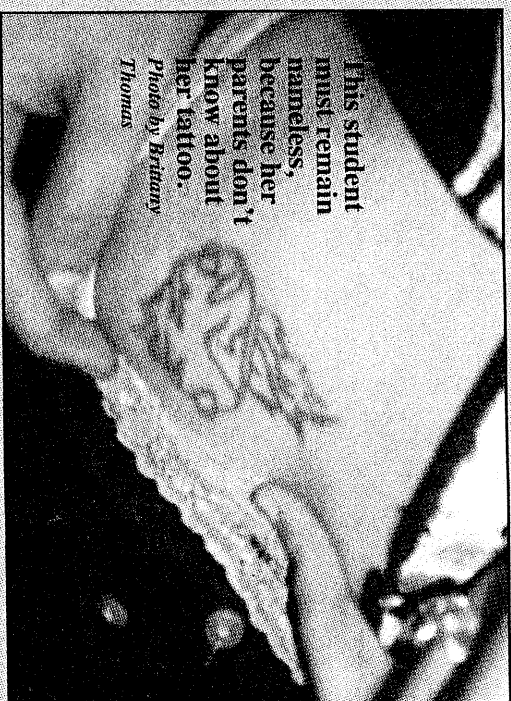


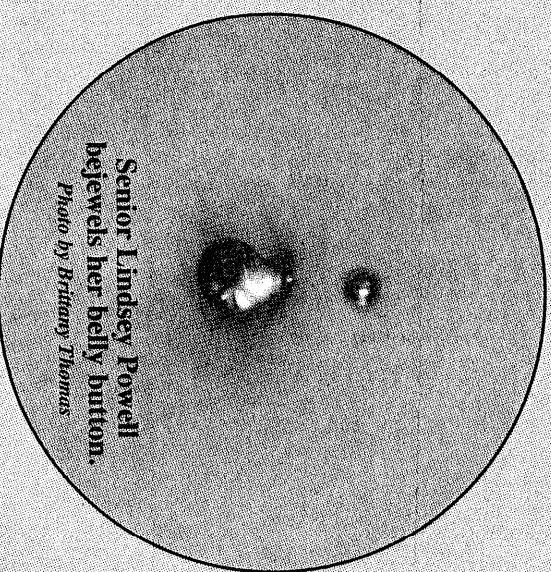
Senior Micah Baker bares his religion on his shoulder.
Photo by Jennifer Simeit



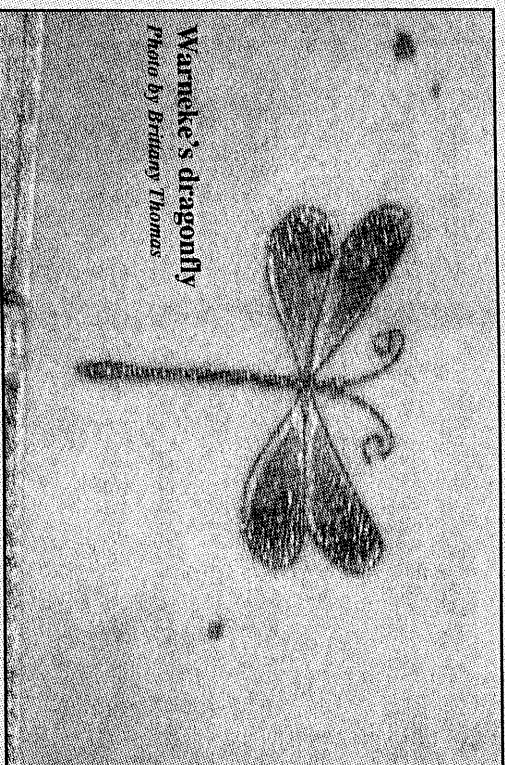
His student must remain nameless, because her parents don't know about her tattoo.
Photo by Brittany Thomas



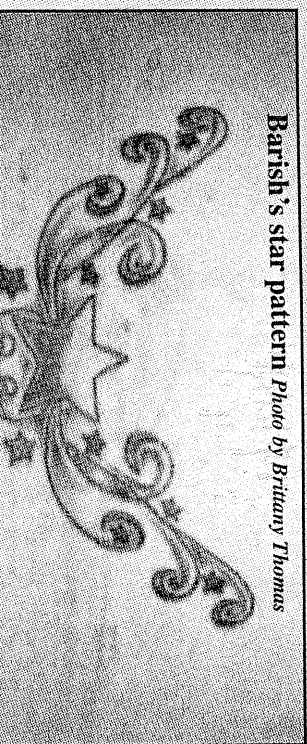
Senior Chrissy Ogil has a tattoo on her back.
Photo by Brittany Thomas



