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**On Thursday**  
Believe what you hear: The Carolines play Eugene with Gin Blossoms

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*Daily*

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## A marriage made in ink

A love affair with tattoos begins with daydreams and results in a loving, life-long commitment

**Nika Carlson**  
Pulse Columnist

One of my best friends got married Sunday. She was the first of my close group of high-school girl friends "down the tubes," as her mother so delicately put it. Mom was obviously handling things very well.

While the mother of the bride dealt with her pre-wedding jitters, my own mom was having a separate subtle freak-out about my recent lifetime commitment. She kept trying to cover my bare arms, despite the tropical temperature — a fruitless attempt to cover the brightly colored tattoo that had been inked into my left arm three days before.

My tattoo was the end result of years of thought and nerves and desire. I was proud of it and wanted it to be seen by everyone.

And no, the needles didn't hurt — that much. My roommate, who got matching swallows tattooed on her chest several months ago, describes her relationship with her tattoos as a love affair. I feel the same way about mine. The arc of its devel-

opment mimics that of any intimate relationship. I've thought about getting a tattoo for years. During high school, I had daydreams about what sort of design I wanted, the same way most girls ponder their future first love: kisses, white dresses, cakes and needles in my arm. *Tres romantique.*

As I got older, my personality solidified, and so did my tattoo ideas. I became enamored with classic designs: Picture 1920s-era sailors and side-show circus freaks with hearts inked on their chests and pin-up girls caressing their forearms. I liked the bold simplicity of the designs. I also admired the sentiment behind the tattoos. These were people who were not afraid to express their individuality in an era when body art was considered crass and risqué.

I found my inspiration more than a year ago, while perusing "1000 Tattoos," produced by the well-known art book publisher Taschen. In addition to hundreds of pictures both new and old, it has dozens of pages of classic tattoo designs. The drawing I found was a swallow swooping down over a rose, created by "Tattoo Peter" in the 1950s. It was simple, pretty and perfect. I had just reached the infatuation stage.

I couldn't stop thinking about it. It was more than just physical attraction. I liked what it represented. Sailors got swallow tattoos to help them navigate and get safely home. I've been sailing

since I was eight years old, and I became immersed in that culture. I also liked the idea of having a symbolic connection to home. And the rose? Well, that's just Americana eye candy.

The crush lasted for several months. But as with all new relationships, its once charming quirks started to wear on me. Fortunately, unlike people, tattoo designs can be changed, at least before they are inked. I tweaked the design until it was perfect. Things were getting serious.

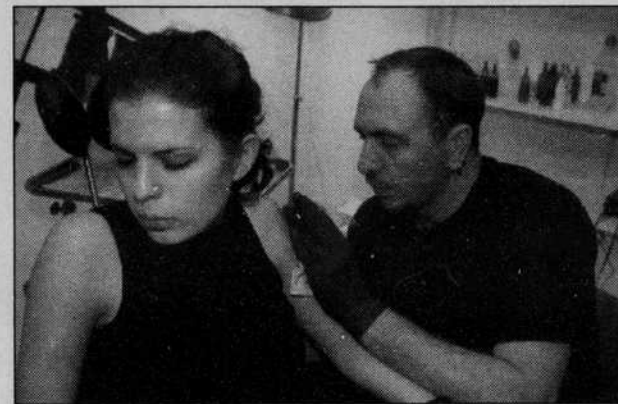
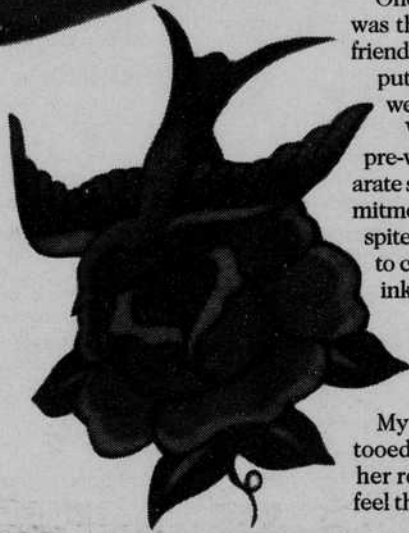
We had our ups and downs. I wanted it. I didn't. I wanted it again. I just couldn't make the commitment.

The final push came just before Christmas. My roommate got her swallows done. They were gorgeous and I was jealous. I felt like I was staring from the sidelines in a flouncy, teal taffeta dress: always the bridesmaid, never the bride. Her tattoo artist, Julien at Primal Body Piercing on East 13th Avenue, did a fantastic job. He is also an ordained minister — how appropriate.

In the days leading up to my appointment, I suffered from massive anxiety. I couldn't sleep. When I did sleep, I dreamt about it. On "The Day," however, I felt nothing but excitement.

Julien, his assistant and I worked on the design for nearly an hour, redrawing it until it was exactly

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Photos: Adam Amato Emerald

## Dreadlocks transcend time as a relaxed hairstyle

The precise history of dreadlocks may be difficult to outline, but this hairdo's unique style is timeless

**Aaron Shakra**  
Pulse Reporter

Providing a history of dreadlocks is a dense endeavor, as tangled and matted as each lock of the hair itself. Or perhaps it should be called a lack of hairstyle.

It's hard to trace the history of dreads back to any single point of origin. The more information a seeker uncovers on the quest for a definitive story, the more complicated and obscure it becomes. In cases such as these, the best thing to do is provide information that reliably correlates across the spectrum of available sources.

Dreadlocks are a naturally occurring phenomenon. Perhaps this is obvious — if a person neglects to maintain their hair, dread-

locks will begin to form. In this sense, dreadlocks have been around since the dawn of humankind, because, clearly, there was a time when combs had yet to be invented.

A religion intimately associated with dreadlocks is Rastafarianism, which officially formed in 1930 and was influenced by the philosophical doctrines of Marcus Garvey. Rastafarianism's place of origin was originally Jamaica, although the religion and its influence transcends beyond any one place or country.

Harald Hammarstrom, who formerly maintained a Web site about dreadlocks, recounted a brief history of the style's origin. "There's solid evidence for at least five genres, namely: India (say from 1000 B.C. or further back), Papua New Guinea (20th century or further back), Aztec Indians (16th century) and various tribes in East Africa (since the 19th century at least) and West Africa (since the 19th century at least)," he wrote in an e-mail.

Hammarstrom also acknowledged biblical connections with dreads, but said that the meaning of the word "dreadlock" in the book is ambiguous.

Because dreadlocks mean many different things to so many people, they can signify more than any of these descriptions. However, people most often wear them in one of two ways. One involves displaying them in the sense of setting, or embracing a fashion statement. This is a growing trend across the Pacific Northwest. The other mode involves a deeper, more thoughtful and conscious choice. In this sense, the decision to externally sport dreadlocks is merely one part of a larger choice. Of course, in both cases, one's personal identity is reflected in the decision — more so than any other hairstyle because dreadlocks are so obvious and pronounced.

Lane Community College student Alyssa

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Aaron Shakra Emerald

Lane Community College student Alyssa Van Pelt used patience and a mixture of ingredients to form her dreads.