

DRINKING HABITS

FROM PAGE A1



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Starkweather Education Center in Plymouth. Like Drew, he also started drinking at a young age because he hung out with an older crowd.

A drinker since the eighth grade, Mark said he prefers the taste of tequila and beer, especially Budweiser. He relies on friends who are 21 or have

An 18-year-old female, who wished not to be named, migrated to where Drew and Matt were standing next to a car. Like the rest of the teenagers, she appeared to be losing her patience with the lack of action: "I need a beer," she announced.

The girl, who said she had been drinking since age 13, added that she had also delved into drugs during the two and a half years she was going out with her now ex-boyfriend. She was proud, however, of having made significant changes to her lifestyle since breaking up with the 19-year-old.

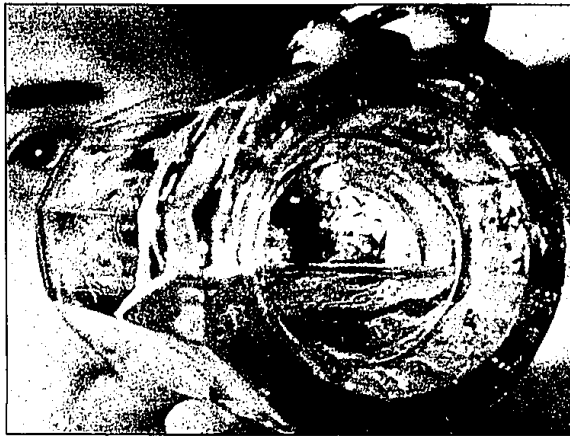
"Now I got my a... straight," she said, explaining that she has a 4.0 grade point average, is on the honor roll and plans to continue attending classes in the fall.

The girl, who says she now has a good job, also said her mom knows she was a drinker. "My mom's OK with what I do, but she doesn't really know what I do," she said.

The girl also has a fake ID she says she obtained from a "carnie" at a recent festival. She explained that the man just gave her the ID, which says she is 26 years old, while she was waiting in line for a ride.

"It works - I've had it for a month... It looks

He relies on friends who are 21 or have fake IDs to buy drinks for him. When all else fails, Mark said he and his friends will occasionally steal their liquor.



ILLUSTRATIONS BY KATY BARTORET | OBSERVER

nothing like me," she said, explaining that she has successfully bought alcohol at gas stations with the ID.

According to the girl, the most alcohol she ever consumed at one time was on her 18th birthday in the beginning of July.

She helped finish off two fifths of liquor with three people before drinking a 40-ounce and a six-pack of beer by herself. She also downed three beers using a bong, which is an apparatus that allows users to drink an entire beer in one swallow.

The girl said she blacked out at 10 p.m. - she had been drinking since 2 p.m.

"I don't know how I'm still alive," she said, explaining that she never plans to drink that much at one time again.

"I'm lucky if I could take a fifth," Drew said as he listened to the girl explain the events of her birthday. "You won't run across too many guys that can do that."

GETTING 'SMASHED'

When asked about the frequency of his drinking habits, Drew said it depends on what's going on and how he feels. He said he usually drinks about three nights per week, although some weeks he won't drink at all.

"It all varies..." he said. "Sometimes I drink after work to relax. I don't drink to get drunk all the time. I can control it - I'm not an alcoholic. Sometimes I do drink for the buzz, like if I'm depressed... Once a week I'll get totally annihilated - just smashed."

Matt said he hung out with older kids, which is one reason why he started using substances. Unlike Joe, he is unrepentant for smoking marijuana.

"I've always hung out with bad kids," he said. "I liked weed. I'll probably smoke it till the day I die."

Matt said he was supposed to graduate this year, but dropped out of school for two years. He said he was on the honor roll in middle school.

According to him, alcohol was often present in his home.


"My dad had alcohol in the house at all times," he said.

At about midnight, nearly an hour after they arrived at the gas station, someone spotted a police car pulling into a nearby parking lot.


"That 'po-po' rollin' in here," Drew informed his friends. "Cover up that fifth..."

The teen-agers scattered to their cars and, shouting directions to the next destination, drove off into the night.





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No fees at Bank One ATMs*	✓			
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No annual fee for overdraft protection**	✓			
No fees for Bank One By Phone***	✓			
No fee for Bank One Online Banking	✓			
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