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Self-Expression



Tattoos becoming more socially acceptable

By Jessica Gordon
Rocket Contributor

Is your body a blank canvas? Years ago, many people could say yes to this question, but in recent years, more and more people are beginning to express themselves through the art of tattooing. So how exactly is it done? According to the Mayo Clinic Web site, the procedure involves "a needle that's connected to a small machine with tubes containing dye (that) pierces the skin repeatedly—an action that resembles that of a sewing machine."

"With every puncture, the needle inserts tiny ink droplets. The process, which may last up to several hours for a large tattoo, causes a small amount of bleeding and minor to potentially significant pain."

So then why are more people

getting tattoos, especially if they are permanent and the process can be painful?

Jeremy Brannigan, the main tattoo artist at Tattoo U Body Art on Main Street in Slippery Rock, said he thinks



Tattoo U, located on Main Street, does about 10 to 12 tattoos a week, tattoo artist Jeremy Brannigan said.

the main reason is because they are becoming more socially acceptable and for some, can be extremely addictive.

Working in the only tattoo shop

within walking distance of the SRU campus, Brannigan said the shop normally does about 10 to 12 tattoos each week.

Though he's only been at Tattoo U since last April, Brannigan explained that he loves doing tattoos and has been a tattoo artist for about eight years.

Brannigan said that while the tattoos may be becoming more socially acceptable, the reasons for getting the tattoos still vary from person to person.

A tattoo can represent something through a picture, words, or a symbol.

While some tattoos are spur-of-the-moment decisions, TV shows like "Miami Ink" are also showing that many people get tattoos to represent something of personal significance to them, such as a tribute to a loved one who has

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Not just for the ear anymore Students take a stab at individuality

By Liz Glazier
Rocket Assistant Focus Editor

"You don't need any more holes in your head!"

Chances are that a lot of the people with a body piercing could say that they have heard this advice before.

But despite this guidance, they go ahead and get something pierced anyway.

In fact, according to a study involving 766 body-pierced college students given by Rutgers University Health Center and the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, 69 percent of these students with a piercing got it between the ages of 18 and 22.

This means the majority of students in the survey got their piercing sometime during their years in college, a time when many students acquire a certain sense of freedom and try things that may help express their personality.

For Aaron Leddon, a business major, this meant getting his lip pierced.

"I've wanted to do it for about two years now," said Leddon, 19. "I had some extra money and just decided to do it."

Leddon said that he likes how it looks and it goes along with his personality. He also said he doesn't mind what older people may think of his lip ring.

"If they are going to judge me on only that, then I don't really care," Leddon said.

Others, like Ashley Rice, 19, a sophomore exploratory major, let the disapproval of a family member lead to the removal of her piercing, which was a lip stud.

"I saw a girl that had it on Facebook and I thought it was really cute, so I literally went and got it done an hour later," Rice said. "But my older brother didn't like it and made me take it out."

Rice said the thing she liked most about it was the fact that not everyone has a lip stud and how it made her just a little bit more unique.

For SRU students who want a piercing, one local piercing shop is Micky's Tattoo Studio, located on Route 422 in Butler.

Quinn Long, an employee at Micky's, does most of the piercing and said an average day consists of piercing anywhere from five to 10 people.

"A lot of people come in here nervous but mostly anxious because they really want to have it done," Long said.

Long said she pierces people of all ages.

Although a popular request for young teens is the belly button, Long said that the nostril is definitely the most common piercing.

This holds true for 19-year-old sophomore biology major Amanda McKenna, who wanted to do something that none of her friends thought she would do: get her nose pierced.

"Some of my friends were surprised, but they really liked it," McKenna said.

McKenna said she thinks her piercing is a form of self-expression because it is one of her unique qualities.

Self-expression doesn't always come at a cheap price.

When it comes to the price of a piercing, different body parts have different costs.

For example, getting the

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Freshman Aaron Leddon said his lip piercing didn't hurt when he got it done.

Non-traditional hair growing in popularity

By Chelsey Rovesti
Rocket Contributor

Thirty years ago, to find a person with tattoos, piercings and unnatural hair color was a rarity. But in recent years, self-expression has been at its peak, and people are no longer afraid to express themselves through their hair, dress and body.

For many people, hair may just be something to wash, brush and take care of every morning. For others at SRU, like Zabrina Rodgers, hair is a way for students to express themselves without words.

Rodgers, a freshman communication major, has been dying her currently black hair with a bleach-blonde streak in the front since she was 14 years old.

"I like having my hair dyed (and) I feel weird if I don't have it this way," Rodgers said. "I have dyed my streaks and tips red, purple, pink,

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Junior political science major Alex McNeill says the only places she wears shoes on campus are in the dining halls and the health center.

Not wearing shoes rare to some, but comfortable, normal for two

By Jessica Rupell
Rocket Focus Editor

Americans, and especially American women, love shoes.

In fact, according to the Reuters Web site, "a poll of 1,057 women by the Consumer Reports National Research Center for shopping magazine ShopSmart found U.S. women on average own 19 pairs of shoes."

However, shoes aren't important to everyone, such as Alex McNeill, 20, a junior political science major.

McNeill, who is known around campus for her political T-shirts, long skirts and strong opinions, is also known for something else: she doesn't wear shoes.

"The campus is just so beautiful," McNeill said. "There is so much green space and I just like the way

it feels."

McNeill said her non-shoe wearing days began during the summer of 2006 when she was working at a Girl Scout camp.

She said it was like a home away from home, and she began to feel so comfortable there that she ended up not wearing shoes except for hikes.

Since then, she often chooses not to wear shoes at all and said the only places on campus she will wear them are the dining halls and the health center.

This means that even classrooms aren't off limits for her. "Only one professor has ever asked about it," McNeill said. "But just out of curiosity, not because they were trying to stop me."

Even the weather doesn't stop McNeill.

McNeill said that she loves to walk or run in the rain and that she actually gets better traction in the rain without shoes than with her flip flops. Not even snow can stop her.

"I only start to wear shoes when snow actually starts to stick to the ground," she said. "But even then I usually wear flip flops and take them off when I get inside."

Though she prefers not to wear shoes, McNeill doesn't do it to be rebellious and will respect a shoe policy in any public place.

"I always have them (shoes) with me in my bag, just in case," she said.

At home, she wears shoes in restaurants and her church, though she mentioned the church she attends here is a bit more laid back and she can get away

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