



# 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.

## Conferences swapped

By Emily Goldthwait



PHOTO BY TAYLOR SMITH

Senior Josh Baker competes in a track and field meet at the regional high school last Monday.

As of fall 2009, all sports teams, except for lacrosse, girls' ice hockey, and sailing, began a new sports season in the Eastern Athletic Conference (EAC).

EAC is a high school sports conference consisting of teams in southeastern Mass. It is noted for having a competitive conference as

well as an eclectic mix of both private and public schools.

"We were in the South Coast conference for two years and they voted not to have us as a permanent member, so we went back to being independent until the EAC approached us about being a part of their league," said Gary Simmons, varsity baseball coach and physical education teacher. "Baseball-wise and competition-wise, it's very tough. There are three private schools in our league, which we play. The fourth school is Somerset whose baseball program is excellent. In terms of those eight games, it's tough. There are no cupcakes in that league whatsoever. You've got to go out and play hard every game," he said. "However, it's nice to be in a league and have consistency each year by knowing who you're going to play."

The change in league has challenged each of the sports differently. "In football we went from a league which we had outgrown," said Donald Herman, head football, softball coach, and physical education teacher. "We've finished first or second about every year for almost a decade, which gave students an opportunity for post-season play. In

football, you qualify by winning your league, and we had a better chance for that in the Mayflower League. We used to start every season knowing we had an opportunity, and now we start without knowing that. It's a big challenge, and we don't know if we'll ever meet that challenge as successfully as we have in the past."

And only a portion of the games played by teams are league games and meets. "From a football standpoint, we're going to a league that has only four league games. If we lose any of them, we're out of the running for winning the league championship," said coach Herman. "We used to be able to lose a game, and maybe still win the league."

Head field hockey coach and physical education teacher, Lisa Knight said, "The conference switch for field hockey has really only had a positive impact on the girls. We play teams that are more challenging and by playing the same schools year after year we are able to develop a bit of a rivalry. By being a part of a conference we are also able to have two girls this year be a part of the all-star team; something we didn't have last year. We also placed second in our league this year. When you're playing independently, there's nothing to be number one or number two in."

## Minnesingers dance in the street



PHOTO BY TOVA KATZMAN

Senior Katie Mayhew (far right) belts Martha and the Vandellas' "Dancing in the Streets" at the Motown-themed Minnesingers' spring show last Sunday with (from left) juniors Rykerr Maynard, Amanda Rose, and Daniel Reid dancing in the background. The show took place at the regional high school Performing Arts Center on Saturday and Sunday, May 8 and 9.

## Social disease spreads

By Chelsea Counsell

"It sounds cliché to say that I don't like drama," said senior Maggie Howard. "Everyone says that, even the people who are involved in it." Even so, "Everyone is always talking about the latest scandal at school."

After the recent media hype about drama and bullying, the high school has adjusted some of its procedures for dealing with social drama.

"Human relations are complicated," said Michael McCarthy, director of guidance. "Every individual kid acts differently depending on the situation—and there will always be some conflict or uncomfortable situation. We wouldn't learn how to cope without these experiences. You wouldn't want to eliminate it even if you could. But if students get into a fight, they are suspended immediately. We work with the assaulted and the assaulter to try and resolve the problem in such a way that it doesn't happen again."

"There haven't been more or less problems in the school lately. We've always been dealing with things like this. Society has just become more aware and sensitized to the effects of bullying on

education."

Any place with over 800 people daily is going to need more attention. Officer Cassidy and Officer Ruley were put into position in order to help meet this need.

"Officer Ruley and I act as liaisons between the high school and the police force," said Officer Cassidy. "If there are threats or bullying and the administrators need help, we're there. It's not because bullying has increased. It's just that it's a hot topic right now. We officers aren't walking around listening to conversations or trying to find out where the parties are going to be. We're trying to be there if there's a problem. But for the most part, we like the school to be able to handle its own problems without going into the legal system. We're just mediators."

"We're here for the safety of the building and for medical emergencies," said Officer Ruley. "We keep the environment uninterrupted and make ourselves visible so if students need assistance, they can ask us for help."

"We enter the classrooms to help teach students how to handle certain legal situations," said Officer Cassidy. "Students will act them out, and we'll give them in-

formation as to what their rights are in the situations."

CONNECT to end violence, a program associated with Martha's Vineyard Community Services, also helps students at the high school learn how to deal with complex social situations. The organization teaches students to recognize unhealthy behaviors in relationships so that they don't become violent. The group also discusses healthy relationships.

Bess Child, Prevention Specialist and Advocate for CONNECT, said, "I graduated from MVRHS in 2002, so I experienced the Island social phenomenon firsthand. I'm sure it is easier to bully now because of the accessibility of private information via Facebook, MySpace, and other social networking sites. It seems nearly impossible to avoid all conflict. What's important is the way the students choose to react and deal with the situation. They have a lot of power to change the outcomes of their lives."

Some students thought that the Island was an optimal breeding ground for social drama.

"I think it happens on the Island because rumors and things like that get started very easily and spread even easier," said senior Alexis Wiseman. "On the Island alone, I know several people that seem to be drawn to drama

and can never seem to get out of it and then just break down."

"I think that people will try to excuse drama by saying, 'It's a small island,' and 'We only start drama because the Island is so boring,'" said Maggie. "It's just a way for people to make themselves feel important. They don't have to start drama. They don't have to be immature and hold grudges and try to 'get back at' people. It's unnecessary."

Drama and social stress can affect both school life and home life in a negative way. "It adds unneeded stress to our already stressful lives," said senior Nick Jerome. "It happens because people are insecure or looking for attention, but it takes away from the focus on schoolwork."

Either students at the high school brush the drama off their shoulders, or just don't come out for help.

"Most of the time, no one means to start any of it, but there's no stopping it when it happens," said Alexis. "In the end, drama is their choice. I just try to keep my friends from doing things they might regret later."

"The worst drama happens when two of your close friends are fighting and both want to drag you onto their side," said senior Savannah Lawson.

Sometimes, students can nit-

pick at the smallest things. "It's because kids don't know what to do with themselves," said freshman Victoria Sadowski. "Some people have nothing better to do than to make fun of my pants."

"In high school, students don't have a clear picture of their future," said Savannah. "If they have nothing to look forward to, every piece of drama just seems like the end of the world. Around junior and senior year they should realize that drama can be easily avoided, and that they shouldn't let it affect them, especially when they have bigger things to be thinking about."

For now, drama in the regional high school simmers, and there still isn't a set plan on how to avoid it. But students manage on their own and with the help of adults to find ways to avoid it. "People shouldn't come to high school expecting flowers and candy and butterflies," Savannah said. "It's not like that." At least not all the time.

### Clarification

In the story "Running in memory of Jena Pothier," published last week, Jay Pothier's residence was misidentified. He actually lives in Sandwich, Mass. In addition, he is Jena's cousin.

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