



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.

Passion for hunting spans generations

BY FINN ROBINSON
AND NIKEYA TANKARD

In the age of the Internet, many activities people used to do themselves can now be done with the press of a button. Zoom is an alternative for in-person meetings, DoorDash is used instead of driving to pick up food, and A.I. engines like ChatGPT can write essays, text messages, and book reports. In this era where almost everything can be outsourced, there are some students at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS) who continue to opt for real bows and arrows, and shotguns, in order to pursue their passion for hunting and source food for their families.

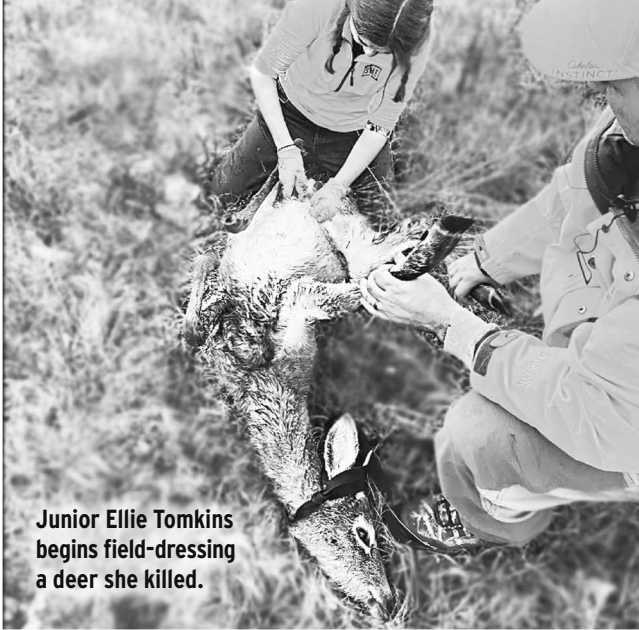
Freshman Zeb Athearn is a duck, goose, and deer hunter. During hunting season, he sometimes misses his first-period class in order to go hunting with his father. After the end-of-school bell rings, he

heads back out to the woods. "Being out in the woods is always nice," he said, "seeing the sunset, seeing the sunrise."

Zeb explained his desire to hunt: "It's hard to explain the satisfaction you get when you see [the animal] go down. You know it's down, you haven't injured it, and you've got it."

In total, Zeb estimates that the mornings he's taken off to hunt add up to about a full missed day of school. "I try to go out as much as I can, any opportunity I can get," he said.

Junior Ellie Tomkins is a duck and deer hunter who hunts during black powder and shotgun season. She calculates that she missed two days of school this year to go hunting with her father and their crew, which consists of her uncles and family friends. "I like that it makes my dad smile. [Being outside hunting] is my dad's happy place. He raised me to hunt, and I find that fun," she said, adding, "I enjoy being outside. It's hon-



Junior Ellie Tomkins begins field-dressing a deer she killed.

COURTESY ELLIE TOMKINS

estly really peaceful." Journalist, outdoorsman, and author Nelson Sigelman is known for his 27-year legacy as a writer and editor at The Martha's Vineyard Times, where he specialized in hunting and fishing coverage. Sigelman spoke to the decline

he has observed in hunting among younger generations. "The first time I went [hunting], it was with a large group of Islanders. Uncles, brothers, and kids were deer hunting in the State Forest. That used to be very common, and it's disappearing," he said.

Currently, the deer on Martha's Vineyard are considered to be too numerous. Based on estimates from the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, Martha's Vineyard has a deer population of at least 45 per square mile — roughly four times the state average. Hunters argue that beyond sport and entertainment, hunting can be vital to maintaining a balanced ecosystem.

Zeb said, "I think hunting benefits the Island by controlling the tick population. Deer living close together in overpopulated conditions leads to the transmission of disease, and the potential for chronic wasting disease in deer."

Locally harvested venison is considered to be an environmentally responsible food source, since it takes very few resources to produce. Unlike domestic animals, wild deer do not need to be fed and raised by humans. The only work is in harvesting and processing, which is minimal compared with livestock. Harvesting — the act of hunting, killing, and utilizing the material that comes

from the kill — can be a net positive for the environment in overpopulated areas, while providing a high-quality source of protein.

Building trades teacher Bill Seaborne, who hunts with a bow and arrow as well as during shotgun season, explained the economic viability of sourcing local venison. "I think it's a good resource we have on the Island. I ran the cost of arrows, broadheads [type of arrow point], stands, added it up at the end of the year, and — not considering time — it was \$4 a pound for lean, organic meat. It's pretty hard to beat that," he said.

Although frequent absences from school can impact students and result in disciplinary action, Mr. Sigelman argues that hunting is a great excuse to miss a few periods: "In this world of increasing technology, hunting is a way to reconnect with the outdoors, to understand the value of nature, and just appreciate our environment."

Zeb agreed. "I think hunting and being outside is far more fulfilling than being inside," he said. **HSV**

Wrestling program gains an advantage

BY NATALIE WAMBUI
AND NIKEYA TANKARD

A decline in membership for a sports program can sometimes be an indicator of weak leadership, a lack of activity, or waning interest — but for the newly anointed wrestling program at Martha's Vineyard Regional High School (MVRHS), going from 50 to 30 members over the past three years is an indicator of becoming established as a competitive sport.

The wrestling team began as a club in 2020, but after piquing the interest of student athletes and amassing an eventual membership of upwards of 50 students, Coach Jerry Kadien applied for and

received official recognition for his team as a varsity sport in the fall of 2023.

Coach Kadien has been at the helm since the club's inception, and when he spoke of the challenges he faced in the beginning, it became clear he is someone who is truly passionate about the sport.

When he started the club in 2020, it was hard to even find space for the team to practice. "It became difficult to have practice in the cafeteria while it was still a place for food service, but luckily the YMCA across the street offered the space off their weight room for us to practice in," he said.

He added that at first, many who joined lacked experience. "In 2021, we were doing

springtime practices, a couple of days a week, for about eight weeks or so, just giving some basics, because the kids who were interested — very few of them had any type of real background in the sport."

But Coach Kadien kept offering opportunities to learn and practice. Many football players joined, and explained that aspects of wrestling (like strength training, for example) are useful in helping them to develop their skills on the football field.

Sophomore and wrestling captain Xeandre Miller said that one of the best things about wrestling is learning discipline and strength. "You are throwing your body against somebody else's, and

they are putting you in positions that you don't like," he said. "They even throw you sometimes. You've got to learn to deal with it and keep pushing through."

"I was just going to do wrestling as another sport to help me with football," he added, "but after a few weeks of practice, I fell in love with it."

Members of the wrestling team all have individual reasons for pursuing the sport, but a common one is a desire to achieve personal goals alongside other members who are working toward the same thing. "It's a sport where you can set and attain goals, and it is inspiring to see a lot of growth from young student athletes to young men and



GREYSON HARTZBAND

Senior Jack Zheng, left, practices a wrestling move against senior M.J. Magaraci.

women," said Coach Kadien. The sport of wrestling isn't easy, and more than 30 students left the team as the competition became more challenging. Xeandre was

not dissuaded. "I like losing matches sometimes, because at the end of the day, it sort of brings me back to who I am and why I started all of this in the first place," he said. **HSV**

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