

On the MOVE



Story by Mike Latona
Photos by Greg Francis

It started out in the ears. Then it spread to the stomach. Next, the tongue. No, it's not a deadly disease. Instead, Erin Fennessy seems to have developed body piercing "fever." Currently, Erin sports three holes in her right ear and two in her left, varying the number of earrings that she wears. She also had her bellybutton pierced last April; her tongue underwent the needle in July. Erin's latest piercing venture can't be missed, she said, because she often smiles and laughs with her mouth open — revealing a shiny piece of jewelry, right in the middle of her tongue. "Most people are like, 'You're crazy!'" remarked Erin, 17, a parishioner in Rochester's Roman Catholic Community of the 19th Ward. Asked what inspired her to go on this piercing rampage, Erin hesitated before stating there's no deep meaning behind the practice. "It's fun — daring, I guess," Erin said. Erin is far from alone. Others teens interviewed for this story report that body piercing is quite popular among their friends as well. "It sounds pretty cool. Maybe it's a little bit of freedom," remarked John Fisher, 16, from St. Mary's Church in Bath. John said he has considered getting his eyebrow or tongue pierced. "It's something different. It's out of the ordinary," added Chris Plaisted, 16, from St. Patrick's Church in Macedon. Chris said he plans to get his eyebrow pierced within the next few weeks. "It's a way to express yourself," stated Shawna Donovan, 16, from St. Patrick's Church in Owego. This self-expression is most often reflected through the wearing of "hoops" — small, round pieces of jewelry, or "barbells" — thicker, longer shafts of metal. An extensive list of body parts is available for displaying the jewelry, Shawna said. "Everything, basically. Eye(lid)s, nose, tongue, eyebrow, in between eyebrows, chin, lip," Shawna said. And that's just above the neck, folks. Shawna said that several of her friends — both female and male — were sporting bellybutton rings over the summer. So, she decided to take the plunge and get her navel pierced last month. However, Shawna found that her bellybutton didn't take too kindly to being tampered with. After experiencing frequent discomfort, she decided to stop wearing her hoop and let the skin close back up over her piercing. Shawna admitted that she was surprised at the pain she felt, because her friends had said it wouldn't hurt.

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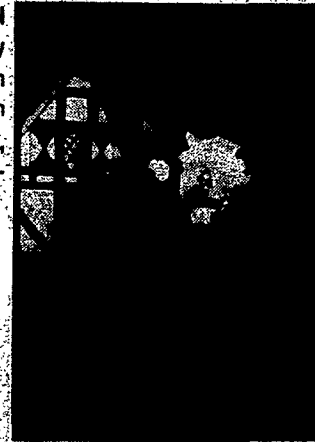
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