

THE POINT

ISSUE 38
WINTER 07

The Quarterly Journal of the Association of Professional Piercers

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a man's face. He has a dark beard and mustache. He is wearing several piercings: two on his left cheek, one on his lower lip, and one on his right lip. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of his skin and the details of his facial hair.

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FROM THE EDITOR



James Weber
Medical Liaison

Not unexpectedly, there was a lot of criticism leveled at the last issue of *The Point*. While many enjoyed the diversion from the normal content of the journal—I certainly did—others questioned the endeavor, feeling that it was overly indulgent to have an entire issue showcasing *The ONE Project*. “It’s not an APP sponsored event,” I heard from several readers, “And it shouldn’t have had an entire issue devoted to it.” “There should have been at least some regular articles,” others said. And my personal favorite: “But, there was nothing in it about piercing!”

All this of course begs the question—what is supposed to be included in each issue of *The Point*?

Should it simply be an industry newsletter or no-nonsense trade publication? One containing articles on the latest piercing techniques? On the latest legislative battles? On advances in cleaning solutions and piercing techniques?

Obviously it should include all these things.

But it is also equally important to write about us, and how we see ourselves, and how we represent ourselves in print. As I’ve written before, I think it’s time that we—as an industry—collectively begin to hold up a mirror to ourselves and start to ask questions about who we are.

And no, I don’t believe we have to choose whether we want a technical publication or a more reflective journal. We need both, and we can have both.

Until recently, most piercers have been firmly entrenched into one of two camps: On the one side, there were those that took the scientific approach to piercing—piercers entranced by metallurgy and the study of autoclaves and the biological effects of cleaning solutions. Piercers who looked to Western bio-medicine as a model, who sought to give legitimacy to their methods and justify their procedures by mimicking those used by the medical establishment—incidentally a group that was often our industry’s biggest critic.

And then there were those, mostly located in and around California, who took a more... well, West Coast approach to piercing. Along with traditional concerns about cleanliness, these piercers explored the more spiritual side of the practice, often looking to traditional and indigenous cultures for inspiration (hence the label *Modern Primitives*). Among other things, these piercers were vocal about what they saw as the shortcomings of Western medicine regarding healing, and the way that piercing and body modification could help reconnect people to their bodies.

Today, piercers are not so easily categorized as either technical or spiritual, biophysical or metaphysical, and those of us in the middle of the country are as involved as the two coasts—as well as the rest of the world. For most of us, what were once thought contradictory attitudes now exist in the same person, the two ways of thinking no longer at odds. We switch between them from one moment to the next, appreciating each as the need arises, expressing each according to the client, the situation, the mood. Moreover, we combine them, understanding that both approaches to our tools, our bodies, our craft and our community are valuable and speak to our own personal experience. I think it is entirely appropriate *The Point* reflects both viewpoints, and I believe it can do that simultaneously, without contest. I think we can also dally in one camp for a time—as the last issue *The Point* did, focusing on the more spiritual side of the industry—without alienating those who prefer to concentrate on the scientific, the quantifiable, and the concrete.

So enjoy this issue of *The Point*. And thank you for allowing our indulgence.

THE POINT

The Quarterly Journal of the
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Alicia Cardenas
APP President

“Let us never forget that government is ourselves and not an alien power over us. The ultimate rulers of our democracy are not a President and Senators and Congressmen and government officials, but the voters of this country.” — Franklin D. Roosevelt

As my faith in world politics crumbles, through my position as APP President I am reminded that there *are* governing bodies that are not corrupt, and that sometimes a person's vote really *does* count. The APP is one example of this, and I have faith in the APP and the system that elects its Board of Directors.

Repeatedly, I am humbly reminded that the APP is not just one person, not even just a Board of Directors—it is a community of people that have agreed to come together to collectively participate in the advancement of our industry. It was unfortunate that in the past year we've had the resignations of two on the APP Board of Directors. Luckily, there are proud members who are waiting for an opportunity to donate their time and energy. As members know, we recently held election to fill the two vacant positions on the APP Board.*

What have we learned from the fact that two more Board members have chosen to step down from their position? *It is not an easy job.* While it is a great opportunity to meet and participate with a group of professionals and peers, it is not just a hobby or an opportunity to get better credentials—it is a full time job, and often a thankless one at that.

