

## Permanent Memories

Students share their reasons for getting tattoos and the stories behind them

By LINDSEY FIELDER  
THE BATTALION

Graham Criglow, a junior wildlife and fisheries sciences major, has been getting inked for nine years. Criglow said he has more than 30 tattoos and got his first tattoo when he was 16.

"I've always liked art and drawing," Criglow said. "It's like having a piece of artwork that's gonna be with me forever."

Each tattoo represents different times in his life, he said.

"I have every type of tattoo," Criglow said. "They reflect different things that remind me of times in my life and things that make me happy."

People react to the tattoos in different ways, he said. Some people will ask questions and are really open, but others turn away when they see the tattoos, Criglow said.

"I sometimes forget I have [the tattoos]," he said. "Other people notice them more than I do."

Criglow said his parents are accepting of his tattoos, but his grandparents are thrown off by them. For older generations, tattoos have a stigma about them, he said.

"Only criminals and Harley guys used to get tattoos, so my grandparents aren't as accepting as younger people are," Criglow said.

Criglow said he thinks younger generations are not appalled by his tattoos because more students are open to getting tattoos than previous generations.

Joker, a tattoo artist at AggieLand Tattoo, said most of his clients are students.

"The majority of people that come in here are students," Joker said. "Seventy-five percent of them are female."

The most popular tattoos are butterflies and tribal designs. Many students also want the A&M block let-

ter logo, he said.

"I try to get people to change it up and do some custom work to make their tattoo unique," Joker said. "Most of the time, they want the block letters in plain black, though."

Members of the Corps of Cadets are also part of Joker's clientele. Cadets often bring in the logo for their outfit, Joker said. The fish usually come together and all get the design together.

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— Graham Criglow  
junior wildlife  
and fisheries sciences major

Patriotic tattoos have become more popular since Sept. 11. Joker said he had never done an American flag before the tragedy and has done nine or 10 since.

The busiest time for a tattoo artist is on Friday and Saturday nights. Joker said the later it gets, the more people start to show up. Most students have not planned to get their tattoo until that night, he said.

However, tattoo bearers must deal with the pain. Joker said most students seem to think the pain is bearable.

"While it's going on, it's the worst pain ever," he said. "Once it's over, though, they say it's not that bad."

Criglow said a shot hurts worse than getting a tat-

too. To deal with the minor discomfort, he said he sometimes takes a friend to distract him.

"I concentrate on relaxing," Criglow said. "I kinda psych myself out."

Matt Morrison, a junior recreation, park and tourism sciences major, has two tattoos.

Morrison's first tattoo is a dragon on his lower back he got when he turned 18. He said his motivation for getting this tattoo was to rebel against the norm.

Morrison said the dragon took an hour and a half to complete.

"I could feel the pain all the way from my teeth to my feet because it was on my spine," he said.

A year and a half ago, Morrison and some of his buddies in the Corps got the old AMC symbol on their legs.

"We had planned it ahead," he said. "A bunch of us wanted to get together and get something to symbolize the accomplishment of our fish year."

The tattoo represents his commitment to his buddies and the organization he got it for, Morrison said.

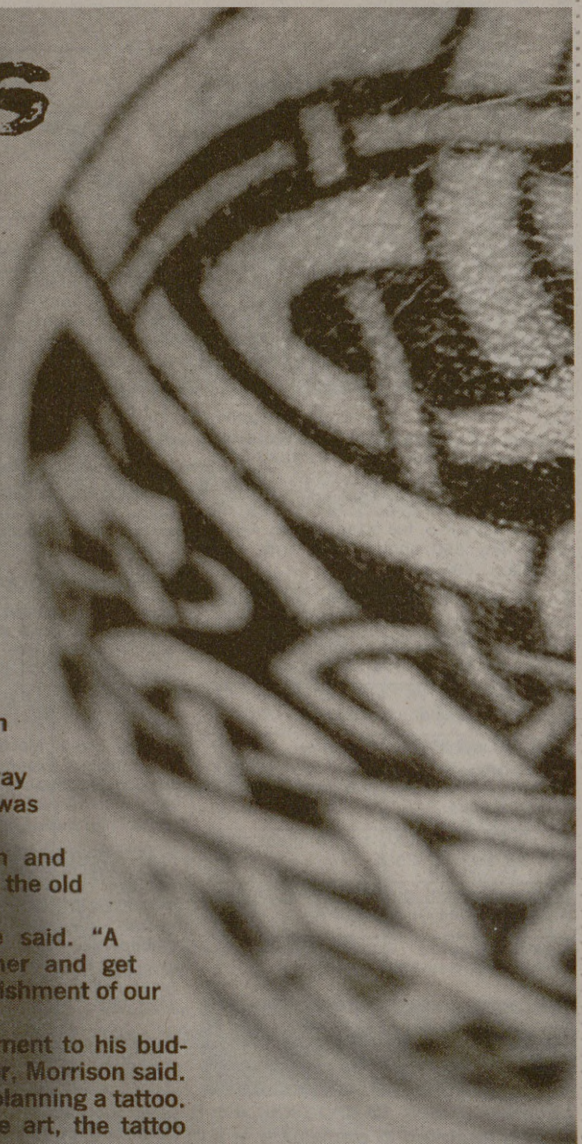
Criglow said several steps go into planning a tattoo. Consideration must be made to the art, the tattoo shop itself and sterilization.

"I would tell someone getting a tattoo to have a well-thought out plan," he said.

Criglow said sterilization is also a major concern when planning a tattoo. Look for a place that opens the needles in front of the customers, he said.

Criglow said he does not regret any of his tattoos. The pain is worth it and they are there for life, he said.

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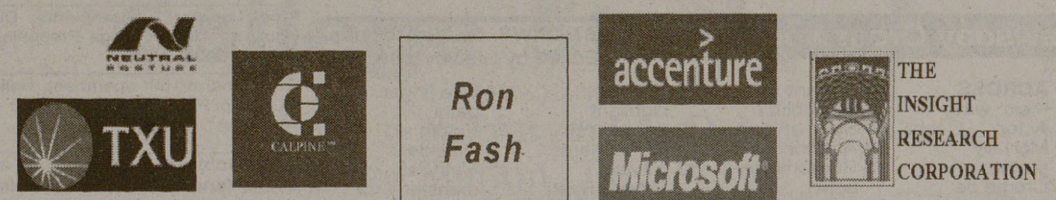
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