



**HelpLine**  
 Week Days: 4 PM to 8 AM  
 Weekends: 24 hours a day  
**845-2700**

- ☉ I'm upset! We just broke up and I need to talk to someone.
- ☉ I think I hate my major.
- ☉ I'm worried about my grades.
- ☉ How can I see someone at the counseling service?
- ☉ Mom just called & I'm worried about home.
- ☉ I'm so lonely. Can we talk a while?



The HelpLine is a program of the Student Counseling Service, a department in the Division of Student Affairs.

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THE BATTALION  
**LIFESTYLES**

Wednesday • November 5, 1999

# Students go against career norms by working as strippers, piercers

By RHONDA REINHART  
 Staff writer

Between classes at Texas A&M, chatting with friends and walking across campus, "Samantha" looks like the typical Aggie co-ed.

But when night falls, a glance at her getting ready for work reveals another side to this senior computer engineering major. She is an exotic dancer at the Silk Stocking Lounge, the only gentleman's club in the Brazos Valley.

Samantha, who has been dancing at the club for three years, said most people who come to the Silk Stocking do not recognize her on campus. She said one person who did recognize her said she looks like a mouse on campus compared to the way she looks at work.

"A lot of my friends come out here," she said. "All types come out here — profs, corps members, fraternities, even guys with dates."

Samantha said her family and most of her friends know what she does for a living, and she is not embarrassed by it.

"It's the best job I've found," she said. "It's a good way to stay in shape, and you get to listen to the music you want."

Samantha said working at the Silk Stocking allows her to make her own schedule, and in one night, she makes the same amount of money she would make working at a minimum-wage job for two weeks.

Samantha is not the only A&M student who has a job that is less than ordinary.

Todd Haney, a senior business analysis major, puts himself through school by running his own body-piercing business.

"I'm totally self-supportive," he said. "I'm taking nine hours, and I work afternoons and nights."

Haney is starting his fourth year of doing body piercing.

He said after his parents divorced he had to find some way to pay for school and pay the bills.

Haney worked at several part-time jobs

before discovering body piercing. He said he was waiting tables when he met the person who taught him the craft.

"He opened my eyes to it," Haney said. "I kind of did it on a whim, and I realized I could make a living with it."

Haney said his work is not all about money. "I love what I do," he said. "I just love putting metal in people. It's an interesting art form."

Haney said regardless of what people think, body piercing is a business.

"Most businesses fail within the first two years, so I must be doing something right," he said. "It keeps me goal-oriented. I'm having a blast going to school now."

Another A&M student whose job deviates from the usual position of restaurant staffer or mall employee is Melissa Keerins, a sales clerk at Adult Video.

Keerins, a senior journalism major, started working at the store in July because she needed extra money.

"When I first started," she said, "I wasn't sure what to expect, but as I worked here longer it became easier to deal with. I don't do stuff like this [watch adult videos], so I wasn't sure how to react to people's questions."

Keerins said customers inquire about everything from which video to rent, to which magazines to buy.

"People assume that I must be a sex maniac or something to be working here," she said. "That's what annoys me the most. I treat it as just another job. I just sell the stuff."

Keerins said working at Adult Video is an interesting experience.

"It's a real eye-opener to what goes on," she said. "We're the only adult video store in the Brazos Valley, so we make a lot of money. You get to know a whole other side to people."

Keerins works one day a week and makes minimum wage plus a 10 percent commission on everything she sells.

She said the job is good because it pays well.

"It's a lot more lenient here than working at the mall or something," Keerins said. "When



it's slow, I can finish reading my history book or watch TV. This is the most unique job I've ever had."

Even though her parents were concerned about her safety at first, Keerins said now they are supportive of her job.

"They know I need the money, so they're 100 percent behind that," she said. "They're cool about it. They think it's funny."

Keerins said students should not be embarrassed to have unusual jobs.

"If you need the money, it doesn't really matter where you work," she said. "You do what you have to do to earn your way through school."

## Earth Info

Did you know...?

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 A weekly earth fact brought to you by the Dept. of Geology & Geophysics  
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PRESENTATION DATE: 11/6/97 TIME: 6:00 PM LOCATION: 301 Rudder Tower FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT: Jennifer Humphries - 409-845-7725  
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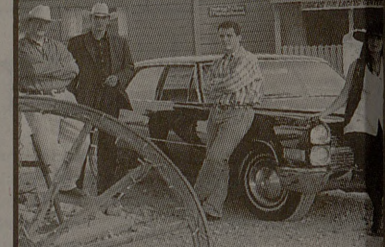
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