The current elections seek to choose two members for the positions on the Board left by the resignation of Schane Gross (Treasurer) and Phish Goldblatt (Outreach Coordinator). Instead of holding the elections to fill these positions specifically—as has been done in the past—these elections aim simply to fill the two vacancies on the Board. As a whole, The Board will then determine duties instead of them being dictated by title or position. I am extremely excited to get some new energy and ideas into the current Board.

At the end of the three year terms, one of the main concerns in the standard transitions of the Board of Directors is that often the entire Board does not continue on, which leaves the organization in a very vulnerable state. In order to ensure that this doesn't happen again, it is the best interest of the organization to stagger elections so that Board members are coming in and leaving at different times. This will be accomplished with our current mid-term elections. The incoming Board members will still be serving a traditional three-year term and will be in place past the end of the current Board's term, ensuring a continuity that has been absent from past Board transitions.

The Board is also currently involved in the formations of project committees. There are many proactive members willing to donate

their time to the APP, but are not ready for the commitment of a Board position. (One of the things voiced loudly and clearly at the members meeting this year was that the members would like to be not only more informed but be given the opportunity to become more involved. Here is your chance.) We are currently recruiting for committees on Conference planning, new member outreach, legislation, international outreach and conferences, and a medical advisory committee. These are all large projects that require the combined effort of a group rather than one individual. As the organization continues to grow, I believe that this design is going to be a big part of the future of the APP, and I encourage all those who concerned about this future to get involved in these committees.

Losing two out of seven members of the Board has not made things easy, but it did set us up for this much-needed change. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Schane Gross and Phish Goldblatt for their service. Despite any criticism of their actions, their effort

One of the things voiced loudly and clearly at the members meeting this year was that the members would like to be not only more informed, but be given the opportunity to become more involved.

Here is your chance.

was more than most. I wish them nothing but the best. I also would like to thank the current members of the Board who have stood strong and consistently supported me personally and professionally. There is not a day that goes by that they are not busting their butts to get the job done. April, Luis, Jim and Chrissy—you will always have my respect and support. Thank you for being stable and strong through this transition. And Caitlin, our administrator, is the rock we all stand on...

Any members interested in serving on a committee, please contact me at president@safepiercing.org

***Editor's note:** As this issue was going to press, votes for the vacant Board positions were still awaiting the certification process. Those filling the vacancies will be introduced in *The Point* #39. **P**



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IN THE OFFICE



Caitlin McDiarmid
APP Administrator

It is true – I am in a *real* office. The APP has established an office on the main drag of Lawrence, KS, affording more room for the APP, and more room at home for this Administrator. We are subleasing the space from a local architect. Thank you to the Board and the members for their understanding in this transition.

Now down to business...

Members, Vendors and Attendees often wonder if their comments or concerns about Conference ever matter to the Board, are heard at all, or ever effect change. The overwhelming answer is YES! The Board Members and Administrator collect your verbal and written comments & questions during the long week of Conference and for weeks afterwards. They become part of the platform of discussion on how to improve Conference for the next year. The following is a list of *some* of the questions, comments, concerns, and suggestions from the 2006 Conference, and the Board's response to them.

What did you like most about Conference?

- Women in the Industry RT
We plan on repeating this, as it was very popular!
- Smoothness of class transition
We will continue to have a 15-minute break between classes to ease the flow.
- Morning Yoga
We are repeating this free event and expanding the days it is offered.

What did you like the least?

- Secondhand Smoke
We have just received notice that, due to the Clear Air Act law being passed in Las Vegas, no smoking will be allowed in the Riviera except for in the indoor casino areas and bar. No smoking will be allowed in the convention areas, corridors, any of the restaurants, or any indoor non-gaming area. If you're thinking of quitting, now's your chance!
- The Dinner: no vegan options as advertised (nothing labeled)
We will be working with vegan attendees and the hotel catering department in order to resolve this ongoing problem. As more and more attendees choose to be vegan and vegetarian, choices must be made available to them at all our catered events. We will also be putting together a flyer with vegan/vegetarian restaurant options in the area for the attendees.

