



Dawn Lewey, Former Frisco ISD bus driver and dive master Casey Anderson take flight.

photo provided by Skydive Dallas

Flying High at 50

By Wendy Crooks

IMAGINE JUMPING from a plane and falling from 13,500 feet at a rate of 120 miles per hour for about 50 seconds. The thought crossed Dawn Lewey's mind briefly while she watched some of her co-workers do it. "I said to one of them, 'Maybe one day I will do something like that. Boy, that would be something,'" said Mrs. Lewey of Pilot Point. She couldn't help but notice one of the participants who just came from the skydiving class. "She was so excited. I wondered what they taught her in the class that would make her so excited before she even went up." From her post on the ground she could see the parachutes deploy in quick succession. "When they went up and jumped, the sky lit up with color. They dove just seconds apart." She enjoyed watching the skydivers that day but didn't give it too much thought after that. "I sort of

forgot about the idea." she said.

Then, at a surprise birthday barbecue thrown for her by her co-workers, she got an even bigger surprise. One of the children at the party threw a Barbie doll from the second floor balcony. The Barbie descended in her own parachute. Still Mrs. Lewey didn't get the message. The co-workers even commented, "She doesn't get it." Her present was her very own sky dive from Skydive Dallas. After her friends explained, she screamed, "No Way! Really? I can't believe it!" and jumped out of her chair. The dive was scheduled for the very next day. Although the party continued and conversation was lively, Mrs. Lewey had difficulty following any of it because she kept thinking, "I'll be in a parachute tomorrow!"

With very little time to get nervous, she got up the next morning and wondered, "What do I wear to go skydiving?" Then

for a while she kept thinking that she couldn't believe she was going skydiving. She wondered what it would be like in the plane and what it would feel like to be free falling and then floating. She wondered if she would do it right. She wondered how she would remember all the things they would teach her in the class. She would soon find out.

Mrs. Lewey headed out for Skydive Dallas in Whitewright, 20 minutes northeast of McKinney with three of her friends in tow for moral support and with the musical birthday card she had received as part of her unusual gift. The card played Tim McGraw's "Live Like You Were Dying" with the lyrics, "I went skydiving, I went Rocky Mountain climbing."

Mrs. Lewey cut up in class and had a ball. Admittedly she was the class clown. "Every time the instructor paused, I

opened the card to play the music," she says.

Mrs. Lewey was signed up for a tandem jump meaning she would have an experienced diver attached to her. After they completed the 45 minute class, it was time to gear up--not her favorite part of the day. "They tighten your gear up so much you can hardly breathe," she recalls.

The first person jumped and then everyone scooted up as more and more people jumped. Before I knew it, it was my turn.

Then the group boarded the plane and took off. "They opened a clear Plexiglas-type door and you could hear the rush of the wind. The first person jumped and then everyone scooted up as more and more people jumped. Before I knew it, it was my turn. My dive master helped me stand up and then we were swaying in and out of the door and it was '1, 2, 3,' and we were out. The wind was so intense that I could hardly even breathe. I was sort of in shock, looking around and I realized, 'This is really happening.' The beauty of it all was just incredible. It was majestic!"

Mrs. Lewey enjoyed the free fall for about a minute before her instructor deployed the parachute. "It was a pretty rough jolt; then I realized he pulled the rip cord. It's a good thing that my instructor was in charge because I was just enjoying everything so much I would have forgotten to pull the rip cord!"

The overall experience was less than two and a half hours from lesson to landing, but Mrs. Lewey says the memories will last a lifetime. "I would go as many times as I could. It is pricey but it is so worth it."

Wendy Crooks is a freelance writer and frequent contributor to Frisco STYLE Magazine.



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