as the part of their anatomy that is closest to the ground during freefall. Much distinct from ‘belly-flying’, this is known as ‘head-down flying’, and has become very popular. He also inaugurated a concept of freefall achievement known as the “Atmospheric Dolphin”, a series of licenses attesting to the ability of the holder to perform intricate, demanding, maneuvers to a high standard of evaluation.

Currently Olav is travelling the country organizing Space Games competitions and equipment demos at select DZ’s, and in the process is picking up most of the medals. Most drop zones are now sponsoring instruction in freeflying, thanks to the organized development spearheaded by Mr. Zipser. When he is not on the road, you might find Olav at the 1st School of Modern Skyflying at Perris Valley, CA.

When asked for a description of a significant event in his career, he quickly named his Emmy for electronic videography, awarded to him in 1995 for the X-games, which was a televised program of skysurfing. This gentleman does it all.

He started jumping at the DZ in Textel, Holland in 1986. Amazingly, he has amassed over 13,800 skydives in under 13 years in the sport; an average of over 1,050 skydives each and every year since he began; including almost 2,000 in one year, an average of 6 jumps every day for a year. Now, that’s freeflying!!

photo: Damon Steele

Laurel News

Skydive Delmarva has undergone another management change. Brian Kunkowski has taken over management of the drop zone, while Ed Young has reverted to focusing on management of the airport and maintenance facility.

Much new development is underway, specifically the construction of a packing shed down near the camping area, for the convenience of experienced jumpers, and to relieve the hot day crush that drives Bruce Slagle crazy in the loft. That task, plus installation of additional electric service for the camping area is being overseen by Bruce Sully, who continues with his gear sales and service through **American Loft**. Chip Gingery has constructed a new manifest building, and is presently finishing up two new indoor showers; these in addition to the two outdoor hot-water showers near the camping area.

(continued next page)

2 Bands for Boogie

Saturday Night

Ed Young is making his hangar available on Saturday night for **The Pilotfish**, a new-age R & R band, being alternated with the **Swamp Rats**, a blues group.

(included in registration fee)

Erica Steele asks the basic question:

“Which way is up?”



LAUREL NEWS (con't.)

Keith May and Rob Julian each have been certified as FAA Senior Riggers, adding to Bruce Slagle's Master Rigger status for DZ rigging credentials. Keith is at the DZ full-time, flying Delta Pop and doing rigging services. Packing classes are available on request. Groups of 5 preferred.

Get a load of the nuptial activity this past season: We featured Dave & Peggy Matchett in the last issue. Since then, there's been

- Eric & Amy Johnson
- Damon & Erica Steele
- Steve & Sherry Wronski
- Rob & Kim Julian

Many happy anniversaries!!

Troy Droegemeyer is feeling a little under the weather these days. A trip to Miami included a visit to the hospital for a back injury received when jumping from a building in the City of Palms. Oh, yes, his canopy opened, but landing in a pile of lumber and twisted construction debris defied his 'hazardous landings' training. We hope he'll be back doing tandem instruction soon... Medical bills, you know!

The drop zone staff includes several competent freefall

Randy Armstrong gets pied on his 100th freefall. The joyous group includes Marie Chaires, Ken Chapman, Kathy Kunkowski, Dave Murphy, Dave



Rob & Kim Julian board the aircraft for their wedding dive, joined by Peggy Matchett, Eric Johnson, Tim Lambert, John Dockrey, Kathy Kunkowski, Greg Whaley, Stan Kay, Karsten Jensen, and the guy in black helmet & sunglasses (mystery diver!).

videographers, but we can single out a few who are working on their freeflying techniques, appropriate to the upcoming CASA boogie: Brian Britton, Mark Kissner, David Hale, and Damon Steele.

We welcome new manifestor Rhonda Kirk, and additional staff members Paul Joseph, a CREW enthusiast from Eloy, AZ, and Doug Kunkowski, assisting loft activities.

Christy Martabano has returned to the scene. She brings fellow skydiver John Myer from Georgia. Welcome!!

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Matchett, Peggy Matchett, Doc Kim, Brian Britton, Mark Kissner, Donnie Heckel, David Hale, and Tim Lambert.



KAY HOIBY-GRIEP

In the USPA elections held last fall, the Eastern Region selected a new Regional Director, to replace Ed Cummings who had held the position for the last twelve years or so. The lady's name is **Kay Hoiby-Griep**. The Operator welcomes Kay into a position which has always been held in high honor and to a high standard by many before her. We can never underestimate the importance of the **United States Parachute Association** in the continuing struggle to organize skydiving in this country and to prevent its regulatory interment by the forces which seem to emerge with frightening regularity.

