

Think ink

Tattooing vogue leaves a permanent mark

I like to do interesting things on the weekends. Sitting around and watching TV is nice, but it becomes less than mundane after a while.

This weekend my girlfriend and I went to Omaha and got tattoos. It definitely was not boring.

I am not sure what in the world possessed me to get my first tattoo two years ago. I had fretted over the event for weeks. Ever since I had come to college, I had known people who had one (or two or three). I decided that I wanted one too. I then spent about a year thinking about what it was I wanted. I finally settled on a yin-yang on my right shoulder.

So three friends and I went to a shop here in Lincoln, and we each got one. Over the course of two days, we spent eight hours there. All four of us walked out with a different design, and to this day we laugh about that weekend.

I think the thing that I remember most about both times is the people. When I got my first, the work was done by a man from China. He told us about his family and how he had lived all over the world. He explained that he enjoyed giving people tattoos and felt it was his art. He enjoyed doing large pieces. He had a guy in the shop who demonstrated this for us. The guy, who was wearing shorts, took off his shirt and showed us this snake that went from the tip of his toe to his neck. If the snake were to be straightened out, it would measure 12 feet. The guy was definitely different.

Another fun character in Omaha was Jarhead. Jar was not one of the guys doing any of the work, but rather a large guy who came in with



Jody Burke

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a 12-pack of beer and a dazed look on his face just to hang out. He apparently is some sort of tattoo shop groupie.

It was overall an interesting experience. My girlfriend and I are both happy with what we got. But the question remains why anyone would do this to himself or herself not just once but twice.

Some say that tattoos are an expression of self, or that they are mobile art.

The two tattoos I have are symbols of things that I believe in. They also look dandy.

But why scar our bodies for life?

It hurts to get one. Nothing severe, but after 2 1/2 hours of being poked with needles, your skin is roached. Why go through with it?

I guess for me it seemed natural. I have been drawing on myself since I was first able to hold a marker. I would come home from school, and my mother would ask why I had drawn a war scene on my thigh. To this day, I really don't know. It seemed like a good idea at the time.

I can't say that I recommend it to everyone, but I don't regret it a bit. I think to myself that at some point I will have to explain to my children why daddy has a big dragon on his calf. But, maybe it will make me the most popular dad on the block.

One thing I would recommend to someone thinking of getting one is: Get it where it is not readily visible. A year down the line you may decide to become a stockbroker, and then it could hinder advancement opportunities to have a green ink spider web spanning your face.

Maybe tattoos are to the '90s what wide collars were to the '70s. Maybe our age group will look back in embarrassment, thinking "what in the hell was I doing?"

For me, the experience was worth it. Friends and I now have a memory that is definitely different from most. We lived through this really weird experience; we have these funny little designs to show for the pain.

In the long run, I suppose it could have been worse. I could have gotten my nose pierced.

Burke is a senior English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Carpe diem

Spring Break more than soaking up sunshine

Sweet freedom sits on the horizon. Maybe you have one more test to squeak through. Or another composition to write. But by dusk on Friday, the calculators, thesauruses and laptops will all be abandoned. Academic demands will be put on hold for 10 days.

Spring Break '96: a well-earned respite from school. The break is a gift, really. Okay, it's not wrapped in a parcel with some big sloppy bow. But it's a chunk of time.

And you're being prodded to go make something of it for yourself.

With this gift, it's not important who's giving it or why. It is important that it's accepted and appreciated. Life doesn't often give up time without occupying it somehow.

I suppose some of you are standing there, paralyzed by the brilliant possibilities of this free time.

This is much like the reaction of the imprisoned hound when he first realizes the gate has been unlatched — he's stunned by his dumb luck. As the barricade swings open, the lucky dog is beckoned to follow his every whim, to frolic and run in search of bright red fire hydrants. So you're free, but maybe the dream vacation you'd hoped for didn't materialize.

For some, this "break" means only that they have a week off from classes. A cursory survey at the Union this week revealed that a fair number of students will work during break.

An observation I've made during my tenure here at UNL is that my peers work their tails off. Many students juggle school, one (or several) part-time jobs, recreation and sleep. And from personal experience, when one of those balls drops, it's usually sleep.

This is probably why many people I spoke with about spring



Kelly Johnson

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break nearly giggled at the very idea of a week with more sleep, if nothing else.

Okay, so tickets to Mazatlan fell beyond the grasp of your credit limit. And your great-aunt Gertrude lent her beach home in Florida to a cousin on the other side of the family. And Harris Laboratories has no medical studies for which you qualify.

