

The Dancing Life

By Hope Nealson
Emerald Reporter

Many teachers see their students working at their jobs, but Samantha's English professor saw a little more than he bargained for.

One night her teacher walked into Jiggles, one of Eugene's topless nightclubs, while she was dancing.

"I had to put it past me and remember he is just another customer," Samantha said. "I just took a deep breath, got up on stage, and did my thing."

It all started fall term of this year, when Samantha (her stage name) sat down to browse through the *Emerald*. An unusual ad caught her eye:

"It's easier than you think to pay for your college education working at Jiggles."

Although many people pass over this ad, Samantha got an idea.

She and her roommate spread the word to other girls in her apartment complex. Why not dance at Jiggles and make some money in the process?

"We were going to get a whole bunch of people together for amateur night," Samantha said.

They decided to do it. "In Europe, they walk around with no tops on all the time; it's just an American taboo," Samantha said. "The week before our amateur night we put up signs around our apartment that said 'Think European.'"

For Samantha, a Lake Oswego native who attended a private Catholic school, and her roommate, the night was an exhilarating success.

"There was a lot of support from the crowd," she said. "It was a real rush."

Samantha placed third, and her roommate finished second. They pooled the prize money and tips and figured that would be the end of their career at Jiggles.

But after a month went by, Samantha



Samantha, preparing for a performance at Jiggles, balances dancing at one of Eugene's topless nightclubs with the daytime life of being a University student. Sometimes, she says, the two roles overlap.

ran into some financial difficulties.

Her parents went through a court battle over child support, which forced Samantha to use her school money for court costs.

"I needed a lot of money really quick," she said. Samantha talked it over with her boyfriend and close friends and decided to do another amateur night as a job audition. She has been working at Jiggles ever since.

"The first two or three times were really difficult," she said. "I wasn't really sure of all the rules. It was really hard just to get enough guts up."

Samantha said she made it through the tougher times with the support of

friends and her boyfriend. In fact, her boyfriend watches her last set every night before taking her home, she said.

She also said she feels completely safe while dancing — a far cry from the seedy atmosphere most people associate with topless dancing establishments.

"The whole staff is always watching out for you to make sure you're OK, especially the dancers," Samantha said. "Most of the rules make sure you're safe and not violated in any way."

Samantha said the closest she comes to any problems is when guys ask her out.

"I tell them that I appreciate the offer, but I'm not interested and I have a boy-

friend," she said.

Soft-spoken and somewhat shy, Samantha said one of her best nights was when a customer who had been playing pool all night put a \$50 dollar bill on the stage.

"I said, 'Are you sure this is the right bill you took out of your wallet?'"

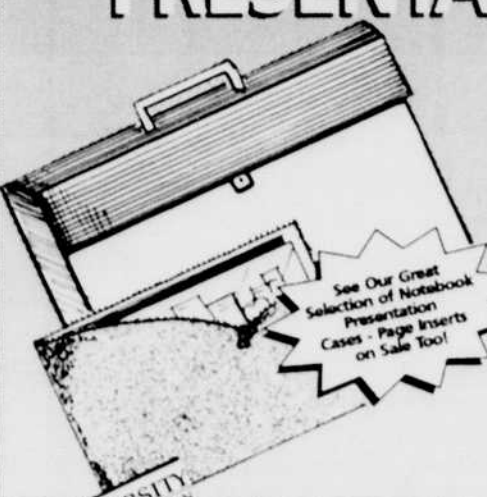
Customers whose seats encircle the stages usually place \$1 bills on the stage during a performance. The dancer then pays more attention to these customers.

Although dancing for her English professor in Jiggles was difficult, Samantha said the most embarrassing night she worked was when a friend from her

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Bill would suspend licenses

SALEM (AP) — The Oregon Senate approved a bill Wednesday to suspend the driver's licenses of drivers under 21 years old caught with any amount of alcohol in their bloodstream.

The measure would subject 18- to 20-year-olds to the same "zero tolerance" standard that the Legislature imposed on drivers younger than 18 two years ago.

Backers of the measure, SB 1054, said it will help reduce traffic accidents and fatalities among drivers under 21 by discouraging them from drinking and driving.

The measure was approved on a 29-1 vote despite complaints from some senators who said they didn't think it was fair to impose a tougher DUI

standard on younger drivers.

Before sending the bill to the House, the Senate rejected a substitute version that would have toughened Oregon's drunken driving laws for adults.

That proposal would have lowered the allowed blood-alcohol level for all drivers from the current .08 percent to .04 percent.

Sen. Jim Bunn, R-McMinnville, submitted the substitute version of the bill.

He argued that lowering the legal standard for intoxication to .04 percent blood alcohol content for drivers of any age is a better approach to solving the problem of drunken driving. The current .08 percent standard is too high, he said.



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