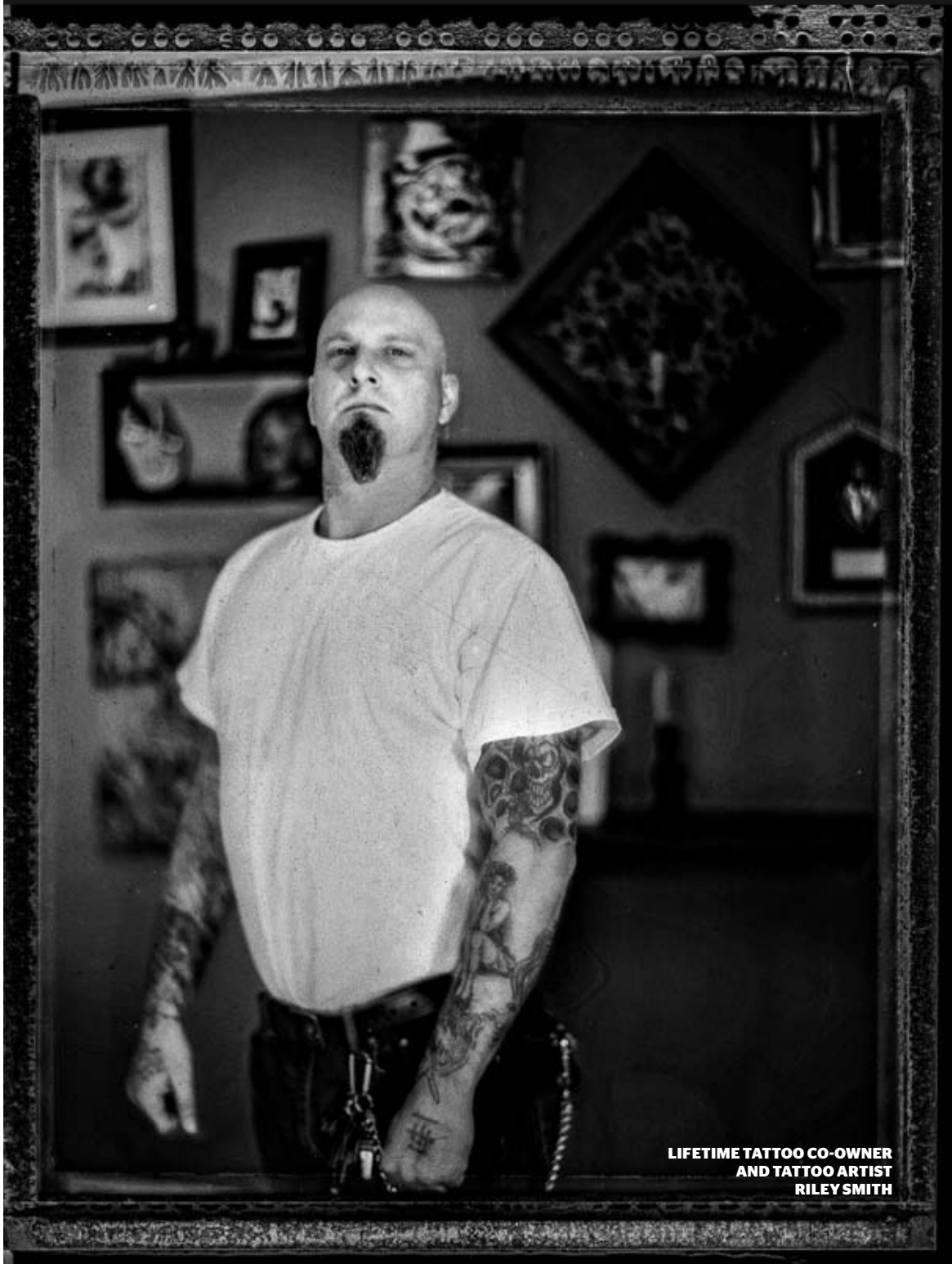




**LIFETIME TATTOO CO-OWNER
AND TATTOO ARTIST
RILEY SMITH**

PHOTO BY TRASK BEDORTHA

Ten months later — and with long days and countless hours served by everyone involved — Evergreen has become a reality. Carlton and Smith enlisted the aid of Damon Conklin, who organizes the annual Seattle Tattoo Expo and who provided invaluable advice. “There’s literally no how-to book on how to do this,” Smith says, “so we had to write it. It’s pretty amazing that we pulled it off. It’s kind of a dream for us to put it together. I also kind of felt like it was our responsibility.”

Carlton says he always “secretly fantasized” about organizing a convention that centers more strongly than most on the “art” in tattoo artist. “I was just like, ‘What if a tattoo artist put it on?’ and we didn’t necessarily have a freak show aspect about it,” he says. “That struck a goal orientation in me. I want to leave my mark, no pun intended.”

Although Carlton and Smith say they appreciate other local and national conventions, they both agree that Evergreen offers a new look at the tattoo community — one that is family friendly and aesthetically intense. Along with a full slate of workshops hosted by the likes of Ian Robert McKown (“Light and Shadow”) and James Kern (“Tattooing the Impossible”), the public can enjoy live music, acrobatic performances, a rock climbing wall, food vendors and a beer garden, as well as a special appearance by Butch Patrick, who played Eddie Munster on the ‘60s TV cult classic *The Munsters* (there’s a Munsters Ink tattoo ink line). Harley-Davidson, one of the expo’s sponsors, is shipping in 16 of its finest bikes from around the West Coast to put on display, and Habitat for Humanity will have an info booth as well. Smith says he’s hoping to involve more charities in years to come.

Carlton points out that, of course, Evergreen also offers a chance for first-timers and veterans alike to get their skin inked by artists they’d otherwise have to hop a plane to visit. “They’re bringing their A-game,” Carlton says, adding that he’s looking forward to the healthy competition among tattoo artists working side-by-side this weekend. Each night will end with an awards ceremony, where a trophy — designed for the event by Carlton — will be awarded for the best tattoo of the day. “This is all about raising the bar,” he explains. “I, for one, am incredibly excited to see what’s going to happen at our show.” ■

Evergreen Tattoo Expo runs Friday through Sunday, Feb. 21-23, at Willamalane Center, 250 S. 32nd St., in Springfield; day passes \$10 adv., \$12 door, ages 10 and under free; \$25/\$30 adv. for weekend passes; must be 18 with ID to get tattooed; for more information and a complete schedule of events, visit evergreentattoo.com.



TATTOO BY SARAH MILLER



TATTOO BY JASON BUTCHER



TATTOO BY CHAD CHASE



PAINTING BY JOSHUA CARLTON