Her bio follows:

"I grew up in St. Croix Falls, WI and moved to New York in 1974. I attended the State University of New York at Albany and obtained a BS in Finance. I started skydiving in 1974 and started flying in 1982, obtaining my private pilot license that same year. I now have over 4,000 jumps and have accumulated about 500 flying hours and an instrument rating. Other interests are skiing and hiking.

I was invited on the Misty Blues skydiving team, an all woman team, in 1989. The Misty Blues performs at roughly 20 airshows a year. We usually travel in teams of four. We open the airshows by jumping a 1,200 square-foot American flag. Other routines are CRW, colorful banners and an intentional malfunction and cutaway.

I participated in a world record 100-woman freefall formation in France in 1992. That record still holds today. Recently, I was on the 1999 United States women's para-ski team which competed in Innsbrook, Austria in February 1999. An injury

prevented me from completing the competition, but it was a great experience to see skydiving competition at the world level.

I currently live in Niskayuna, NY (a suburb of Schenectady) and co-manage the skydiving operations at The Ranch in Gardiner, NY. I have an accounting business and act as treasurer of the various entities involved in the skydiving business at the Gardiner Airport, including Freefall Express, Inc., owner of Twin Otters and Pilatus Porters placed at DZ's in Florida and The Ranch.

My husband is also a skydiver and pilot. He's a mechanical engineer for Knolls Atomic Power Lab in Niskayuna. Last year we purchased a Cessna 182, which has already proven to be a valuable asset as I visit the DZ's in the region.

I'm on USPA's Finance and Budget Committee and the General Membership Committee. Since I am the voice of the Eastern Region at the USPA Board meetings, I encourage anyone with ideas and concerns to voice them to me. Our next meeting is July 16 - 18 in Alexandria. If you get a chance, attend the meeting. My contact #'s and email address are listed in each issue of the Parachutist."

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Kay will be at the SuperCASA boogie at Laurel in June; a good opportunity to come out and meet one of the individuals who contribute their time and resources for the benefit of the community in general. *Many thanks for a thankless job, Kay!*

LAUREL NEWS (con't.)

We've had a particularly bad weather season so far. Fully half of our weekend appointments have been cancelled or postponed. However, there's been some good participation from organizations like the **University of Maryland**, the **Naval Academy**, **Johns Hopkins U.**, **U. of Delaware**, **Towson State U.**, **Goucher College**, and some large groups from **U.S. Capitol Police**, **Digex Corp.** and the **Space Telescope Science Institute**, as well as the **MD Outdoor Activities Club**.

photo: Brian Britton



Josh Sheintal and Marc Yuter, seated, front for a few of the large number of University of Maryland and the Maryland Outdoor Activities Club who came and did over 50 student skydives on about three weekends.



Brian Kunkowski closes on tandem duo Dave Matchett, with passenger Doug Kunkowski.



Doc Kim displays his sit-flying technique to David Hale. Kim bought airline tickets for Olav's trip.

Gene Madlangbayan organized a large group of AFF first jumpers from Digex Corp. in Beltsville.



Christian, and Marlene Carolina of STOR.



Tim Lambert escorts a couple of ladies back from the landing area after a tandem skydive

GENE PAUL THACKER

In the late '60s and early '70s, the sport of skydiving was still pretty young. The form of competitions being held were style and canopy accuracy. Style is a discipline in which the performer exits the aircraft, tucks into a small body configuration in order to be able to turn and loop with controlled urgency, and performs a series of prescribed maneuvers, stopping and looping on a heading with precision; in the fastest possible time. Judges on the ground watch the process through binoculars and other telemetering devices, submitting their version of the time to complete, and a list of deductions from kinematic perfection. Back then, there were only a handful of qualified individuals who could spend time in the pea gravel pit, diving to mark a jumper's touchdown point, measuring the distance from the dead center; or, standing and staring into a brutal sun, waiting for a style jump run and reciting their observations to a judge's recorder while the competitor battled stability as he or she thrust their body through the particular specified style series, pursuing a clean, fast performance.

