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WEEKEND BREAK

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RETHINKING

TATTOOING



Photos by Colin Murphey

Daniel Valdez, right, looks away as Kevin Fink works on his tattoo.

Tattoos, once taboo, have special significance for each person who gets one

By **PATTY HARDIN**
 For The Daily Astorian

Tattooing has been practiced for centuries throughout the world. The oldest mummified body, with 61 tattoos, was found embedded in glacial ice in the Alps and dated to about 3,250 BC.

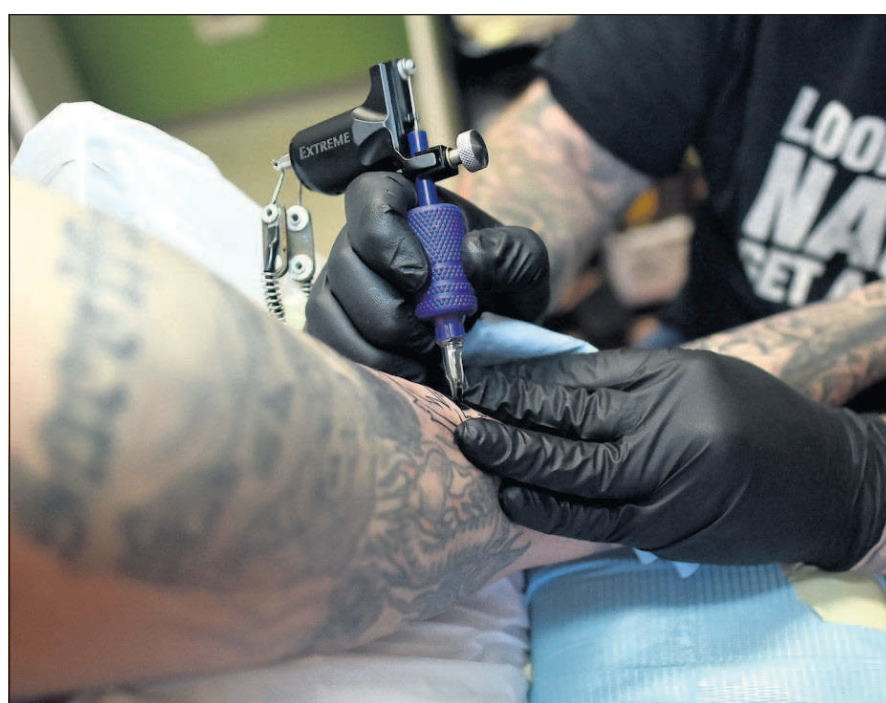
But tattooing has often been considered uncivilized in the western world.

"In the earlier days of tattooing, it was construction workers, people in the military, bikers and ex-felons who sported tattoos," said Chris Lee, owner of Shanghaied Tattoo Parlor in Astoria.

"People who don't have tattoos often ask themselves what kind of lifestyle a tattooed person has," he said.

Many people who get tattoos now are of an age when tattoos were not exactly taboo, but certainly not accepted by most of society.

In the past, more men than women got tattoos. Now Lee sees more women get-



Kevin Fink adds shading to a tattoo on his apprentice, Daniel Valdez.

ting tattoos than men.

Lee tries not to work on a person more than three hours at a time. "Any longer than that can make it difficult for the tattoo artist to remain sharp. I want people to come back more often to finish their tattoos," he said. "I try to keep the process

simple so people will come back and refer their friends."

He suggests that people know what they're getting into with a tattoo. For example, know the approximate dollar amount and length of time the inking will take.

"Hydration is most important," Lee said. "Make sure you are well hydrated before the artist starts on your tattoo."

Why is hydration so critical? Dry skin is more susceptible to tearing by the tattoo instruments.

Body art

Cathy Lucero, from Antioch, California, a mother of four and grandmother of two, got her first tattoo when she was 40.

"A friend and I went together to celebrate our birthdays," Lucero said. "I wore ankle bracelets a lot, and people would comment on them, so I decided to get a rose tattoo on my ankle. It was just a rose with a little vine that didn't go all the way around my ankle."

Eventually, her kids chipped in so she could have the vine completed. "Now I have a tattooed ankle bracelet," she said.

Her grandpa had a tattoo of a hula dancer that moved when he flexed his muscles, she said. But he told her and her brother not to get tattoos.

"My mom and dad weren't too sure about me getting a tattoo, either," Lucero said. "I recall telling my mother, 'I'm a mother, I'm 40 years old, I'm getting a tattoo.'"

Lucero's youngest son, Nick, has several tattoos.

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'I THINK A TATTOO SHOULD HAVE A SPECIAL, SIGNIFICANT MEANING. THAT WAY YOU'RE NOT STUCK WITH A BARBED WIRE TATTOO YOU GOT WHEN YOU WERE IN YOUR 20s BECAUSE IT WAS 'COOL' TO HAVE.'

Tanner Scanlan | Lacey, Washington, resident who got a black tribal armband tattoo when he was 21

