

VAPED CRUSADERS



FAUQUIER TIMES STAFF PHOTO/RANDY LITZINGER

Fred Rowland performs vape tricks inside Krazy Vapors in Warrenton. Two vape shops have recently opened in town, riding an uptick in nicotine vaporizers.

Vape shops find growing market in Fauquier

By Hannah Dellinger

FAUQUIER TIMES STAFF WRITER

Fauquier County is catching onto the trend of vaporizing nicotine.

Two new vape shops, Krazy Vapors and Wiki Vapes, recently opened in Warrenton. They both offer devices and juices that some say help wean cigarette smokers off tobacco.

The first electronic cigarettes hit the U.S. market in 2006.

“Since then it’s been a snowball effect,” said Michael Rowland Jr., co-owner of Krazy Vapors.

Now there are hundreds of different kinds of customizable devices on the market and thousands of vape shops around the country.

“Warrenton didn’t have any vape shops before us,” said Rowland. “There were people here who vaped already and com-

muted to Leesburg or Manassas to get what they needed.”

Diderik Van Regemorter, owner of Wiki Vapes, said he chose to bring his business to Warrenton for the same reason.

The two sought out store spaces around the same time, without realizing that another entrepreneur had the same idea.

The interiors of the shops are very different. Krazy Vapors has a laid-back, artistic feel. Wiki

Vapes is spare and minimalistic in decoration.

Both shop owners say that they have helped dozens of Fauquier residents quit smoking cigarettes since opening.

All vaping devices are battery powered.

The atomizer is a metal wrapped metal wire hooked up to the battery. A cotton string,

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soaked with juice, runs through the wire.

When the button of the device is pressed, the wire heats up and creates a vapor that is inhaled through a mouthpiece.

Clouds and silver linings

Both Van Regemorter and Rowland used to smoke cigarettes heavily.

"Vaping is what helped me stop a 35-year heavy smoking habit," said Van Regemorter. "It allows you to stop smoking cigarettes and replace it with something that is a hell of a lot better for you."

The owner said that he immediately felt the benefits of leaving cigarettes behind. He said that his breathing, his taste and his personal life all improved immensely.

Vaping juice is usually made of propylene glycol, vegetable glycerin and food-grade flavorings. Users can add as much nicotine as they like to the juice.

Since the amount of nicotine in the vapor is easily controlled,

some users slowly decrease the nicotine until they are weaned off of the chemical.

"I've had people start as high as 24 milligrams of nicotine and come down over a few weeks until they are completely off of it," said Rowland. "As far as getting people off of cigarettes, its one of the more successful methods out there."

Dr. Michael Amster, pediatrician at Fauquier Hospital, had mixed feelings about vaping as a growing trend.

"Vaping has the potential to help and be beneficial," he said. "Compared to smoking, vapor has much better ramifications for second-hand smoke. The vapor is generally pretty harmless."

However, Amster said that vaping nicotine is still harmful.

"It also has the potential to convince high school kids that this is a 'safe alternative' to smoking, and that's not its real purpose," he said. "Helping smokers quit great. Luring teens in bad."

Wiki Vapes is close to Fauquier High School, but Van Regemorter says that he abides by the law's age restrictions on his products.

"The last thing I want is to get

a young person into vaping," he said. "As a parent myself, I would be very upset if my 16-year-old went into a shop and left with a device."

Both Rowland and Van Regemorter say that their main focus is getting people off of cigarettes.

Warrenton resident Steven Ways said that he smoked cigarettes for 35 years. Two weeks ago, when he noticed the Wiki Vapes sign, he decided that he would give up his habit.

"I've tried to quit cold turkey many times," he said. "The urge was too overwhelming. With vaping, the urge is nowhere near as strong."

Ways said that he hasn't smoked a cigarette since he bought his device.

Rowland said that some users can end up vaping frequently and don't reduce the amount of nicotine in their juice over time.

"Once you don't have that restriction on where and when you can use it, you feel a lot more comfortable doing it," he said. "Because nicotine is addictive, it gets to the point where people chain vape their device."

KRAZY VAPORS

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(540) 860-2065
www.krazyvapors.com

WIKI VAPES

579 Frost Avenue,
Warrenton
(540) 680-2371

Both vape shops have seating areas and welcome customers to try products and socialize.

Rowland said that Krazy Vapors hosts events like cloud contests. Participants compete to see who can blow the biggest clouds and who can perform the coolest tricks.

"There are teams of people who travel around the country and competitively vape as their career and their livelihood now," he said.

The shop owner said that when people start vaping, they socialize.

"The industry as a whole is really a big community," he said. "We do everything we can to support each other."

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