



# The High School View

The High School View is staffed and prepared entirely by students from the Martha's Vineyard Regional High School, and published on their behalf by The Martha's Vineyard Times, with the generous assistance of the sponsors whose names appear below.

## Trends turn skin deep

By Sophie Lew

"Last year I tried to kill myself. And the doctors didn't think I was going to make it," said Jane L. "While in the hospital I had this bitch-ass nurse who was rude and asked if I even wanted to live. When I got out of the hospital I tattooed 'Yes' on my arm as a reminder that I love life and that 'yes,' I do want to live."

While the reasons vary, body art is increasing in popularity at the regional high school.

Usually students get their tattoos when they turn 18, because they do not have to go with their parents. "I've always wanted one," said senior Taylor Stone, who got a treble clef on the back of her neck as soon as she turned 18. "My mother was going to come with me and get one of her own," said Taylor.

For others, parents were not an obstacle. "Both my parents were fine with it," said junior Ashley Willoughby who is 17 and has four tattoos. "My dad took me the first time to get them, and then I went with my mom and got the others."

One thing that seemed to come easy for the students was deciding on what to get. "Music has always been a big part of my life," said Taylor. "So getting one of a treble clef seemed fitting. And I designed



PHOTO BY HALEY KOORSE

Taylor Stone with her self-designed tattoo.

it myself, which made it extra personal."

"I am getting a tattoo that reminds me of how my family has made a living for eight generations on the Island," said senior Alexander Poole who is getting a flounder on the top of his foot. "It is realistic because in real life flounders live on the floor of the sea."

"I wanted to get one that had meaning to me and to show everyone that it does play a big part of my life," said senior Thatcher Brown, who has a fishing hook that looks as if it is in his arm and a question mark in the palm of his hand.

"My first two tattoos that I got, I had a friend help me pick them out, and they were the ones that weren't meaningful, just pretty," said Ashley. "But the tattoo of the Om symbol I have on the back of my neck means a lot to me."

Friends played a big role in the tattoo process. Some even made the tattoo experience a whole excursion.

"I went with two of my friends," said Taylor. "It was so much fun. I took the day off of school and went to a place in Hyannis. The two people who came with me really wanted to get one too, but they weren't 18 yet. But as soon as they turn 18 they'll have their own."

"Loren Gibson drew the one I'll be getting on my side, a tree," said Kat. "It means a lot to have artwork of a close friend as a tattoo. It just seems like a sort of milestone, or at least a memorable moment, and I like having people I

am close with there with me."

Although friends played a large role in the process, many denied that peer pressure played any part in getting the tattoo.

"No peer pressure," said Taylor. "I really wanted one and that's what made me get it. But I do like how people perceive me now."

"No I am not doing it for popularity," said Alexander. "It is more for representing my family name, Poole."

Others think that peer pressure and how people perceive you has a huge part. "There is definitely a social image that people look more 'gangster' if they have tattoos," said senior Zach Rabin. "That is also why peer pressure plays a part because kids think they will be cooler if they have a tattoo. I think most kids who get their tattoos at a young age will regret them because they will not find their tattoo as meaningful in their adulthood as they did when they got it."

But some students got their tattoos for other reasons. "I got my tattoo because it is a family ritual to get this tattoo when we come of age," said senior Fin Kaeka. "It is very meaningful to me because it means I am a Kaeka. I did it because my family has it. It represents our ancient protector, which is the shark. My tattoo is of shark teeth, so having this on my arm means that the shark is looking

over me. I got it with my family. It is already predetermined where it goes, which is my left bicep, and the design."

"I don't think it's a bad decision, and I won't when I'm older," said Taylor. "I really thought about it before doing it, and I won't regret it. Plus I'm hoping to be an artist, so it won't be bad careerwise either."

"I don't think I would ever get them removed," said Ashley. "I might cover the ones that don't mean anything personal to me, but other than that, I love them and they're here to stay."

"My advice to all my friends is to think about it for at least six months before deciding," said Kat.

Other students disagree. "I think students get tattoos because they believe there is meaning in the tattoos they get," said Zach. "I disagree with this because I believe something that is important to you when you are 18 won't be important to you when you are 40, and then you are stuck with the tattoo. I don't think anything in my life is meaningful enough that it needs to be plastered onto my body for the rest of my life."