Note the hound, who sleuths out a fire hydrant on the next block if the first one he encounters is being used for another soaking.

Stop moping. All things considered, having no travel plans may be the least of your worries. Where you are matters little. Now, what you're doing ... that's a different matter entirely.

An adventure is waiting for you, wherever you will be next week.

Think of the possibilities. You could read that favorite childhood book you've always wanted to return to.

Here's a bit of frivolity to put you in the mood:

"The time has come," the Walrus said, "To talk of many things: Of shoes — and ships — and sealing-wax — Of cabbages — and kings — And why the sea is boiling hot — And whether pigs have wings." — Lewis Carroll
Through the Looking Glass

Or you could take the ultimate literary journey by reading Moby Dick. Heck, you've got an entire week, right?

Write your gramps and gram. Or even better, visit them.

Enjoy a video renaissance: Rent a rusty western, a sigh-and-chuckle romantic comedy, a cartoon classic and something with spaceships.

Memorize a Dr. Seuss rhyme.

Gaze at the night sky. Find Orion.

Plant a bucket of tulip bulbs.

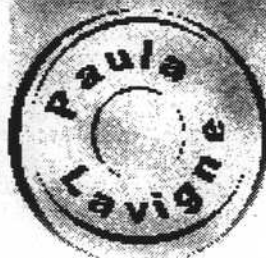
Make homemade cinnamon rolls for your roommate, who also happens to be stranded.

Henry Van Dyke said, "Be glad of life because it gives you a chance to love and to work and to play and to look up at stars."

Yes, be glad of life. And of breaks in the routine. You've made the most of your work-time. Now go gonzo with play. The gauntlet has been thrown down: how will you spend your break?

Johnson is a senior news-editorial and English major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Letters from Dublin



Irish eyes a'laughin at U.S. St. Patrick

Paula Lavigne

You may think it's really novel to be in Dublin for St. Patrick's Day, but the green holiday is actually given more fanfare in America.

Here, it used to be revered as a holy saint's day. Now, it's a national holiday and an excuse to wake up the next morning with a painful hangover.

Parades from New York to O'Neill (that's in north-central Nebraska for all you city slickers) are on a slice of the "kiss me I'm Irish" silliness in America. They dye the river green in Chicago, but the Liffey, the river running through Dublin, stays its normal murky black.

Irish ranks as the second most common ethnicity in America (German is first). The potato famines in the 1800s and continuing high unemployment account for the massive emigration to the United States. It goes on today.

Politically, the ties to Ireland are well known, starting with J.F.K. and continuing to Sen. Edward Kennedy and U.S. Ambassador Gene Kennedy-Smith. The late Tip O'Neill, Sens. George Mitchell and Daniel Patrick Moynihan and the Congressional Friends of Ireland group have also had their hands in Irish affairs. More than 15 U.S. presidents have traceable Irish lineage, including President Bill Clinton.

Thus, it is no coincidence that Clinton is Irish-American of the year. The reception he received in Dublin in November rivaled any he could get in the states. He was the first president to visit Northern Ireland, and he has been adored by the citizens for his help in furthering the peace process there.

Everyone I've talked to in the south and north love the guy, even the hard-line Catholics, and a lot of media speculation says he's the key to bringing Ireland and England together for peace.

America has had a counteractive hand in the peace process — a hand with a powerful trigger finger.

To put it bluntly and truthfully, the Irish Republican Army has survived on American guns, money and support and wouldn't exist without its overseas invest-

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ment. It's sad, really, because so many Irish-Americans have been disillusioned as to what this paramilitary group really is and what "cause" it supports.

My mother worked with a woman who donated money to the IRA (she says) through an American Irish Republican fund-raising group called NORAD. The FBI "contacted" her soon after, I was told. She said she gave money just because she was Irish.

Oh well. The "real" Irish laugh at the many Americans who come over here to trace their roots. They've made quite a business out of it. Tourism is the No. 1 industry in Ireland, you know. You can buy the little green hats and stuffed Leprechauns in the stores, but it's like selling straw hits and corn cobs at an Interstate 80 rest stop.

Actually, in a funny twist, March 17 is also Mother's Day in Ireland, so people can drag Mom out to the St. Patrick's Day parade as a little treat.

Speaking of the parade (and what a nice transition) the Cornhusker Marching Band will be in Dublin for that. I've missed being able to strike up a conversation with every man, woman, child and dog about the Fiesta Bowl for two months now.

Anyhow, back in the states, if you want to celebrate St. Patrick's Day as if you were in Dublin, buy yourself a glass of Guinness and complain about the weather.

Cheers.
Lavigne is a Junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

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