

Tomten fuses ambitions



Photo by Brian O'Shaughnessy

Junior Ashley Tomten relaxes in Fitness Fusion on Tues. evening. Tomten co-owns the new dance studio with senior Sarah Martin. Tomten is married, has a one-year-old and also is involved in several groups on campus.

BY KARA SAVAGE
Staff Reporter

Junior Ashley Tomten knows how to juggle. That is, juggle commitments.

Tomten, an art major, is not only a full-time student but a mother to her one-year-old son, Bradley. This past summer Tomten also opened a dance studio on the Square called Fitness Fusion.

"Even though this might be a lot for one person to juggle, I am very passionate about everything I do and wouldn't do it all if I wasn't devoted," Tomten said.

ed," Tomten said.

Tomten and senior Sarah Martin own Fitness Fusion. Tomten said she always wanted to open a dance studio and that she noticed last year there were three buildings for rent on the Square. She said she approached Martin about opening a dance studio, and they decided to do it.

"Once we got the place I started freaking out because I wasn't sure if there would be enough interest to pay for everything," Tomten said.

In order to afford the rent and utilities

as well as the startup costs for the dance studio, Tomten said they borrowed money from Martin's parents. Tomten, however, already has paid her portion back to them, she said.

"We made enough this month to pay rent and utilities and have some left over," Tomten said.

Fitness Fusion does not have a sign for the building yet, but Tomten said she hopes to have one in the near future.

"We do not have enough money for a sign yet, so we are relying on word of mouth," Tomten said.

There are a wide variety of classes offered at Fitness Fusion including kickboxing, yoga, belly dancing and swing dancing, she said. Tomten said she teaches belly dancing for children and adults on Tuesday and Thursday.

"My belly dancing classes are doing the best out of all of the classes at the studio," Tomten said.

Tomten is president of USMED, University Society of Middle Eastern Dance. She said she started the organization at the University two years ago. She also is involved in TruHop and University Swingers.

"I really love anything that has to do with dance," Tomten said.

Tomten is married to sophomore Tim Tomten. She and Tim were married in June 2006 and had their son Bradley in September 2006. Tim also is a full-time student and works at McDonald's in between taking care of Bradley and going to school.

"We alternate our schedules," Tomten said. He goes to class for an hour, and then I go to class for an hour, and we meet in the middle with the stroller."

Normally, Tomten said they do not have to find a babysitter because they have coordinated their class schedule, as well as their work schedules, which enables them to have one person home at all times taking care of Bradley.

"Most of the classes I teach for either USMED or at the studio are early evening, and Tim works 8 p.m. to 12 p.m., so we go back and forth [from work to home]," Tomten said.

Tim not only works at the McDonald's in Kirksville but also at the McDonald's in St. Charles, Mo., which is close to their hometown.

"He goes home every weekend and works 30 hours a weekend and then drives back to Kirksville Sunday night," Tomten said.

She said she travels for belly dancing on occasion, which can be difficult because Tim is gone on the weekends. When this happens, she said it is hard to find someone who will babysit for a whole day while they are both out of town.

When she is not traveling on the weekends, Tomten said she catches up on homework and plays with Bradley.

She said she usually is not able to go out on the weekends because Tim is out of town working.

"On my free time I play with Bradley and watch Baby Einstein," Tomten said.

She said that once she starts to make a stable profit for Fitness Fusion, Tim will quit the McDonald's in Kirksville because the McDonald's in St. Charles provides insurance for their family and also pays \$3 more per hour.

Even though this is a lot for one person, Tomten said she has learned how to handle the stress. She said she does yoga or meditates with other belly dancers to relax.

"I wouldn't do it all if I didn't really love it," Tomten said.

After graduation, Tomten said she will stay in Kirksville while Tim finishes school. When he finishes college, the three plan on moving to a bigger city.

"Once I graduate I am going to have my teaching degree and a degree in painting," Tomten said. "But if I can go somewhere bigger and open a dance studio and make a living that way, that is what I would do."



Health Talk

with Najma Usmani, M.D.



Northeast Regional Medical Center

www.nermc.com

Disorder causes more than snores

Sleep apnea is a serious disorder that occurs when a person stops breathing for 10 seconds or longer during sleep. It can be mild, moderate or severe, depending on the number of times in an hour the breathing stops (apnea) or becomes very slow (hypopnea). Apnea episodes can occur from five to 50 times an hour.

There are two types of sleep apnea: Obstructive and central.

- **Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA):** This is the more common of the two forms of apnea. Obstructive sleep apnea is a blockage or narrowing of the airways in the nose, mouth or throat. This usually occurs when the throat muscles and tongue relax during sleep and partially block the airway.

