

Eastern Ink

Henna offers temporary alternative to pain of tattoos

Since Madonna's music video "Frozen," henna, an ancient Indian art form, has burst into Hollywood creating the newest look for celebrities and the public alike. Contrary to popular belief, henna, also known as mehndi, is not actually a temporary tattoo. Henna is safe, temporary and painless, but it is actually a dye extracted from the hawsonia inermis plant found in Egypt, India, Iran and Pakistan, which dyes the skin, nails and/or hair a dark brown to light orange color.

Vasuda Bhatia, an electrical engineering graduate student, said the process of applying henna to oneself begins with a paste and ends with it being squeezed onto any body part.

"We first make a paste with water from leaves and put it in a cone like those

used for cake decorating," Bhatia said. "The dye gives the color to hands and feet. We let the hands and feet dry for three to four hours, depending on how dark you want the design to be."

There are books available with samples that can be copied, but most people draw the designs free-hand.

Ganesa Gopalakrishnan, a senior lecturer for the chemistry department, said henna is safe.

"It has no toxins, it is as harmless as the vegetables we eat," he said. "There are no additives, it is simply the crushed leaves with water, which is the paste-like substance."

Sheila Krishan, a freshman biomedical science major, said the dye is used mainly in India and Pakistan wedding ceremonies.

"Henna is used to decorate both hands and feet during wedding ceremonies, it is a decoration, like jewelry for festive occasions," Krishan said. "Many classical dancers use the henna for decoration."

"The amount of time that it (henna) takes to actually apply also varies, it takes approximately three hours for a bride because of the elaborate designs," Bhatia said.

Bhatia said the mehndi lasts anywhere from one week to a month and then slowly fades away.

Zaneta Gonzalez, assistant manager of Claire's in Post Oak Mall, said they are trying to popularize henna in the Bryan/College Station area.

"We've carried henna, which, here, are temporary tattoos for about six or seven months," Gonzalez said. "Not many people knew about it before Madonna wore it, but now a lot of people want to try it."

Although the henna powder can be purchased at herb, health food or Indian stores, Claire's actually carries temporary tattoos resembling henna.

"The henna we sell stays on for about four to six weeks and cost about \$12," Gonzalez said. "We also sell henna markers used to draw the design yourself, it looks a lot like the real thing."

Gonzalez said henna is not restricted to the hands.

"There is henna for the palms, toes, neck and ankle," she said. Brijesha Shah, a senior marketing major, said along with the decorative purposes people have found other uses for the mehndi that are therapeutic.

"I always wondered if there was a purpose behind mehndi, but I found there is not a religious meaning behind it," Shah said. "Although there is a scientific meaning, which is the cooling effect when applied to the scalp, hands and feet."

Krishan said henna is used for relieving stress and is very soothing. "Mehndi is also used as a natural hair coloring, it is supposed to

SEE HENNA ON PAGE 5.



Story by
Hina Patel
Photo by
Guy Rogers

Congratulations!

Aggieland Credit Union®, a branch of Greater TEXAS® Federal Credit Union would like to welcome it's newest board member to the GTFCU family. Aggieland Credit Union and Greater TEXAS Federal Credit Union are proud to announce the election of Jack W. Falks to our Board of Directors.

A credit union is a non-profit financial cooperative designed to offer real savings and real alternatives to its' members and their financial needs. Without the benevolence and generosity from our volunteers, as seen with our Board of Directors, the credit union and the credit union movement would not find the success and growth that it enjoys.

Please join us in congratulating Mr. Jack W. Falks on his latest achievement.

Aggieland Credit Union &

Greater TEXAS Federal Credit Union

Owned by those we serve since 1952



Mr. Jack W. Falks 85',
Director of Student &
Administrative
Services,
Texas A&M University
Health Science Center

Aggieland Credit Union
providing the students, faculty, and staff of Texas
A&M with financial services including:
The Aggie Card, Aggie Bucks, and Student Loans

AGGIELAND
CREDIT UNION

a branch of Greater TEXAS Federal Credit Union

201 Southwest Pkwy. E & 501 University Dr. W

409-696-1440 800-999-0310

www.gtfcu.org www.aggielandcu.org www.bonfire.org

"At Your Service"