

Tattoo shops

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June explained black ink comes from carbon and is often created from charred animal remains. In contrast, Eternal Ink produces black ink from charred plants.

June employs four other artists, two women and two men. Although it is not something she intended, June said she thinks it is good to have a balance in a shop. She has worked in all-female shops as well as shops where she is the only female and finds it is best to have an even mix.

June got her start in tattooing as a henna artist at a renaissance festival. She and her friend did this throughout high school and college, but eventually fell out of touch. Through what June called a serendipitous coincidence, she and her friend both ended up in California. June was a recent college graduate with no idea of what to do and her friend was a tattoo artist looking for an apprentice.

"I had never forgotten about the idea of tattooing," June said. "It had always appealed to me and I always wanted to pursue a career in art. I was always just super intimidated by the industry and intimidated by tattoo artists in general and even tattoos."

At the time, there were very few female tattoo artists and June jumped at the chance to apprentice under her friend. Every day she took a train from San Francisco to Davis, where her friend's shop was located. The apprenticeship lasted for a year and a half while she was also working another job in San Francisco.

June is originally from Asheville and after living for 12 years in San Francisco and having a child, she moved back across the country to start her own shop.

Homecoming

course, crowning a homecoming king and queen, the weekend was filled with activities to bring current students and alumni together.

Tara Carr, a 21-year-old psychology student from Charlotte, won the title of homecoming queen in the spring of 2015. She is currently studying abroad in Spain.

Carr said she is sad homecoming clashed with her studying abroad schedule because she loves all the activities so much and wished to be a part of the festivities one last time.

"I do not like the idea of homecoming in the fall because I feel like we are such



Photo by Karrigan Monk

Kimi Leger sets up her station at the shop she owns, Sacred Lotus Tattoo.

Like June and Leger, most tattoo artists become interested in the art early in life.

Galen Holland, artist and owner of Freaks and Geeks Tattoo, cites a childhood experience as igniting his love for tattoos.

"It started as a kid at the beach seeing some old-timer with a tattoo," Holland said. "From that point on I was fascinated with the art form. I didn't get an apprenticeship until later in life. Most folks start around 18. I was almost 29."

Holland said his favorite part of tattooing is carrying on the craft while also making it his own and being a positive ambassador to the art form.

a basketball-based school, it is weird to have it around soccer," said Carr. "I love soccer, but there is nothing like basketball in North Carolina."

With all the main activities in the fall semester now, Carr said there will not be any fun activities in the spring semester, if the university chooses to keep this a permanent change.

Angela Kroninger, a 21-year-old health and wellness student from Raleigh, took the title of homecoming queen at Saturday's soccer game against Winthrop.

"Being on court is a great honor, I love this school and the community here,"

Bianca Sky Kreba, an artist from Red Rabbit, grew up with a stepfather who was a tattoo artist. She said she eventually decided to pursue the art herself after spending so many years around it.

For Kreba, the best part about tattooing is getting to create art every day. Her least favorite part is having to explain to uninformed clients that sometimes ideas just are not possible, a frustration June said she shares.

"Tattoo reality shows give a pretty shitty idea of how the actual tattoo process is so I think sometimes people come in with the expectation of, 'I'm going to give you this idea and you're going to draw it up for me in ten minutes and

we're going to do it right then,'" June said. "A lot of people have a misunderstanding that custom tattoos take time and there's this sort of impatience and it's our job to explain that this is how the process is."

Most shops in Asheville have a minimum charge of \$60 and an hourly rate of around \$130.

"The reason the hourly is what it is, is — I mean tattoos are expensive," June said. "We're not getting compensated for drawing time, we're not getting compensated for any adjustments that need to be made to the drawing or time spent discussing the tattoo."

Despite the fact many shops in Asheville have similar prices and talent, very little animosity lies between them.

"I love how connected the tattoo community is here," Kreba said. "There are a lot of great artists in this town and everyone seems to really support each other, which is something I haven't always experienced in other cities."

For those wanting a first tattoo, the artists all suggest waiting to find the right artist for the client and the piece.

Leger said to look at as many portfolios as possible, to not go too small and to wait for the artist, even if they are booked for a while. Holland suggested to listen to the artist because they often know best and want to do right by the client.

"Tattoos are something that people can look at and give them inspiration throughout the day," June said. "I feel like it helps people overcome things. I feel like tattoos are a lot more powerful than just something to be cool."

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said Kroninger. "I am so excited to represent my home and everyone here."

Since autumn is Kroninger's favorite season, she said she believes the fall foliage and atmosphere will draw alumni back into the mountains to celebrate their alma mater.

Kroninger said the change from a spring homecoming to a fall one is going to take some getting used to. Adjusting to the change is just part of the process for her.

"I am not upset about it," Kroninger said. "I think it is different and change always takes time and adjustments to get used to and work with."

There definitely exists a split between students in regards to changing one of the few traditions of UNCA. Alumni seem to welcome the change with open arms.

Juliana Grassia has seen the days of freezing homecoming parades come and go, and now she is excited to see a new chapter in the university's history begin.

"I remember my first homecoming wearing mittens and leg warmers just trying to stay cozy," said Grassia. "It is definitely difficult when you want to have fun, but it is just so cold outside."