

FLYING I TRIED IT: TRAPEZE U HIGH AGAIN!

By Kristi Larsen

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Trapeze? Like the kind in the circus? Oh yes! You can fulfill your dreams of

trying out for the circus right here in Gilbert! On several occasions, I have been driving along Pecos Road and was distracted by this big trapeze contraption and wondered, "What is the deal with those people? Are they in the circus and like the kid who wants to grow up to be a pro basketball player, they set up the apparatus in their back yard so they could practice for hours on end to hone their skills?" When I found out this was actually Trapeze U, I was on the phone faster than you can say "trapeze"! I had to investigate.

Now if you are a regular Perfectify reader, you know I gravitate towards testing airborne activities. We've tried skydiving, indoor skydiving, fighter combat/aerial flight training... and now trapeze. While I LOVED skydiving, the negative is that its duration is brief – a mere three to five minutes at most. The flight training was an INCREDIBLE and daring experience, but it's not something you can just go do on a whim. Now trapeze ... this is my new most favorite thing in the world!

An Institute of "Higher" Learning

Trapeze U is the dream of Founder and President Dylan Phillips. He spent the last eleven years traveling throughout the world performing at live shows, corporate events and teaching trapeze to adventure enthusiasts. Co-founder and Dean of Student Activities, Brian Lazarus, spent more years than he'll admit in special events and entertainment marketing. Together they built Trapeze U – An Institute of 'Higher' Learning – and opened for business March 9th, 2008. Phillips, a competitive gymnast for 14 years, was forced into retirement due to an injury when he was just 20 years old. He began doing trapeze about three years later and absolutely fell in love with the feeling of flying the trapeze produced. "I started doing trapeze in '97 and continued to teach and perform flying trapeze all over the world for the next three years. After that I started working as a freelance acrobat doing various circus acts and stunt work, but my heart was always with 'flying,'" explains Phillips.

"I realized how much I wanted to open a trapeze school within the first year of touching a trapeze. I saw very quickly what a positive impact it could have on kids and adults who never expected to do such an activity. I'm amazed at what a confidence-builder it can be and how individuals are able to face their fears by doing something most people only dream about."

Open Enrollment

Most people would guess that in order to even try trapeze they would have to be very fit and quite strong or have a background in gymnastics. Quite the contrary! Trapeze U is open to all skill levels and all ages. "I think the biggest misconception is that people feel like they will not be strong enough to do trapeze or will look silly trying something new. This is not the case! In fact, it's incredible what some people can achieve in only one class," says Phillips. The youngest flyer at Trapeze U was age four; the oldest was 76 years old - and he was able to hook his knees on the bar and hang upside down!

Fly Girls

As you may have noted, this feature is not "He Tried It, She Tried It" as it usually is. Why? Because guys are chickens! None of my regular male counterparts were willing to hang with the trapeze. Therefore I went with my sales manager Shandi Hudson. Instead of starting a new feature called "She Tried It, She Tried It," we'll just carry on ...

Trapeze 101

We arrived for the Sunday night two hour Trapeze 101 class not quite sure what to expect. I figured we would sit and watch instructional videos and listen to someone explain lengthy safety procedures. Instead, we went directly to the trapeze and belts were strapped on us. The instruction lasted less than two minutes before

we were climbing the 30 rung metal ladder to the platform 24' off the ground. Trapeze people don't mess around – it's straight to business. I was one of the last to make the climb for my turn – we were in a class of about six. One girl had taken the 6 week course so she was demonstrating her advanced talents with some more complex tricks, while the others who were on their first class focused on the basics. While I am not technically afraid of heights, some weird phenomenon takes over my body when I get more than about five feet off the ground – I shake like a leaf. I don't mean a little bit. I mean like full on seizure effect ... which in turn makes me petrified that I am going to fall due to the intense shaking. While the trapeze did not look high from the ground (I wasn't even nervous till I got to the top of the ladder), my shakes began with fervor. I was rattling the entire trapeze apparatus. The shaking got worse and worse. In order to grasp the bar, you must hang over the edge (yes, there is a net below) and trust the trapeze expert to hold your belt and all of your body weight so that you don't fall. Doing this while having a seizure was challenging and petrifying. I am sure no one thought I was never going to swing – but I finally did. And WOW! Was it a thrill! With the first swing flooded back memories of the years I spent hanging from jungle gyms – just on an enormous scale. I swung back and forth, following the directions on when to let go, I

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flopped onto the net, crawled to the edge, flipped off and took a deep breath! That was a rush!

Being that I survived, I decided my next turn would be more aggressive. And it was. I swung off the platform, hooked my legs on the bar and hung upside down. A few more rounds of perfecting that process (Dylan was giving directions from the ground every step of the way) and we were ready to do the real circus act. Dylan got up on the extra swing across from the platform. He gave us exact directions on the ground and it was our turn to swing out, hang upside down, swing out, reach up out to him, unhook our legs, swing with him holding our hands, then he tossed us back to the swing (or we fell to the net if we missed). We each had two opportunities to try that trick - some did better than others.

I am officially in love with trapeze! This was the most fun I have had in quite some time. When I arrived for class, I was not even sure I could get my legs up onto the bar (it's been a few years since I have attempted to hang on monkey bars), but the progress each person is able to make during just two hours was utterly amazing. This was a great full body workout (I was sore the next few days even though I workout everyday - definitely felt the abs!), however, it does not require extraordinary strength due to the momentum of the swing which helps lift your legs to the bar. The classes are VERY affordable, fun was had by all. Dylan and his crew were so supportive, patient, and so helpful in enabling each person progress at their own pace with each subsequent swing. They were very cool with me as I had my seizure and took a little extra time to break my permanent grasp on the apparatus. I absolutely will be back to perfect my trapeze skills. In fact, I think Dylan should hire me as his marketing rep as I have told so many people about my experience! Take advantage of the opportunity to try trapeze ... it's not something everyone can say they have experienced! You won't regret it! In fact, you may eventually join the circus!

For a limited time, Trapeze U will waive the registration fee for all first time students if they mention Perfectify (\$20 value)!

Trapeze U is located at 14407 E. Pecos Road (Lindsay and Pecos) in Gilbert. In addition to six week classes, they offer drop-in sessions, team-building and corporate events, birthdays and other private parties. Visit their website: www.trapezeu.com or call them at 888.872.7101.