In those days, the U.S. Army Golden Knights had three components: a gold demo team, a black demo team, and a competition team. The competition team was most frequently interfacing with the skydiving public, while the demo teams interfaced with the general public. **Gene Paul Thacker** was an early competition team leader, stationed at Ft. Bragg, NC. When he decided to assume the mantle of developer of Hoke County airport, at nearby Raeford, he focused on skydiving; establishing an attraction for the sporting desires of the large pool of Airborne jumpers at Ft. Bragg. Eventually, the competition team became so attracted to the

Raeford environment, his operation became the training site for the Team.

Gene Paul is one of those persons who has a long record of helping his community, of dedicating his time and effort to the development of the sport, primarily by building the greatest drop zone I've ever known. It's not the biggest, or the most spectacular, but its always held a prominent position in terms of its significance to skydiving; no other one has so incisively and consistently influenced the evolution of the sport. For virtually all of my career, as a Jumpmaster, Instructor, competitor, pilot, aircraft owner, airplane mechanic, drop zone operator, USPA Board member, U.S. Team member; any part of what it takes to operate in the skydiving environment, I've always had occasion to call to Raeford to get some help or advice on activities. Gene Paul is a retired U.S. Army Special Forces Master Sergeant, who has since risen to the position of Commanding General in the business of performing as a purveyor of skydiving services, and supervising our collective behavior on the local, regional, national, and international scene.

My earliest vision of him was when I made a water jump into Lake MacArthur on Ft. Bragg, over thirty years ago. Gene Paul was among those who assisted in the military sponsoring competitions and water jumps which were required for the expert license. Civilians were invited to take advantage of the military effort, a wonderful gesture to those of us who would otherwise have difficulty in finding an occasion for doing such a thing. Some time later, on another occasion, I arrived at work, at Pelicanland, an old drop zone on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, to find Gene Paul asleep in his pickup truck, which had a set of telemeters in the

back. He had travelled 500 miles to help in conducting an Eastern conference championships, being held to select the representatives from this area who would qualify to compete in the National Championships. His experience as a competitor and judge gave the event the credibility it needed. When I requested his help, all he asked for was a place to spend the night and a shower. Well, he got to park his truck in the lot, didn't he? That's a place to stay ... I'm not sure if he ever got a shower. But we got what we sorely needed; his help!

He became a Board Member of USPA early on by being elected to what is now the Mid-Atlantic region, eventually becoming Chairman of the Board. At the end of every two-year term, he threatens to retire, but always answers the call of his constituents and allows his reelection to 'one more term'. All will regret his last term.

We want friends like him in our personal lives, as well as in our professional lives. We aspire to it spiritually, if not in physical fact. Gene Paul is the progenitor of skydiving's 'first family'. His wife, Miss Billie, spent years and years doing early breakfasts at Raeford's snack bar; in the trenches, so to speak, as well as hostessing many passing admirers of the Thacker clan in her own house. They parented four skydiving children, Paul Keith, Tony, Tim, and Kim; and have since provided the launching platform for several grandchildren, whenever Tony and Kim decide the family tradition should be carried on. Gene Paul had the unfortunate and unfathomably anguishing experience of witnessing the death of his oldest son in a skydiving accident some thirty years ago. Raeford is named in honor of Paul Keith Thacker, a very young man who passed away still in his innocence, but having ex-

hibited the sort of character that we all aspire to; a handsome, personable, intelligent, and accomplished championship level competitor who had all the world before him, but was traded to the next, higher league of spatial adventure by the almighty, apparently in order to leave those of us within this community with an unsullied image of what is admirable.

True friendship is not without mistakes, but is without lasting resentment. I have the great and envious privilege to sit and reflect on the old days, comparing with now, and reminiscing on the qualities of character which forged the embryo of skydiving. I was early in the sport, and I made mistakes of friendship, mistakes borne of limited vision, but I will always treasure Gene Paul's precocity. He had such pragmatic insight into skydiving operations and personal qualities. His precocity: "Schultz! You're an arrogant, insufferable bastard" "As big as you are, I'm gonna kick your ass if you don't sit down and shut up." He's the kind of guy you've got to love. For people to follow you, they must trust you. Gene Paul has displayed trust to all who come within his shadow. Hell, nobody's perfect, but he's an effective leader. In England, there's a woman by the name of Barbara Woodhouse who advocates gentle treatment of dogs, going so far as to title a book, "No Bad Dogs!", meaning they should always be allowed to commit errors and never be harshly dealt with, so that they will evolve after an indeterminate time into gentle, relaxed creatures who will behave impeccably around elderly women. This is a great philosophy, presuming the dog has an infinite time to develop, and is allowed to make uncountable errors. This begs a question, 'what if it has trouble staying in the yard, even

though it lives next to a highway?'. Just how much patience is going to be applied while the beast flirts with becoming road kill? Sometimes, harsher measures may be necessary to conform to a higher principle; say, 'survival'!!