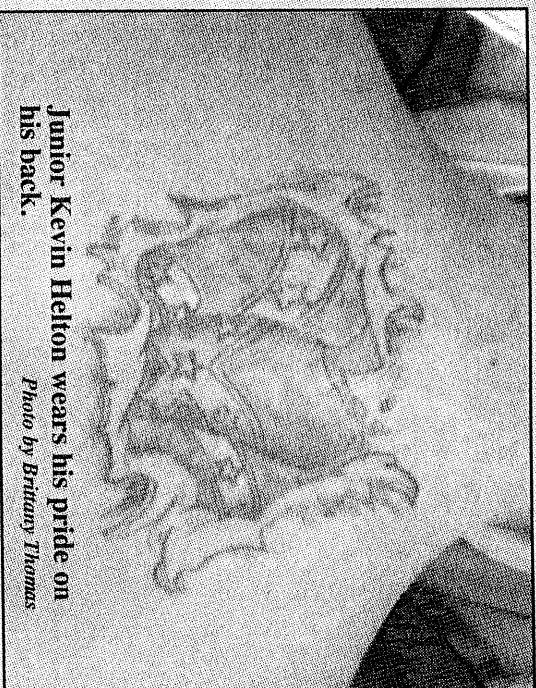
Senior Lindsey Powell bejewels her belly button.
Photo by Brittany Thomas



Warncke's dragonfly
Photo by Brittany Thomas



Barish's star pattern Photo by Brittany Thomas



Junior Kevin Helton wears his pride on his back.
Photo by Brittany Thomas



by Sydney Warncke and Annah Barish

I'm [Sydney] not the biggest fan of needles or pain, so it came as a shock to my mom when I told her I was getting a tattoo. One of the milestones, I suppose you could call it, of being a teenager is the 18th birthday. I had decided that the day of my birthday, Oct 16, Annah Barish and I were going to get our tattoos. My friends Erin and Jamie and I went to Tye Dye West on Kingston Pike so that I could go ahead and pick out the one I wanted and find out the cost.

When we walked in, the lady behind the counter said to just find what we wanted and the artist would give us the best price he could. But we ran into a little bit of a problem. Tye Dye is closed on Sundays and Mondays, and I wouldn't be 18 for another ten hours or so. I explained my situation to the guy who was helping me find the tattoo I wanted. He told us to hang on a minute and a few seconds later he came back with awesome news. He had talked to Shawkey, the tattoo artist, and he said that he would go ahead and give me my tattoo today, since my birthday was the next day. It was a purple, pink, blue and black dragonfly. After I picked it out, we left to get something to eat so that we wouldn't pass out. When we came back, I went back into a room that much resembled a doctor's office, but less clean and organized. Shawkey had me straddle a chair that was kind of like a massager. I had to lower my pants so he could align my tattoo in the center of the small of my back. The dragonfly I decided to get was 3 in. by 3 in. and cost \$55.

Everything was easy at first. He wiped off my back with a wipe and then shaved where he was going to tattoo. He then placed the outline on the dragonfly on. I sat there with anticipation as he mixed the inks and got the needle ready. Listening to him test out the needle has to have been one of the most nerve wrecking things I have ever experienced. We were finally ready to start. He told me that he was going to start off with an easy spot so that I could get used to it. There was no getting used to that feeling.

It wasn't really an unbearable pain-I mean I did go through with it-but more so an annoyance. I mean you're having a needle poking ink in and out of your skin many, many times. It's definitely uncomfortable. He got most of the way through the outline before I started letting it get to me. Finally, an hour later, it was done. The tattoo I fell in love with on the page was now permanently on my back, and I love it even more. Despite the fact that it was one of the most uncomfortable things I have experienced, I wouldn't take it back.

I [Annah] am addicted to tattooing. Within the first few days of having my first, a red sparrow on my side, done, I had a larger, more intricate star pattern done on my abdomen. The small amount of pain is worth the pride of having a tattoo. The only thing I could really think of when going to get a tattoo was, "What am I going to get?" Not "How much is this going to cost?" "This is going to hurt." "Am I going to regret this later?"

I laid sideways on the chair for my first tattoo. I thought I couldn't handle the pain and wanted him to stop. The pain isn't really overbearing so much as annoying. The thing that kept me in the chair was the thought that I was going to either have a gorgeous bird on my side or the black lines beginning the head of a sparrow. That and the fact I had already paid \$80 and wasn't going to get that back. My second tattoo was more expensive (\$140) and... a little more interesting to get. I had to place my legs on top of the artist's and lay back in a chair. This tattoo was far less painful than the first one because of placement and because I knew what to expect.

People have certain views of body art, thinking only sailors, prisoners, and unsavory characters have tattoos. This is not true anymore. Moms, Dads, and their children have tattoos, as do some grandmas and grandpas. It is becoming more commonplace than it used to be, which I find both refreshing and exciting. I've come across some people that have tattoos just for the image. Tattoos are a form of personal expression that portray a certain belief or interest the individual has, not because some guy in some band has the same symbol on his shoulder.