While some students don't see the point in one tattoo, others plan on adding more to their collection.

Said Taylor about her body art, "It represents me. Me turning 18, testing my boundaries, and doing my own thing."

## From friendships to drugships

By Eliza Gowell and Sophie Lew

All names are real except for those with the last name denoted with only a letter.

"Relax," many kids are saying to their parents about drug use. "Breathe in, breathe out." However, just as they reassure their parents, some students are also indulging in drug use.

In some instances, the drugs that some regional high school students are doing are having an adverse effect on their friendships.

"Drug use dissolves friendships rather than destroying them outright," said senior Ray Ewing. "It is not that the friendship ends because of the drug or its abuse, though that happens as well. It is that the user of the substance slowly changes into a different person than they were when the friendship began."

Other students believe that drug use may encourage friendships because it makes them less shy. At parties, while under the influence of drugs, it is easier for them to meet people and make friends.

Although a percentage of students will try marijuana at some point in their high school career, some situations are more likely to elicit experimentation at an earlier age. "A lot of kids who are on a sports team look up to the juniors and seniors who are good athletes and think that drugs might help them excel in sports," said one freshman, Arnold K. "Also, freshmen girls who are interested in older guys often try drugs sooner than they might otherwise to impress the guys."

As kids get exposed to drugs, drugs often begin to play a big part in their social lives. "I think smoking marijuana is a major part of the school culture," said senior Leah H. "There are many kids that become friends for their mutual like for getting high. For some people, drugs become the center of their friendship and it makes it impossible for this group of friends to be together without using drugs."

"It's like in any friendship," said senior Kyle S. "Having a common interest will make it stronger whether it is smoking weed, play-

ing sports, or making scrapbooks."

Marijuana appears to be the most widespread drug at the high school, however some other drugs exist. "I've heard that some kids are doing Percs, and that when they do, they can't even walk," said Arnold K. "I think that people try drugs and slowly progress, trying more and more, until they are addicted."

Drugs often destroy or damage the relationships between those people looking from the outside in on the drug use. "I have experienced so many people I know and love going through this vicious cycle," said Leah H. "I would get glimpses of the person I once knew, but then he would transform back into someone I didn't know. Everything was the extremes, angry one minute and happy the next. I see people that I care about using cocaine every weekend and I know that many of them have used heroin."

"Though I still have the same core group of friends," said Kyle S, "I think that in it, some bonds have grown stronger because of drugs and alcohol while others have grown weaker for the same reason."

Friendships are not only affected, but also prevented from being formed through drug use. "I try to dissuade my friends from resorting to the abuse of narcotics whatever their motives are, but I also realize that the odds are stacked against me," said senior Richie T. "The fact that drug use is so prevalent has made it difficult for me to commit to friendships because of the likelihood that they will dissolve. In an educational environment, such as that of our high school, I personally base my relations on intellectual grounds. This becomes a problem when a friend loses whatever cognitive integrity originally attracted me to him or her to drug use."

"My friend, after years of using drugs, no longer cares about who he hurts as long as he is okay," said Mike D. "One time he left me stranded driving in a snowstorm on a beach and hitchhiked home because it wasn't his responsibility and he didn't want to deal with it."

While in the elementary school students study drug abuse resistance in the D.A.R.E. program. It is a shock to enter high school and see the popularity of drugs. "When I was in elementary school I thought [drugs] were such a big

deal," said Arnold K. "But now I'm in high school and I don't think it's such a big deal anymore."

Other students agree that peer pressure is only a part. "I don't think a lot of people would have said that they wouldn't have done drugs if it weren't for peer pressure," said Kyle S. "But I definitely think that it's a factor. I think that kids who pick on others are doing so because they are insecure about doing drugs themselves."

Students and adults look for solutions to this problem. "A change in the culture and policy of the school must take place before a change in the behavior of the students can be seen," said Richie T. "The change cannot include more video cameras and in-school suspensions. The administration must make more tolerant decisions to receive less rebellious behavior from the students."

Said Mike D. who's brother got in trouble, "Later on he became part of the community and made friends with the people in the various rehabilitation programs and now he's better. The community definitely helped him. Most people always need a friend to help them along, and now he has one."

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