- **Central sleep apnea:** This type is called central sleep apnea because it is directly related to the function of the central nervous system. The airway is not blocked, but the brain fails to signal the muscles to breathe because of instability in the respiratory control center. Central sleep apnea is usually seen in people with central nervous system dysfunction, such as stroke survivors or those people with neuromuscular diseases. It also is common in people with heart failure and other forms of heart and lung disease.

Some people with sleep apnea complain that they wake up with a sore and/or dry throat. On occasion, they might wake up with a choking or gasping sensation and sometimes seem to wake themselves up with their own snoring.

The symptoms of sleep apnea include:

- loud snoring
- feeling sleepy throughout the day
- tossing and turning during the night
- waking up with constant headaches
- feeling irritated and unrefreshed and/or
- insomnia.

When a person stops breathing, it causes a lack of oxygen in the bloodstream. In time, this lack of oxygen can lead to serious health problems including high blood pressure, hypertension, stroke, heart failure, irregular heartbeats and heart attacks. Also, untreated sleep apnea can be responsible for job impairment, vehicle accidents and increased risk of depression.

Typically, a polysomnogram (PSG) test is used to diagnose sleep apnea. During the test, a variety of functions are performed, such as measuring the activity of the brain, eye movements, muscle activity, heart rate, respiratory effort, air flow and blood oxygen levels during sleep. After the study is completed, the number of times breathing is interrupted during sleep is counted, and the severity of sleep apnea is graded.

Losing weight, developing good sleeping habits and avoiding drinking alcohol before bed can treat mild sleep apnea. However, with severe sleep apnea, a person might need to use a breathing device that will prevent the airway from closing during sleep.

If you have questions regarding sleep apnea and its effects, contact your physician or Dr. Usmani at Northeast Regional Specialty Group at 660-626-2189.

Simplicity of single life is worth savoring for students

In about three years, I need to find "the one," make sure he is "the one" and then make the lifetime commitment to marriage.

According to the 2000 United Nations World Marriage Patterns, the average American woman marries at 25.

If I were British, I would have until age 27.7 to find "the one" and trick him into marriage. If I were French, I would have until age 29.1. Of all the European countries listed, Poland is the only one with a younger marriage age for women, at 23 years. The next highest is Belgium at 26.6 years.

Go figure that American culture, which most would say is based on European culture, is rushing me to the alter. We like fast food, fast cars and fast women (or men, I guess).

Why not a fast marriage?

I am not talking about the Vegas type of fast marriage, but the sudden condensing of the dating, engagement and marriage process into less and less time. Perhaps it is senior year, but I suddenly feel like everyone around me is either engaged, about to be engaged or recently broken-up. So basically, everyone seems to be ecstatic about life ... or slightly down and out.

The speed at which couples proceed with their relationship depends entirely on that couple. A good friend just got engaged after more than five years of dating through high school and college. Another got engaged after six months. Yet another ended a three-year relationship. I know a girl who just got engaged after one year of dating. I know myself, who just ended a relationship after a bit more than a year. My mom dated someone for seven years before ending it on a whim. She dated my dad for seven months and got married.

I will never say anyone who gets married quickly made a poor decision. But as someone who does not



Lauren Miller

sex and the 'ville

believe in soul mates, it is not something I would ever do. It takes time to meet and greet — especially a future spouse. Rushing to the alter would only serve to give me an existential crisis, which would probably manifest in some kind of horrific breakup and consequential weight gain from all the Ben and Jerry's.

Everything takes time.

There is no need to rush.

In the words of Gandalf the Grey, "All you have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to you."

Dork, I know. However, there is a valuable lesson here. I could run around in circles for the next three years trying to find "the one" and a marriage proposal. It would prob-

ably be stressful, and I imagine that all the failed dates and engagement dramas would only pile up until I became convinced that I was going to end up alone in a small apartment with 40 cats.

Or, I could just relish the single life. After all, it has been more than a year.

My good friend Megan and I discuss relationships a lot. We realize being single can be stressful just dealing with the drama of current love interests, crappy first dates and the loneliness of a Saturday night when all your roommates are shacking.

However, there are a lot of perks. At this moment, for me and many of my newly single friends, these perks outweigh the loneliness.

When you go out, no guilt exists in flirting. For once, it is all harmless.

All those cute dresses can be put to use. Even though guys always say they like a girl in jeans and a T-shirt, we at least have the excuse to get dressed up. Preparation has to be taken simply because half the population holds potential (unless you are at a gay bar or a baby shower).

Boyfriends are expensive, but first dates usually are not done Dutch. Free dinner? All the money we would use on a DVD or a watch or football tickets for a birthday or anniversary can be put to good use. Shoe shopping?

Hands down, more free time. Being single requires no obligation. It is like a magazine subscription, try it out and then let it go if you don't like the contents.

Being single is not the end of the world. It is more like an open opportunity to fine-tune yourself and what you want in a relationship.

There are a lot of dresses out there, and there are a lot of fish in the sea.

And there is plenty of time. No need to rush.



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