- I hated the scooter people; they make us look bad (and violated the attendee code of conduct).
The Board is equally concerned about this practice. We have had numerous complaints from attendees regarding this behavior. We ask those that participated in the rental of scooters (who do not need them) refrain from doing so in the future. Even if used outside of the Conference area, the behavior reflects poorly on the APP Conference group as a whole. The Board will be talking with the rental company (and the individuals involved) with the hopes of curtailing this behavior.
- Some classes had too much info in too short of a time. Some classes should be longer, as it seems like they skipped over a lot of good things.
We hope to remedy some of this by breaking down large topics into two different classes, and by having some classes be an introductory level while others will be more advanced.
- Members only classes are not available to non-members. Have classes available to both members and nonmembers; I was sad I couldn't take the genital piercing class just because I am not the owner of the shop and therefore can't bring up the standards to become a member. *All membership groups have perks that are provided with their membership. While Members Only classes will continued to be offered, the APP will begin to offer some topics—first offered in Members only classes—to non-members the following year. (Look for a non-members class on Female Genital piercings in 2007.) Also, see our roundtable: Implementing Change as an Employee.*
- Fun & interesting classes conflict with seriously needed classes. *There will always be conflicts with other classes. In order for the APP to offer 20-30 classes and up to 10 roundtables every year, there has to be overlap! We suggest sending more than one person from your studio if possible.*

Your suggestions/criticisms:

- A sterilization class
Aseptic Technique and Sterilization/Equipment Management will be separated into two classes in 2007. This should allow for more specific information and instruction on sterilizing, maintenance of the equipment in the studio, and options available (pros & cons).
- Woods class
Look for it in 2007.

- Business card exchange for members
We are working on this and ways to facilitate it. Attend the members meeting, bring your business cards, and receive a free gift!
- Make The Point public; Sell it at bookstores.
The Point is available to anyone who wants to subscribe. We mail to over 150 subscribers in addition to our members, and it is available online for free. We advertise our publication in industry related magazines and provide copies free of charge at many educational conferences that reach hundreds of healthcare professionals.
- I would appreciate classes starting on time; people need to get to class on time. It's frustrating and disrespectful starting so late...
So would we! By adding the 15-minute break in between classes we helped this process along but it's an ongoing challenge.
- ...and Caitlin needs a secretary.
Don't we all?
- We need a new conference hotel or maybe a different city.
The Board is actively researching venues for 2008. They must keep cost as the main factor in their choice so that Conference can be financially feasible for all involved (the APP, the attendees, and the vendors).
- Better roundtable facilitators
The current board is committed to involving more members in teaching and facilitating roundtables. Due to concerns expressed by attendees, the Board has established criteria for the Roundtable facilitators to make sure they understand their role and how it differs from an instructor.
- Channeling energy - I had hoped for more about bedside manner not just breathing techniques.
Look for these topics to be separated into two different classes in 2007.
- Jewelry 2 seemed more like a debate between the instructor and the glass manufacturers.
We've gotten a lot of comments regarding this matter. While the APP understands that glass is a hot topic right now, this issue often sidetracked the 2006 class. In the hopes of providing a better avenue for this discussion, the Board will be offering a separate Glass roundtable in 2007.
- If there were less vendors in 2007, why were so many still upstairs?
The vendor spaces upstairs are offered at a reduced rate and provide a different environment than is available on the expo floor. The vendors who had those spaces chose them over a booth on the floor. Some vendors opted to rent space in both areas.
- Considering the fees paid for classes and ample time to prepare, classes and media should be more rehearsed.
A new schedule for curriculum development has been established to encompass more time for review of materials/media presentations.

We believe that when an individual agrees to teach a class they should put the proper time and effort into polishing their presentation prior to Conference. Maybe we need to offer a class on teaching a class?

