



MIKE FUENTES/THE BATTALION

Mark McHam, a member of Texas A&M Skydiving Club and a senior industrial distribution major, comes in for a safe landing at Coulter Field in Bryan.

SKYDIVING

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"You go to class and learn everything and you usually jump the same day," Woodings said. "It is the cheapest way to do it and you can jump with your friends because we take three people up at one time."

The static line is a cord attached to the airplane and pulls the student's parachute out after they jump from the airplane.

The line is 20 feet long, which allows the skydiver to fall for five seconds before the main parachute opens. The chutes are designed to open slowly for the comfort of the jumper.

The jumping altitude for the first static line is 3,000 feet.

Once the proper altitude is reached, the jumpmaster opens the door and the student is asked if they are ready to skydive. When they are ready, they are instructed to swing their feet out of the plane and then told to climb out.

After the instruction is given, the student climbs out and hangs from the strut of the airplane until given the command to let go. All that is left for them to do is let go, arch their back and wait for the chute to open.

To become certified on the static line progression, the student is required to make a minimum of 15 jumps. The jumps get progressively higher and more skill is required to complete each jump successfully.

Accelerated free fall is the quickest way to become certi-

fied but also the most expensive. In ground school, the student will receive more training and will learn hand signals so they can communicate with the jumpmasters. The student and two jumpmasters reach 12,500 feet for the first jump and freefall for about 50 seconds. The two jumpmasters jump with the student to give them stability and instruction on the way down.

They must tell the instructor certain things and pull their own ripcord, if not the jumpmasters will pull the ripcord for them. The student is graded on every jump and must improve with each skydive. To become certified on the AFF progression, the jumpers are required to make at least seven jumps, but may be required to make one or two extra jumps is not uncommon.

Both progressions will certify the student and give them the same amount of skill.

Julie Slater, a senior meteorology major and president of the Aggie Skydiving Club, said the club gives them a chance to compete nationally against other schools.

"Last year at nationals our novices took first, second and third place," Slater said. "Which goes to show that we are really competitive, even against the military schools."

Woodings said skydiving is incomparable to anything else.

"There is nothing like it in the world," Woodings said. "It's the most fun you'll ever have, but it's hard to describe. You just have to experience it."

Toons accessible on World Wide Web

NEW YORK (AP) — Can a little pink donkey find success on television? That depends on how she fares on the Web.

Cartoon Network, which unspools toons nonstop for cable TV viewers, is now using its Web site as a proving ground for animated shorts. New online cartoons that click with the point-and-click crowd could soon find themselves uploaded to the television big time.

Visit Cartoon Network Online and this week you'll find two episodes of "Pink Donkey and the Fly," as well as the first installment of "B. Happy." Each is cheeky, colorful and well animated to be a rea-

sonable facsimile of cartoons as you'd view them on your TV.

What's more, these "Web Premiere Toons" come with a computer-centric twist: interactivity. Mouse ready? You can choose how Pink Donkey might reach the apple dangling from a distant branch. You can decide if B. Happy, a "bluebird of happiness" with a nasty streak, should succeed in his mission to keep the bully cat from gobbling Pity Kitty's fish.

"We're just scratching the surface of interactivity in these first ones, but our goal is to make good interactive entertainment," said Sam Register, creative director of Cartoon Network Online.

HENNA

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be good for hair roots, much like eggs," she said.

Krishan said there are also many stories having to do with henna for weddings.

"In one part of India, the name of the husband is hidden within the intricate design, on the palm of the hand," she said. "It is said if the husband finds his name then the sister-in-law gets money."

Another involves a sort of ritual. According to "Mehndi: An Ancient Art For Modern Primitives" by Michelle Delio, before the wed-

ding ceremony the bride has mehndi (henna) applied to her hands and feet.

While the mehndi is drying, the bride is told of all the mysteries of married life.

The drying process is a very important one, the longer it is left to dry the longer the dye stays on the skin, which is crucial because the bride does not have to participate in any household chores until the henna wears away.

These are her first and last days of being idle.

Krishan said in Hollywood, henna is worn as a fashion statement more than ritual.

"Almost all the stars have mehndi done now," she said.

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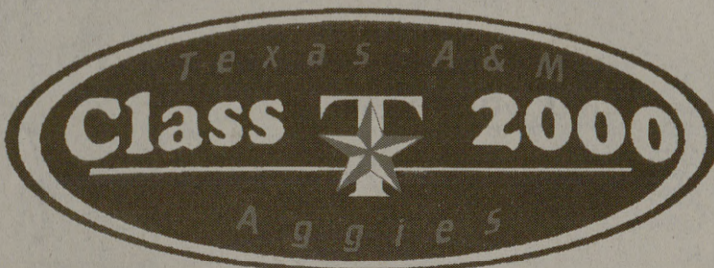
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