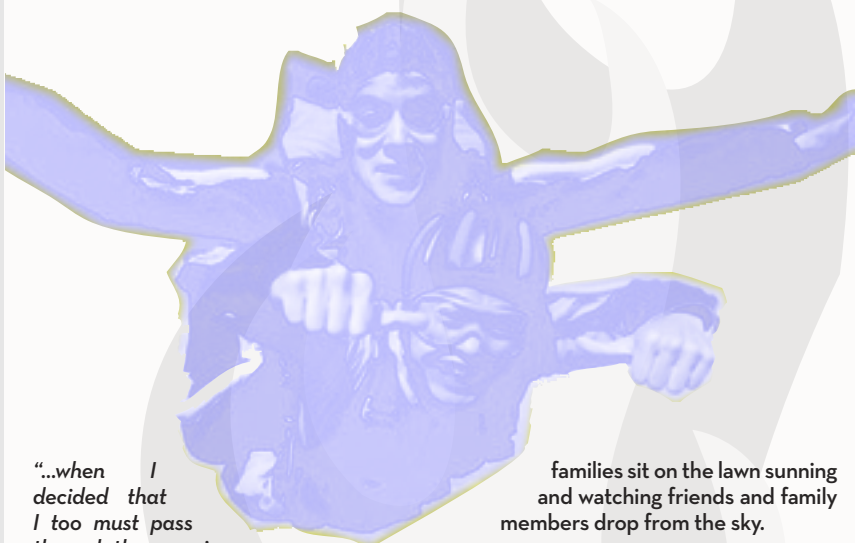


summerguide

THE VIEW FROM HERE

Skydiving in Western New York



"...when I decided that I too must pass through the experience of a parachute jump, life rose to a higher level, to a sort of exhilarated calmness...I would have to pay money for hurling my body into space. There would be no crowd to watch and applaud my landing...nor any scientific objective to be gained. No, there was deeper reason for wanting to jump, it was a love of the air and sky and flying, the lure of adventure, the appreciation of beauty—where immortality is touched through danger, where life meets death on equal plane; where man is more than man, and existence both supreme and valueless at the same instant."

—Charles A. Lindberg, June 1922

Frontier Skydivers, Western New York's oldest sport parachute club, is located in 20 miles from Buffalo in Newfane, New York. Their little airfield is nestled in the great fruit-growing region of Niagara County, offering parachutists jumping at 13,500 feet a spectacular view of lush green Niagara County landscapes and a look across Lake Ontario as far as Toronto.

Frontier Skydivers' season begins the first weekend of May and continues until the last weekend in October. During summer weekends, the first plane takes off at about 8am and the last load leaves around 9:30pm as the sun is setting. That's a glorious, full day of skydiving. Wednesday and Friday jumps are from 4pm until sunset. They're closed Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

A visit to Frontier Skydivers can be enlightening. Big, round military parachutes of the past have been replaced with small, colorful rectangles known as Ram-Air parachutes. Jumpers dress in bright nylon or polycotton suits that could easily belong in a Star Wars film. Paratrooper boots have been replaced with sneakers and many helmets are outfitted with video or digital cameras. Small children run around spilling pop on their shirts, and

families sit on the lawn sunning and watching friends and family members drop from the sky.

Thanks to Ram-Air parachutes and other advances, skydiving is safer, easier and more fun than most people believe. Skydiving is not about falling to earth, it's about flying. Today's skydivers spend their freefall time flying in an incredibly controlled manner. They're able to control their flight to move forwards, backwards, sideways, and can even adjust their fall rate.

Frontier offers Accelerated Free Fall (AFF) training classes and beginning students are given all their gear, personal instruction, an experienced jumper to jump tandem with (the instructor is harnessed to you for your first few jumps) and a video of their skydive. Jumpers range in age from college kids to folks in their 80s. However, you do have to be 18 to jump.

There's a healthy expense involved, but skydiving becomes cheaper the more you do it. The most expensive hit is during the training phase and, of course, when you purchase your own equipment. Most people on their first skydive jump tandem, which is around \$200. To get through all your AFF training and make all the jumps required for licensing, the expense is slightly over \$2,000. But once you've finished training, basically, you just pay for a lift up into the sky. Frontier Skydiving club members get discounts and pay anywhere from \$12 to \$20 for a lift. With students and 70 or 80 members making more than 600 jumps, on a good weekend the skies over Frontier are very busy.

For more information visit www.frontier-skydivers.com, where you can register and book a tandem jump online, or phone 716-751-6170.

If you're considering becoming a licensed jumper the United States Parachute Association has a good website, www.uspa.org, that has all the information about license requirements.

—jamie moses

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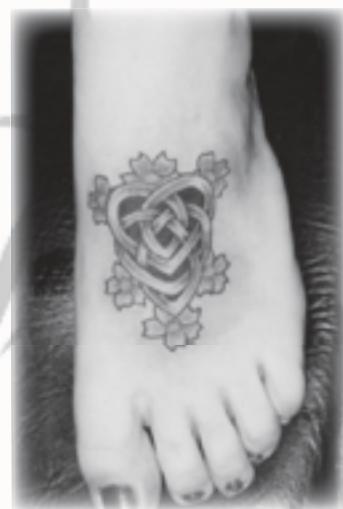
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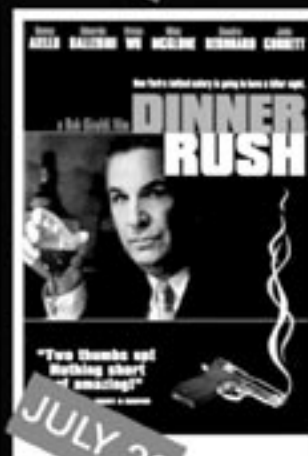
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