

AGGIELIFE

THE BATTALION

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Bartender, pour the wine

Student bartenders juggle customers, classes and relationships

By Erica York
THE BATTALION

It's Friday night and The Dry Bean on Northgate is so crowded it takes 10 minutes to get from one end of the bar to the other. People are packed like sardines trying to order a shot of their choice while Clayton Dean tries his best to accommodate the eager customers.

Dean, who has been a bartender at The Dry Bean for two years, said it can be hard to manage his school schedule while bartending.

"It takes a special kind of schedule, and I suppose a lot of people wouldn't put up with it," said Dean, a senior engineering technology major. "The earliest class I would have after working would be 9:10. Most bartenders have afternoon classes."

Dean said bar managers are usually understanding.

"At most of the bars on Northgate, the managers are students, so they're willing to help you out if they can," he said. "I was in the Corps with my manager. We've known each other for six years, so it makes for a pretty good working relationship."

In addition to balancing a full class-load and work, personal relationships can add pressure to a student bartender's schedule.

"This job has the potential to put a lot of strain on a relationship if you're not able to handle your time very well," he said. "I guess it also depends on how understanding the person is."

When it comes to learning how to mix shots, Dean said, it eventually becomes a habit.

"You learn how fast for pour spouts to allow the fluid to flow. Once you do it for a little while it becomes more and more refined," he said. "It's easier for me to turn around, grab a bottle and make a shot than for me to tell you what's in it."

Dean said dealing with intoxicated people can be tiresome, but his job has a lot of advantages, one being his co-workers.

"Anyone who's told you they're not in it for the money is lying. I also do it because I really enjoy the people I work with," he said. "I've known them all for a couple of years. We're a pretty close-knit group."

Jessica Robinson, a senior speech communication major who works at The Tap, said she likes being a bartender because of the money she makes and because her co-workers are friendly.

"It's a really, really good way to get through school if you have to pay for most things. The money is good," she said. "I like all of my managers and all the people I work with, so it's fun."

Robinson said she would rather work on a busy night, such as Thursday, than a slow night.

"I like to work on busy nights because the time goes by faster and it's more exciting," she said. "I'm busy, but it's a fun kind of busy. You have fun while you work."

Dean also said he would prefer a busy night to a slow night, but the Dry Bean's busiest night is Friday night.

"I would definitely prefer working on a busy night. The time goes by so much slower when you're not moving," he said. "I guess guys that are still learning would prefer to work on a slow night."



RANDAL FORD • THE BATTALION

Jeremy Stender, a sophomore industrial distribution major and bartender, serves up drinks at Madhatters Bar on Northgate.

David Prince, a sophomore agricultural business major and bartender at the Salty Dog, said working as a bartender doesn't interfere much with his schoolwork.

"If you're dedicated to school, then it doesn't get in the way," he said. "You just wake up extra-tired sometimes, and the temptation's there to go out and party after work."

Prince said being a bartender has its advantages and disadvantages.

"I like my job a lot but on the downside, I don't have a lot of time with my girlfriend because I'm at work Friday, Saturday and Sunday," Prince said. "At the same time, I've got my job and going out all in one, so it's fun."

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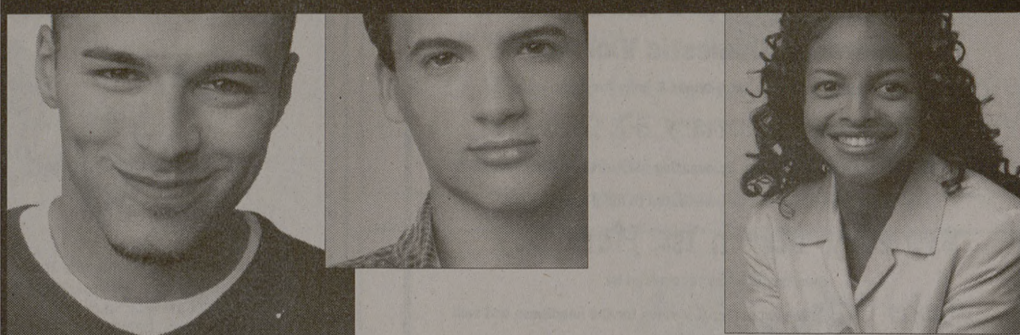


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