

Campus Report: University of California at Los Angeles

# Mehndi offers method for temporary tattoos

By Meghan Ward  
U-Wire

LOS ANGELES — When Corine Leseuer, a conservative woman in her 50s, greeted her husband at the door, she held out her arm to show him her new red heart-shaped tattoo with his name written across it. Charles Leseuer thought his wife had gone mad. Mid-life crisis? No, mehndi.

Mehndi, the Haitian word for henna tattoo, is the latest trend in body decoration. Painless, sanitary and inexpensive, mehndi provides an alternative for people who have trouble deciding if that fire-breathing dragon tattoo will look as cool at 80 as it does at 20.

Though henna has long been used in Western culture as natural hair dye, it has only recently become prevalent in hair salons and tattoo and piercing parlors as coloring used to create temporary tattoos on the skin.

The henna plant (*lawsonia inermis*) is a small shrub grown in the dry, hot climates of Northern Africa and Southeast Asia. The strongest natural dye in the world, henna leaves and twigs are ground into a fine powder and sifted through nylon to remove unwanted debris.

The powder is then mixed with oils to form a paste, and the paste is applied to the skin in designs ranging from traditional Indian patterns and African designs to Japanese floral decorations and art nouveau motifs.

The paste is kept moist for one half hour by dabbing it with a lemon/sugar solution. The hardened henna is left on for 6 to 20 hours and then removed with a cotton ball and vegetable oil or scraped off with the dull edge of a knife.

Once the paste is removed, the stain on the skin may range from a light orange to a dark brown or even burgundy color.

The design will typically remain two to four weeks, depending on the quality of the henna and the frequency with which one washes one's skin.

Carin Fabius and Pascal Giacomini, the owners of Gallery Lakaye in Los Angeles, Calif., opened the first all-mehndi parlor in the United States last year.

"When we first opened, we were getting as many calls for people wanting to do mehndi as people who wanted to get it done," Fabius said.

At that time, articles about mehndi were running in *People*, *Vanity Fair* and *Los Angeles* magazine. Celebrities such as Naomi Campbell, Demi Moore and Mira Sorvino had mehndi applied.

Soon hair salons and tattoo parlors began offering mehndi to customers. Realizing how little information

about mehndi was available to the general public, Fabius and Giacomini decided to focus their efforts on trade shows, trainings and mehndi supplies.

Frustrated because once henna is mixed into a paste it lasts only three days, Fabius and Giacomini hired a chemist to combine henna with a natural preservative in order to create a natural henna mixture with a shelf-life.

Seven months later, they marketed the Lakaye Mehndi Studio Earth Henna body painting kit. The kit contains everything one needs to practice mehndi and once prepared, the paste lasts up to six weeks.

In addition, with the Lakaye kit, the wet paste remains on the skin for just six hours instead of the typical 15 to 20 hours that other kits require.

Corinne Weber, a second-year world arts and cultures major at the University of California at Los Angeles, said that the hardest part is waiting for the paste to dry. "It was on for about a day. I couldn't put my arm to my body. That part was kind of annoying," Weber said.

Other mehndi artists offer color and black mehndi. Color tattoos last only three days but are convenient for those who want to test how a real tattoo would look.

Marsha Knight, web site designer and part-time mehndi artist at Angel Hair Salon on 3rd Street in Los Angeles warns her customers about black mehndi.

"One girl who came here her friend had it done and she said it turned green and splotchy. It also dyes the hair on your arms. One other guy had it done and it scarred his skin. It looked like a chemical burn," Knight said.

Bennett agreed that kattam does sometimes cause skin irritations, though she is aware of only three customers who have had allergic reactions to black mehndi.

"The people who did have a reaction had the black henna done and when it faded, came back and had it done again in the same spot," Bennett said. She advises anyone concerned about having a reaction to do a test patch 48 hours before receiving a design.

The art of mehndi originated in Egypt over 3,000 years ago. Traces of henna have been found on the fingertips and toes of mummified Pharaohs.

Spreading through Northern Africa and the Middle East, mehndi made its way to India during the 12th century where it was valued in particularly hot and dry regions for its cooling properties.

*Meghan Ward writes for The Daily Bruin at the University of California at Los Angeles*

## SG studies new programs

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legislative voting session were non-controversial. Two charters, one for the Agape Christian Woman's Vocal Ensemble and other for the Sigma Tau Delta English Honor Society, were approved unanimously.

Wake Web, a new website for students and faculty to be established over the next semester, was voted into official existence.

Committee reports centered on SG president senior Scott Plumridge and SG treasurer junior Ryan Marsh as they briefed the legislature on the recent Atlantic Coast Conference Student Government Conference.

Plumridge said he was thankful that the university's private status facilitated the procurement of SG funds, adding that students at state institutions must file a plethora of paperwork with the State Legislature.

Comparisons between the university's SG format and that of the other ACC schools were also discussed.

"I really felt that Wake's SG setup was superior to the other schools' at the conference," Marsh said. "At most other schools, the bulk of the power is delegated to committees, whereas at Wake every bill is voted on by a legislature in which the student body is more effectively represented."

## Fraternity, athletes argue at party, police called as result

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to make sure nothing else happened that night. Then we left and went back to bed. Forty-five minutes later we heard the cops go back to the house," he said.

Senior Chad Harlan, the president of Dekes, said that the brothers were not speaking exclusively to the football players when requesting that everyone leave the party at 1 a.m. Party management regulations stipulate that parties must end at 1 a.m., and according to Harlan, the Dekes were following these guidelines that night.

"We were kicking everyone out," Harlan said. "As far as (the football players) coming back (later that night), two of them came back to talk to us, to clear things up. They were both very cordial."

"Then at 3 a.m. a group of six or seven came back to the West House (next to the East House, where the original incident took place). They invited themselves in," he said.

"We asked them to leave," he said. "A couple of them randomly threw punches and so we called the police."

According to Bender, the charges brought up against the involved football players through the Winston-Salem police have been dropped, but the university is still pursuing the incident.

"University Police apprised us of (the situation)," Holmes said. The next step, according to Holmes, will involve an hearing between the two parties. "These are informal, fact-finding, non-confrontational hearings."

Holmes said that although altercations involving fraternities and other parties happen occasionally, these incidents rarely result in Winston-Salem police intervention. He added that fraternities have conflicts with each other more often than with athletes.

"Certain historical personality traits of the fraterni-

ties cause them to be friendly or unfriendly to each other. Occasionally student-athlete groups come into conflict with fraternities, but those don't happen nearly as frequently," he said, citing two such incidents in the last nine years.

Holmes stressed that the entire football team is not under investigation. "We're dealing with individuals that we have been able to identify as part of the incident," he said.

"With the fraternity, it's a little different. We're dealing with their president because (the incident originated at) a planned fraternity event.

"We're not dealing with the football captain because the entire football team was not involved," he said.

After numerous phone calls and messages to Jim Caldwell, the football coach, he did not respond to comment by deadline.

"Caldwell has a high standard of behavior," Holmes said.

Ron Wellman, the athletic director, said that the football players and coaches have talked about the incident. "We will not divulge what those discussions entailed," he said.

Mike Ford, the director of student development, could not be reached for comment by deadline. Wellman would not comment on his interaction with Ford.

After Holmes makes a ruling in the case, both parties have the option of appealing the decision to the Student Life Committee, Holmes said.

The police reports did indicate that the Dekes who filed the complaints "had been drinking."

"It was a party and there was drinking going on," Holmes said. "We're working towards not seeing a recurrence."

"We're trying to put all this behind us," Harlan said. "It's really not that big a deal."

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