

Area model gets Super exposure

Webster High grad says it's just a job

By Christine Leta Rook

Democrat and Chronicle

If you're out this weekend, buying a last minute six-pack for the Super Bowl, say hi to Jill Johnson. She'll be the cheerleader, standing next to the Coors Light.

Don't worry, you'll be able to pick her out of a crowd. She's the woman, thin as cardboard, with the tight-fitting dress and flirtatious, lipsticked smile.

TOWN OF WEBSTER

Johnson, 21, a Webster High School graduate, is the Coors Light model for this year's Super Bowl. About 50,000 slightly smaller-than-life cardboard cutouts have been distributed to liquor and convenience stores across the country and locally to Wegmans and Wilson Farms chains.

The cutouts are there to draw attention to the cases of Coors Light that have arrived along with her.

"From across the room, you look at that and say, wow. That's really an attractive lady," said Doyle Albee, an assistant manager in Coors promotions department in Golden, Colo.

And, of course, the strategy is that while you're gawking, you'll notice the price of the beer, scribbled across the pompon at her hip.

Coors managers in Colorado wouldn't say how much money they expect to make off of the full-color image.

Johnson, who works through a modeling agency in Denver, made \$700 — \$100 an hour to sit under hot lights in a tight dress with a can of Coors Light.

"It (modeling) pays for spring break and vacations, but it doesn't pay for food and rent bills, that's for sure," she said from her college apartment near the University of Colorado campus.

The few hundred bucks she earned from the Coors modeling stint paid for a trip to Hawaii to visit her boyfriend.

Johnson, an English major and a senior at the University of Colorado, downplays her part-time career as a model. She insists that it has more to do with height than anything else, and she said she's getting too old to start a serious career in modeling.

Well, maybe, but one could well assume that Coors didn't choose her because she was unattractive.

In fact, Albee said he sifted through hundreds of mug shots, looking for someone who would fit the desired cheerleader persona. Incidentally, Johnson has never



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Cardboard cutouts of part-time model Jill Johnson are showing up across U.S.

THE JOHNSON FILE

JILL JOHNSON

TRIVIA: Johnson, 21, grew up in Webster, the daughter of Richard and Karen Johnson. She is a University of Colorado senior and a member of Phi Beta Kappa honorary society. Works as a part-time model.

SUPER BOWL FAME: She won't get a Super Bowl ring, but Coors Brewing Co. in Colorado says the cardboard cutout of her has an advertising shelf life that outlasts the game.

HER SUPER BOWL PREDICTION: "Buffalo, of course," she said.

FAVORITE BEER: Coors Light.

PERSONAL PREDICTIONS: Modeling is only a hobby. She's thinking of a career in journalism.

been a cheerleader, although he said she does prefer Coors Light to other beers.

"We weren't looking for an airhead cheerleader," Albee said. "We were looking for someone who looked like you could walk up and talk to her."

That person was Johnson, a slender 5 feet 9 with shoulder-length blond hair, and a warm smile.

Even over the telephone, she embodies that girl-next-door character. And one might envision her wearing double-knit slacks from a J.C. Penney Co. catalog. In fact, that's the type of modeling she does.

"She's very down to earth and intelligent — very approachable," said Kim Samburg, Johnson's college roommate of three years. "In almost any situation, she'll be there to listen to you."

The general public tends to imbue models with a larger-than-life image. So perhaps Johnson's most striking feature is that she seems quite average — the type of person who sits next to you at work.

She takes her studies seriously and has won enrollment in the prestigious Phi Beta Kappa honor society with a grade point average of 3.96 on a 4.0 scale. Hobbies are varied — horseback riding, skiing and aerobics. And like many people she is unsure what she wants to do with the rest of her life. Modeling isn't it.

"I try to keep the modeling aspect of my life low-key," Johnson said Wednesday morning before her classes. "I try not to give the impression I'm preoccupied with looks or superficial things."

But modeling has been a significant part of her life. She's been doing it since she was 11. It was then that she met a model and had the opportunity to flip through her portfolio. And since then

Johnson has had about 15 modeling jobs, most of them for department-store chains.

Along the way, she made some moral decisions. Johnson, for example, refuses to model lingerie, even though she could make \$200 an hour doing it.

"It's just a matter of integrity," she said. "I wouldn't walk around in public like that."

And last winter, she scrubbed a shoot when she refused to wear a one-piece bathing suit that she thought was too small.

It was a promotion for suntan lotion and the suit was revealing at the bust line and cut high at the hips.

"It looked ridiculous," she said. "I would never wear a suit that fit that way."

But the short cheerleading skirt and low scoop neck that Coors costumers proposed was fine.

"It wasn't offensive at all," Johnson said. Although "I wouldn't have minded if it wasn't quite so tight."

Albee of Coors defended the snug outfit.

"We wanted to do the cheerleading thing but not have her look like my date to the senior prom," he said. "It would look silly if we gave her a couple of pompons and put her in a turtleneck and slacks."

After all, Coors, which is the third-largest brewer in the nation, knows its market. The cutout probably wouldn't have the desired effect if the model were a man, he said. The bulk of Coors Light sales come from men.

Of course, the company wasn't about to alienate potential female buyers, he added. That's why Johnson wasn't in short shorts, a half shirt and pumps.

"You can use a pretty girl to sell your product without exploiting her or without exploiting pretty girls or women in general," he said.

And Johnson, a realist, feels far from exploited.

"Advertising is a business," she said.

GOP picks 2 to run for Village Board seats

By Christine Leta Rook

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Webster village Republicans last night chose two candidates to run for open seats in the March 19 Village Board election.

Dick Swingly Jr., 51, won 59 votes during the caucus polling, and Tom Johnston, 39, took 45 votes to beat out Charles Styles, 54, who had 39 votes.

Swingly, of 164 Country Manor Way, is a newcomer to village politics. His campaign, he said, will be based on improving communication between the five-member Village Board and residents.

"We're going to take the government back to the people," he said from Streppa's

Bistro on Main Street where Republicans gathered after the vote.

Johnston was there, too. This campaign will be his second bid for a Village Board seat. He is a member of the village Zoning Board of Appeals and ran unsuccessfully two years ago. Johnston, of 21 Gordon Park, said he hopes to project himself as a candidate who will listen to voters.

Two seats are up for grabs because Republicans James A. Hall and Jon Anderson are not seeking re-election.

Democratic officials last night said they are not running a separate slate of candidates. In fact, town Democratic Leader Tom Sergent said he thinks the two Republicans are "good people. I think they have the village at heart."

There, however, appears to be indepen-

dent opposition. Two other men have indicated they will run. They are Richard O'Gorman, 68, of 248 Judson St., and William Saucke, 52, of 97 South Ave.

O'Gorman, an enrolled Democrat, said he has attended 80 percent of the Village Board meetings for the past four years and is a village Zoning Board member. That is proof, he said, that his commitment is greater than that of the Republican candidates.

"I really don't see the involvement they've had in village affairs the last four years," he said.

Saucke is an independent and is running independently. He, like O'Gorman, has yet to officially file his petition. Saucke cited the need for better communication between the Village Board and residents as his reason for running.