

Pole dancers to square off

Event Saturday at Fox Theater

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Bare skin and dance poles will fill the stage of the Fox Theater in Redwood City this Saturday as amateur pole dancers strut their stuff.

The U.S. Pole Dance Federation is holding its 2010 West Coast regional competition Saturday night at 7 p.m., where 12 amateurs will compete for the championship title and to get their professional qualification so they can move on to the national competition.

Going mainstream

"It's definitely coming out of the strip club and into the mainstream (with) the performance and competition element," said Christina Kish, co-owner of Poletential, a pole dancing fitness studio in Redwood City.

Kish, whose studio is hosting the competition, said Stacy Levichev, a graduate from Palo Alto High School who is a classically trained ballet dancer, is among the finalists.



AMBER RICHARD shows off a few moves. Post photo.

Levichev was born in Russia and spent her youth in Tel Aviv before attending Paly. She's now working to get a degree in neuroscience and physiology from UC-San Diego.

Kish said finalists will compete in two rounds, including a compu-

sory dance round where performers must complete a specific set of dance moves and pole tricks.

"(The judges) want to see dance, not just tricks," said Kish.

However, one trick has the performer using her inner thigh to grip the pole and hold herself upright.

"It is hard. You are basically in charge of your own body weight," said Kish.

During this first round, dancers wear sports shorts and bras. However, Kish said a certain amount of skin has to be showing since it's used to adhere the dancer to the pole.

Getting fancy

The last round is a freestyle round where the dancers can do whatever they want, which can range from burlesque to hip-hop dance. And the costumes in this round are a bit more flamboyant, much like an ice skater's outfit, said Kish.

But it's not all competition, said Kish. There will also be performances by the 2009 and 2010 national champions as well as the 2009 winner of the West Coast regionals, Poletential instructor Amber Richard.