

Topless dancers reveal work life

By JOHN BOZZO

Ann Marie Aiton needed six rum and Cokes before her first topless dancing audition.

"There was no way I could go up there straight," she said.

That was one year and four topless bars ago.

"Now she makes the customers nervous," quipped Sol Milan, owner of La Chambre Bar, where Miss Aiton now dances.

La Chambre is a topless bar located in a shopping center at the corner of Schoolcraft and Telegraph Roads. Although listed in the Detroit phone book with a Redford address, the bar itself is in Detroit. Its parking lot is in the township.

There are normally four dancers on during the day and six at night. With three lighted stages, there are always two girls dancing at the same time.

"I've always liked to dance," Miss Aiton said. "I even go out dancing on my days off to places like Uncle Sam's. I'm entertaining people. It's a lot of fun."

A 21-year-old graduate of St. Hedwig's Catholic High School in Detroit, Miss Aiton said her mother approves of her dancing.

"She said, if she had the figure, she'd get up there, too," said Miss Aiton.

Miss Aiton also has one brother. Her father died five years ago.

"Before I started dancing, I used to think about the kind of people I would meet," Miss Aiton said. "I knew I would have to meet a lot of idiots and to put up with a lot of stuff from people."

However, customers and co-workers have been better than she expected.

"Sometimes they start talking dirty," Miss Aiton said. "I just walk away from that happens. One guy tried to grab me. I punched him out."

Miss Aiton is dating a man she met at La Chambre. The man refused to give his full name because he is married. He said he plans to divorce his wife.

"It's all right for Ann to dance now," he said "but when things become more permanent she probably won't be going on stage — maybe part time."

LA CHAMBRE OWNER, Milan, described Carolyn Thompson as his "smartest" dancer.

Mrs. Thompson, 24, quit Emerson Junior High School in Detroit to get married. She comes from a family of 12 children. She has a four-year-old son and is now separated from her husband, "for about the sixth time."

Three and one-half years ago her husband talked Mrs. Thompson into going back to the job market to help the family get ahead.

"I used to wait tables," Mrs. Thompson said. "I wanted to dance. This pays more."

She makes six dollars per hour at La Chambre. Topless dancers make anywhere from \$6-8 per hour, according to Milan.

Unlike Miss Aiton, Mrs. Thompson sings no special praises about her job. She gets along fine with customers and co-workers. In fact, she said the staff at La Chambre is like "a family."

Even though two girls are dancing at the same time, Mrs. Thompson said there's never competition between dancers. But her job is just that — a job.

"I don't really think about nothing while I'm dancing," she said. "I just get up there and dance and that's it."

"I never pay any attention to how long a set takes," she said. "I just get

up there when it's my turn."

EACH DANCER works a six hour day, dancing about 20 minutes out of each hour. They range in age from 18 to 30. Many of the girls will dance at two clubs in one day.

Besides running La Chambre, Milan is also a licensed booking agent. He books topless dancers for other clubs as well as his own.

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Carolyn Thompson became a topless dancer because of the pay — \$6-8 per hour. (Staff photos by Bob Woodring)

Hadassah to sponsor education sessions

The education department of Metropolitan Detroit Hadassah will hold classes from 10 a.m. to noon on four consecutive Wednesdays beginning March 7 in the Zionist Cultural Center 46 Southfield.

The course, "The American Jewish Experience," will be taught by Bette A. Roth. It will encompass phases of Jewish life such as Jews in the Civil War, the lower east side, the Zionist movement and Israel.

Mrs. Roth is a graduate of Oakland University and the University of Michigan. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in American culture majoring in American Jewish Culture.

She has taught at the U of M and Wayne State University, and has lectured extensively on American-Jewish history.

The classes are part of Hadassah's spring education series, which will also include a March 17 Oneg Shabbat with Aviva Mutchnik, executive director of the World Organization of Jews from Arab Countries.

It will be held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Richard Burton of Southfield.

Mrs. Inge Kramer of Southfield is chapter president and Mrs. Ida Joyrich of Franklin is education vice president. Mrs. Rochelle Goldstein is class chairman and Mrs. Lucille Weisberg is Oneg Shabbat chairman.

Reservations may be made by calling the Hadassah office, 357-2920.

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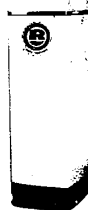
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