

A painful art form



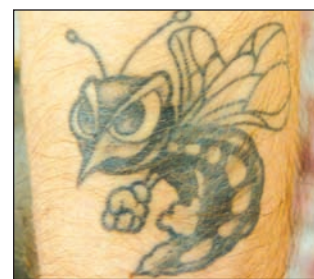
Bettie Page burlesque pin up model on fire tattoo on Andrea Jacobson's forearm. Jacobson prefers pin up artwork as well as Anime as a reflection of who she is.



Above: Cover art from the seven-inch record from the band Vindictive on Eddie Howlett's forearm. Howlett's choice of tattoos is a bit comical as well as nostalgic of his yester years.

Lower Left: Tribal wings symbolizing the spirit of a best friend that past away in an over dose on the back of Tavia Shepherd. All the ink work on Shepherd's body has symbolized her troubles and tribulations in life. They have become a sort of autobiography.

Below: Mickey's Malt Liquor bee on Eddie Howlett's forearm. A group of friends have the same tattoo.



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Photography
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There are many reasons why someone chooses to get a tattoo. It can be hard to understand for those who decide never get one. For those opt to go through the pain it is a different story all together.

Getting a tattoo is not an easy task; there is a needle that punctures the skin at over hundred times per minute. It takes time, from half an hour and in some cases years.

The reasons vary; they can be a memorial to a lost loved one, the simple nostalgia of

friendship or the love of artistic forms. It can be very personal or just a big joke.

For Andrea Jacobson, the passion of tattoos comes from her love of pin up art, Hello Kitty design and Anime.

"I got my first tattoo when I was 18, it was the Hello Kitty character," Jacobson said.

From there she moved on to pin up art models such as Betty Page and Anime cartoon characters. "It hurt but I was happy with the turn out of my Hello Kitty tattoo," Jacobson said.

Tavia Shepherd's reason for her tattoos is a personal one. In a life full of addiction to

opiates, she has chosen to get tattoos to remember the hardship. Her first tattoo was when she was a young teenager. She was intoxicated and when she sobered up she had a tattoo on her breast.

"I tried to rub it off but it was not coming off," Shepherd said.

Later in life she lost her best friend to a drug overdose. To remember her spirit she decided that she would get a set of wings on her shoulder blades. "It was a way for her to fly away into the sky and at the same time a way for her to stay with me in spirit," Shepherd said.

As Shepherd started recovery it was time for a new tattoo to symbolize her transformation in recovery. "In recovery you start out as an ugly bug, like a caterpillar. Then you go into a cocoon stage where one begins to transform. Soon there after you have been sober and in recovery you CHANGE, transformed into something beautiful like a butterfly," Shepherd said about her tattoo on her neck.

When Eddie Howlett was 21 he decided to get a shamrock, but when he got to the tattoo parlor he realized it was too expensive so he opted to get a

bottle of liquor, which was much smaller and cheaper. At 26 he decided it was time for more ink. "It is the Mickey's Malt Liquor bee. Its nostalgic, a group of my good friends all have the same tattoo. It is all about our younger years when we hung out and drank Mickey's," Howlett said. His latest ink is from the cover of the Vindictive seven-inch record. "I love the design. It is comical a smarmy" Howlett said.

What ever the reason is to get a tattoo one must understand that it will be forever on you skin. Once it on it's not easy to come off.