



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.

Vineyard grads buck odds

BY OLIVIA JACOBS

While the majority of high school graduates attend college close to home, three regional high school alumni have traveled 3,000 miles from their Vineyard homes to attend Stanford University in California. Sarah Ortlip-Sommers, class of 2014, began her studies at Stanford this past fall. She said, “Deciding on Stanford was not an attempt to get away from the Vineyard or from New England. From what I’ve observed, Stanford has a different atmosphere from most other top-tier schools. I was very competitive in high school—almost too competitive, I’ll admit now—and I really wanted a different experience in college.” Duncan Pickard, class of 2006, is currently studying for his Juris Doctor (JD) at Stanford. He received a MA in Public Policy (MPP) from Harvard’s Kennedy

School of Government and a BA from Tufts University, where he majored in history. After graduating from the Kennedy School, Mr. Pickard moved to Berlin, Germany to work for a non-governmental organization (NGO) which supports democracy in the Middle East. He worked on constitutional reform in Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, and Yemen. Mr. Pickard said, “My biggest apprehension about moving to California was being far away from my family. I still feel that and it will never go away, but they are happy that I branched out by moving here and they look forward to visiting. No matter where you go to school, you’ll have the same exciting opportunities to make new friends. Being physically close to home, at least in my mind, didn’t make too much of a difference.” Sarah Johnson, class of 2011, is currently a junior at Stanford University, major-

ing in economics with a minor in Middle Eastern languages, literature, and culture. She hopes her future will involve research or working with a non profit or social enterprise. Ms. Johnson didn’t always

East Coast schools. I wanted to see another part of the country, and was drawn to the culture of California and the excitement of Silicon Valley in particular.” Ms. Ortlip-Sommers, describing her decision to

worldly paradise. I’m also really not a fan of cold weather. I have to admit, it feels pretty nice to be sitting in 70 degrees and sunshine while my family is at home with two feet of snow. I’ve been sending my mom pictures of the flowers here to get her through all the blizzards!” Like Ms. Ortlip-Sommers, Mr. Pickard hasn’t lost his love for the East Coast. He said, “I love New England. I went to college and grad school in Boston and loved studying there. I was also happy to get to know Boston well since growing up on the Vineyard isn’t precisely the same thing. But I also wanted to give California a try. Of course I could have moved to California at any point in my life, but having a foothold here through school makes it a bit easier to live here full time if that’s what I decide to do. It’s also great to get a perspective on how people on different coasts perceive themselves and their role in the world.” In terms of adjusting to life at Stanford, Ms. Ortlip-Sommers said, “I’m very

close to both my parents and my sister, and being 3,000 miles away from them has definitely been the hardest thing about living here. Stanford is on the quarter system, which means we essentially have trimesters instead of semesters. Each quarter is only 10 weeks, so everything goes by amazingly fast. Because of this, I feel like I had to adjust quickly in order to not fall behind. That process was a lot easier than I thought, though, and in a few short weeks I felt at home already.” Ms. Johnson said, “The transition to college always comes with some challenges, but the great part about being at college is that you are surrounded by people from all over the country and the world. I spent a year in India and a year in Egypt before coming to Stanford, so I had experience transitioning to new environments and cultures. I love it here. I feel like I am at the center of everything. The great thing about being from the Vineyard is that wherever I go in the world the ocean makes me feel like I am home.” **HSV**



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SARAH ORTLIP-SOMMERS

Sarah Ortlip-Sommers (right) poses with friend Heather Kramer (left) at Stanford soccer game.

plan on going to school thousands of miles from home. She said, “I didn’t really think too much about exactly where I wanted to go to school. I always loved the idea of Stanford, but also seriously considered a lot of

attend school in California, said, “I wasn’t specifically looking to go to school far from home, but I was willing to in order to be somewhere like Stanford. My parents always talked about California as if it were some other-

Teen views of drug culture

BY RUSSELL SHAPIRO

This is part two of a two-part series. Part one can be found in our Feb. 12 issue.

I would say one-third of ninth graders smoke or have tried smoking. As I understand it, most of the kids aren’t drinking, but more are smoking marijuana,” said Freshman Miles Jordi. Adjustment counselor Amy Lilavois concurred with the student’s statements. “I think weed use has been on the rise the past couple years.” The school administration has been working hard to push the substance issue in the right direction. Ms. Lilavois said, “Anyone who brings drugs to school or comes to school high has a

problem. We work together to get that student the support they need.” Assistant principal Andrew Berry said, “There are two levels for drug offenses in the school. There’s statutory, which includes possession, distribution, and use in the school, which carries a mandatory 10-day suspension, and an expulsion hearing. There is also non-statutory, which includes being under the influence in school. With that, the idea is to work with the student to correct the behavior.” Sergeant Mike Marchand, the school resource officer, said, “More of what we’ve seen has been on the user side, personal consumption. We haven’t seen much dealing in school.” The new Tip-411 program, paid for by the Youth Task Force,

has helped the fight. Ms. Lilavois said, “Tip-411 has been very helpful with this issue. It’s going to provide an outlet for kids who are fed up with seeing students high in homeroom every day.” Many students believe better and earlier education on substance abuse would help to combat the issue. Health class, which addresses many of these issues, is mandatory for sophomores, though some believe it is not impactful. Senior Ellie Reagan said, “By sophomore year many are smoking and drinking already, so it doesn’t make much sense to discuss the hazards after the fact. There should probably be a program in eighth grade or freshman year, because DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education, taught in sixth grade) is too early, and health class is too late.” **HSV**

Visiting Mali in the classroom

By August Welles

Vice Consul of the United States Embassy in Bamako, Mali, David Lindfield spoke with a junior history class over Skype recently. Mr. Linfield works in the social media division for the U.S. Embassy. Mr. Linfield talked about being a part of the embassy, what it takes to do the job, and the different opportunities that arise from that career path. Junior Kate Hansen said, “I honestly didn’t know a lot about the workers of the embassy before that class. I knew that they traveled abroad, but that was all. I loved that he was so open and honest with our class, and he answered every question we asked without hesitation.” Speaking with Mr. Linfield was an eye-opening experi-



PHOTO BY MOLLY HOUGHTON

Junior Global History class Skypes with David Linfield, the Vice Consul of the United States Embassy in Bamako, Mali on Feb. 4.

ence for the juniors. Following the Skype session, many students were drawn to the job opportunities abroad. Junior Maisie Jarrell said, “Something that stuck out to me was the amount of traveling that working for an embassy includes. He said that he changes location every few years and after some experience he gets to choose where he lives and works. I enjoy traveling and it was fun to hear that it’s possible to

combine work and travel.” History teacher Corinne Kurtz organized the online session for her class. Ms. Kurtz said, “The timing was great. It was right after midterms. I noticed the kids started thinking about their career options. [Mr. Linfield] really plugged foreign service—which doesn’t always mean a gun. It was interesting for students to get a taste of that career. I saw the gears turning.” **HSV**

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