I'll be retiring from full-time professional skydiving at the end of this year. I will have celebrated 35 years of what can be loosely construed as a career in the trenches. I want to enter the new millenium as an elder, pressure free and in a position to be more casual about my weekends, spending some of them with my long-suffering wife, who now will receive the dedication I gave to the skydiving community, for the rest of our natural lives, and hopefully feeling somewhat normal. Within the next year or so, I will surpass 7,000 skydives, virtually all of them spent either in competition, or in mentoring over 22,000 individuals through jumpmastering, instructing, flying, or supervising staff performance and development. I have so immensely enjoyed my life that I feel truly guilty that I must have used up several other individuals' allotment. There's no part of the development of this sport that I haven't proudly been in the middle of. I've made many errors. I carry many regrets, including some shame, but I 'm finally reconciled to immodestly awarding myself a passing grade.

I've followed great figures like Gene Paul, Bill Ottley, Lenny Potts, Norm Heaton, Doc Fitch, and others who deserve equal recognition, but with whom I didn't have the good fortune to share so intimate a platform. Bill Ottley has received so many well-deserved accolades, Norm Heaton ushered the sport through the transition from the Parachute Club of America to the United States Parachute Association. Lenny Potts es-

tablished the Eastern Region and invented interdisciplinary diplomacy. Doc Fitch died of hepatitis after a long period of leadership. I must measure myself in honestly humble terms against these early giants. But the future now belongs in the arena that I am retiring from: the continued development of the image of skydiving and marketing of the activity to the general public. Our ultimate power lies in the voting booth, the continuing lobby of state and national legislatures, and organized well-timed influential gestures. TV coverage of activities like World Skydiving Championships, the X-games, Space Games, etc. have elevated us out of the company of alligator wresting, and tractors leaping junked cars.

The evolution of the square parachute, freefall video, turbine aircraft, and the Cypres are the central advances since the early seventies, but there's still a residual feeling amongst the older generations, including large parts of the aviation community, that we're a bunch of hippie renegades. Thankfully, with the influence and leadership of persons like Gene Paul and his wise oversight of the USPA Board of Directors, with their collective balance and vigilance, we'll be in good hands for some time to come.

After my retirement, I will request that my epitaph be: "My God, what a blast!!"

But today belongs to this gentleman who hails from WV and has settled in NC, dedicating himself and his family to a very specialized activity of creating a community that experiences all there is, but controls it's hazards and exercises a conservative approach to extreme behavior. Ego is good in this business. However, there's a limit! Evincing an air of superiority while exhibiting clearly inferior behavior is a bad form of ego.

USNA

You can exploit that which already exists, or you can create; start at the harvest or begin by plowing the raw ground. Gene Paul has done his share of plowing. He has the requisite leadership ego, but tempers it with humility of substance and the patience of wisdom, cutting through the fanfare. Why recite Kant and Nietzsche, when Murphy will do?

Gene Paul, like I and others who know what it takes to cultivate long-term progress, bemoan the creeping incompetence of supervisory personnel. Demand more, give less! is not a good expression of ego. Close, caring, detailed and explicitly honest supervision is an implicit invitation to join our community. It makes people feel like they're more than just a jump ticket. Gene Paul's techniques have developed a large, lasting cadre of competent entrepreneurs who were allowed to join his community, and took his counsel because they trusted his vision and dedication to their well-being. This brand of care should always be held in high esteem. Many persons in the skydiving community today will never have the privilege of appreciating this royal oak.

Is there a spiritual reward for drop zone operators? I joined in because of people like Gene Paul. ■

Randy Lee from UMD stands with USNA midshipmen Micah Bailey, Marshall Chastain, Paul Gouge, Don Stackhouse, Gabby Fiorilo, Jon Chase,

The **United States Naval Academy** is located in Annapolis, MD on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay. For over thirty years, the midshipmen of the Academy have been skydiving on the Eastern Shore. We have overseen the direct supervision of over 1,200 trainees in the early learning stages. It may be noted that although the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point, NY and the United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) in Colorado Springs, CO have institution sponsored skydiving teams, the USNA does not. The mids are totally supported by the individuals who participate in this extracurricular activity. In the past, some of these guys have paid their own way to the U.S. National Collegiate Parachuting Championships, sponsored by USPA, just for the pride of having the Academy represented at events perennially dominated by the other service academies, who subsidize their athletes at the Nationals.