Additional Comments:

- I would like to apply for the Al D. Scholarship but I have never gotten any information. I don't know when the deadlines are or how to become a candidate. Maybe something in the Point would be helpful.
See issue #34 of the Point on more information about the Al D. Scholarship. Applications are typically taken until the January prior to Conference.

Also: *It has come to the attention of the Board of Directors that there were some concerns regarding the top raffle prize in 2006 being listed with its potential retail value rather than its wholesale value. While the APP understands the concerns being brought forward at this time, the Board would like to point out that the amount was listed with retail value posted – and even if it had been listed at wholesale value it would have easily exceeded the \$20,000 mark. The APP does not want this dispute to overshadow the generosity of the donation itself (graciously given by Anatometal), or the donations by other vendors. In the future, in order to be clear to its vendor donators and its attendees, the APP will enforce a policy whereby raffle prizes will be listed in wholesale value only. The APP apologizes if this matter has caused any confusion to its attendees, its vendors or the participants of the raffle itself and takes full responsibility for the way it was listed. The Board of Directors wishes to commend once again all the donating vendors for their amazing generosity for this year's and past donations.*

Additional Suggested Class and Roundtable Topics and Titles:

Class Ideas: Male Genital Piercing; Staying Professional (When Others Aren't); Front Counter Protocol; Jewelry Manufacturing; Labret, Monroe, & Philtrum Techniques; StatIM Set-up.

Roundtables: Suggestions on APP Growth; Problematic Piercings; Outreach Within Our Communities; Ethics; The Future of Piercing; The History of the APP/The History of Modern Body Piercing; How To Follow Up (and Follow Through); Why Not Be an APP Member?; Respecting Your Elders: Getting the Most Out of Who You Learn From.

To see how many of these suggestions were implemented—and for the full list of classes and events at this year's Conference—check out the handy tear-out registration form in the center leaf of this issue of The Point. P

APTPI 4TH ITALIAN CONGRESS 2006



Bruno Valsecchi - President
Brenno Alberti - Vice Secretary
Beppe De Palo - Treasurer

On November 19th to 21st, 2006, the APTPI (Associazione Piercers e Tatuatori Professionisti Italiani) organized its 4th annual Conference in Arezzo, Tuscany in Italy.

During this fully crowded event the APTPI organized many different initiatives, starting with the formative/informative congress for operators (piercers and tattoo artists). The second part of the conference was called The Body as Vehicle of Communication, with the participation of artists not strictly connected to the tattoo world and organized with the goal of giving different communication perspectives, alternatives, and artistic compensation ideas in our industry. We presented a video on sterilization procedures done in collaboration of the APTPI Board and hospital technicians. There were photos displayed of the annual Italian Suscon (organized by the APTPI in Amelia, Umbria) and a presentation of the DVD of that event from September 2006. The Conference exposition was also a good chance to keep in touch with vendors of professional sterilization supplies, jewelry and much more.

During the formative congress we discussed many different topics—different sterilization techniques, correct use of electro-medical devices (and their checks and proper maintenance), dealing with contaminated waste, etc. In different rooms (with walls dividing piercers and tattoo artists) there were anthropology classes and amazing technical classes, free hand technique and sterile technique classes done by Pat Tidwell and Dave Gilstrapp (from the USA), and Secrets of the Tattoo Machines organized by the Godoy Bros of DHD Manufacturing (also from the USA).

Both classes ended being a big success and were greatly appreciated by the public, especially the round tables to compare topics that followed the classes. It was a chance to compare perspectives and techniques on modern body piercing and tattooing. Many aspects of the American and European realities are

very different, and this was a great occasion to share and spread very important information and raise the quality level of all the operators. In order to make upcoming events more open to an international public, as an experiment, this year we used professional translators for all the classes (English to Italian and Italian to English).