The spirit represented by these ladies and gentlemen does not go unnoticed by those of us who get to work with these exemplary individuals. They are continually seeking rides to the DZ to make jumps and pursue authentication as competent aviation

Jessica Schiavone, and a Navy booster, Barb Schiavone





Getting to manifest to register early means less wait to get into the air. When that's done, the uniform is exchanged for more appropriate skydiving attire.

sportsmen, ready to go on to their tours of duty as Navy officers, and perhaps involvement as Naval Aviators or Seals. They do this under a great deal of duress brought about by busy schedules imposed by the Academy curriculum.

Frank Weisser and Zach Farrar have been very active in advancing the cause.

We welcome them with enthusiasm, and appreciation for their courageous determination to participate in a growing, contemporary activity. Their enterprise and resolution serve well the image of the United States Navy.

The Freefall Academy

SKY HI!



"Self Conquest Is The Greatest Victory"

This season, there will be greater numbers of novice skydivers, those who have progressed beyond the training phase and are proceeding independent of direct supervision.

To accommodate these persons, the Freefall Academy is setting forth an introductory offer to make a skydive with a faculty member. The offer includes:

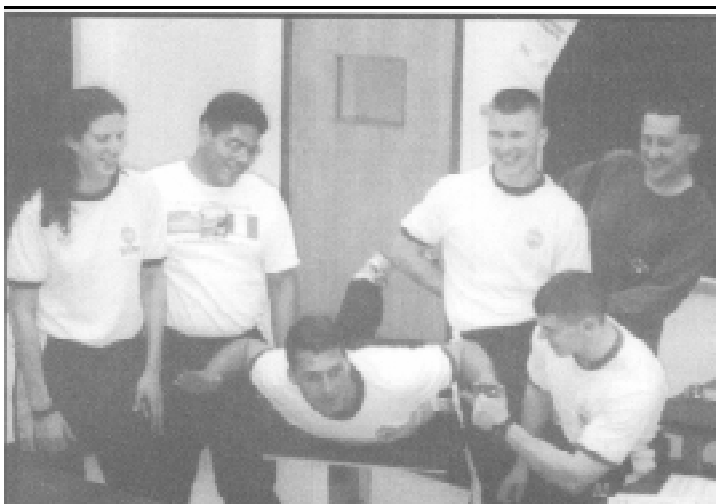
- a 1 hr. pre-dive preparation with classroom video, with emphasis on the Skydive University 4-part model philosophy.
- a 1-on-1 dive with a Coach
- a video of the skydive
- a postdive skills analysis using stop-action video on a monitor, with the dive video being added to your video log.
- free counsel on your license

After this experience, you may opt to continue the process through the entire first six modules; with at least two more skydives being videoed.

301/261-0188 or 302/875-3804

request coaching info...

leave name, address, & telecom



Dave Martinez, who is entering his Junior year at the Academy, and Al McLean, the marksmanship instructor for the midshipmen oversee some classroom practice in the First Jump Course in Chauvenet Hall. This is the first year that plebes have been allowed to make skydives. USNA is the only service academy that does not have an administration sponsored skydiving activity

AFF Certification Course

Sept. 11 - 19, 1999

Skydive Delmarva will be hosting a USPA Certification for Accelerated Freefall Instructors and Jumpmasters late this summer. The DZ encourages participation in AFF supervisory development throughout the coming season, in order to prepare for the course. If you have interest in



Tom Timmins and Mike Schultz exit the King Air with a Level 1 AFF student over Laurel



photo: David Hale

pursuing this rating, see anyone on the staff and announce your intentions.

A pre-course workshop will be conducted on the dates of Aug. 27, 28, and 29 by Glenn Bangs, USPA's Director of Safety and Training. The cost will be \$200 for the pre-course and \$475 for the certification course.

Course evaluators will be Ric Horn, who conducted the last AFF course here in 1996, with additional Evaluators being Bow Bobovitch, and Glenn Bangs.

The AFF rating is viewed as the most difficult rating to achieve of those offered by USPA. Adequate time for preparation should be programmed into your season. Prerequisites include, for the AFF Jumpmaster: At least 6 hours of documented freefall time, completion of the Basic Instructor Course, a D license, and be 18 years old. An AFF Instructor candidate must possess the Jumpmaster rating for one year.

DZOperator
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