The event concluded with the traditional debate of the APTPI Board members and the Conference participants. We showed all the goals we reached this past year and presented our next projects. We wanted to know the needs and the interests of the participants in order to optimize the efforts and the resources of the APTPI. We strongly believe that quality and preparation are our future, and this is the main reason on what we are focusing our work and projects. To quote something the APP smartly used as a slogan, we would also like to say one day: “*I have a real job.*”

We would like to thank the APP for all the help they have given, and continue to give, and for helping to make sure that our efforts have been appreciated since the very beginning of our association. We hope to be able to collaborate with the APP in the future on projects to increase the professionalism of all those in our industry. **P**



Pat Tidwell (with Dave Gilstrapp, behind) instructing in freehand techniques.

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TONGUE PIERCING, TRIGEMINAL NEURALGIA, AND THE “SUICIDE DISEASE”



James Weber
Medical Liaison

“Don’t read your press, weigh it.” —*Andy Warhol*

When I got into work on Friday, October 20th, there was a fax waiting for me. It was a copy of a newspaper article from the San Francisco Daily with a headline that read, “Tongue Piercing Tied to Painful ‘Suicide Disease.’” I knew it was going to be a busy weekend.

And then the calls started. Had I seen the articles? Had I read them? What was I, as the Medical Liaison for the Association of Professional Piercers, going to do about them?

Since the article originated at the Associated Press, it was everywhere. (The AP news service is the oldest and largest news organization in the world. It supplies news to over 1,700 US newspapers daily, 5,000 TV and radio stations, and 8,500 international subscribers.) The piece was printed in dozens of newspapers, occasionally with different headlines over the same body provided by the Associated Press.

For those that haven’t seen the article, the gist of it is this:

A research letter written up in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), and published on October 18th, 2006,* was titled “Atypical Trigeminal Neuralgia Associated With Tongue Piercing.” It outlines the case of an Italian woman who complained of face and head pain that started one month after she had her tongue pierced, and lasted for two months until she removed her jewelry. In the article, the pain was purported to come in episodes “described as ‘electric shocks’” which “lasted from 10 to 30 seconds, and recurred 20 to 30 times each day, increasing in frequency and severity in the latter weeks.” According to the authors, these episodes were consistent with the disorder known as trigeminal neuralgia.

Trigeminal neuralgia is a condition characterized by sudden attacks of pain involving different sections of the face. These

attacks are severe, and are usually described as resembling electric shocks—the pain is intermittent, but intense. And, most importantly, the article goes on to describe several types of trigeminal neuralgia, the main two being *typical* trigeminal neuralgia, and *atypical* trigeminal neuralgia.

Typical trigeminal neuralgia is incredibly painful, and most often caused by an enlarged blood vessel putting pressure on the trigeminal nerve root (the trigeminal nerve is one of twelve cranial nerves serving the face and head). What results from

this pressure is an extreme, electric shock-like pain that is completely debilitating for the sufferer. (The diagnosis of typical TN is based in part upon the sufferer’s description of his/her pain.)

Atypical trigeminal neuralgia is a less common form of the disorder and is characterized by less intense, constant, dull burning or aching pain, often with occasional electric shock-like stabs. Atypical TN is also not commonly treatable with medications used for typical TN, such as carbamazapine. (It should be noted that, in the JAMA article, the patient was treated with carbamazapine with little effect.)

The woman in the JAMA article was diagnosed with atypical trigeminal neuralgia, based on the descriptions of her pain (and her lack of reaction to the carbamazapine). After the failure of the medication, she took out her tongue piercing jewelry, and the symptoms disappeared completely within 48 hours. Though it was speculated that the tongue piercing was the cause of the TN, it was noted, “The symptom was probably secondary to a lingual metallic implant, and although findings indicate the involvement of the trigeminal system, the location of the piercing and implant should not have resulted in trigeminal injury.” It further references an article in the New England

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.....

Journal of Medicine, where a 66 year-old woman was suffering from trigeminal neuralgia from a mercury-amalgam filling in one tooth coming in contact with a gold crown on the adjacent one.† On the whole, the research letter in JAMA was informative, well written and, above all, objective. The same cannot be said about the Associated Press article.

The problem with the AP article was that it failed to differentiate between typical trigeminal neuralgia and atypical trigeminal neuralgia. It also was the first mention of TN's most unfortunate nickname: the suicide disease. Because of the overwhelmingly intense pain, those suffering from typical TN have a very high incidence of suicide—the pain is so horrible that many feel this is the only way out. This is not true of atypical TN, which is a much more minor, and more manageable form of the disorder. The combination of these two pieces of the AP article—the lack of distinction between *typical* and *atypical* TN, and the inclusion of the phrase “suicide disease”—set the stage for the press that followed.

While the title of the AP article--“Tongue Piercing Linked To Pain”—was not especially inflammatory, things got worse each time the article was reprinted. Each news posting (print or web) provided their own headlines, and made decisions about how much of the article to reprint. (Many papers choose to edit the article for length, often leaving out the paragraph where Dr. Marcelo Galarza, an author of the original study, states, “Certainly, this was an isolated case, an extremely rare complication of this kind of piercing.”) This is where the incitive headlines appeared, such as the one MSNBC, which screamed “Teen’s Tongue Piercing Causes ‘Suicide Disease.’”

Strangely, the whole incident reminded me of *The Simpsons*. (Yes, the TV show.) On the first season’s DVD collection, if you listen to the writers’ commentary during the episodes, you hear them often mention the cheap shots and cruel jokes included at the expense of the old. This was because every week they were pitted against the *Cosby* show in their time bracket. And while *The Simpsons* led the ratings with the younger demographic, anyone over 40 that was watching TV at that time was watching *Bill Cosby* and his TV family. This gave the creative team at *The Simpsons* free rein to make the elderly the butt of any joke they wanted—there was simply no one watching who would complain to the network.

This is much the same way piercers and other body modification artists allow themselves to be portrayed by the mainstream media: We’re the whipping boy for traditional news services because not only are we a marginalized and unorganized group, but we’re simply not watching, and not insisting that news outlets are held accountable for misinformation and exaggerations that are printed about us and what we do.

So what was I going to do about the mess started by the Associated Press?

The first thing I did was to write a letter on behalf of the APP to the Associated Press writer, politely seeking to educate her on the situation, and explaining my interest as the APP’s Medical Liaison.

The next, more daunting, task was to attempt to send a letter to the editor of every news outlet that ran the AP article. After emailing out the first round of letters for the articles that were already sent me, I composed a letter to the APP membership asking for help in tracking down versions of the article in all media. This message was sent to every APP member via email asking each to forward me contact info for any paper they encountered which printed the AP story—which quite a few did. (I then sent out the letter to each news source.) This request was also posted on MySpace, and I saw the letter re-posted repeatedly in bulletins by over the course of several days.

The response to all this was amazing. I received emails from members (and non-members) from all over the country. These included about 50 links to outlets running the AP letter, from newspapers to TV stations to radio stations to Internet news groups. I spent a day modifying the letter template, and composing and sending a letter to each news editor. I posted on newspaper and newsgroup comment boards, and on larger papers that listed postal addresses, I had letters printed and sent from the APP office to each of the newspapers.

At times it did seem rather futile. How many of my letters to the editors did I think would actually get printed? It didn’t matter—I was simply determined to not let tongue piercing be the focus of yet another misinformed, sensationalistic attack on what we do, on what we hold to be most important.

And it must have worked. The last time I did a Google search with the words “tongue piercing suicide disease,” my letter came up #3, on the Chicago Tribune’s website. Not too bad.

And while we are still a long way, as an industry, from getting the respect that we deserve, we don’t have to be passive participants in the process. If we don’t like the way we’re being portrayed by the mainstream media, we have a responsibility to our industry and ourselves to try to do something about it. Change will be slow to come, but I believe that, unified and organized, we can make a difference.

*Gazzari R, Merceri S, Galarza M. *Atypical Trigeminal Neuralgia Associated With Tongue Piercing. Journal of the American Medical Association. Vol. 296, No. 15, October 18, 2006.*

†Cheshire WP Jr. *The Shocking Tooth About Trigeminal Neuralgia. New England Journal of Medicine. 2000;342:2003.*

This article first appeared on www.bmezine.com in November, 2006 **P**



SURFACE ANCHORS



Didier Suarez
Enigma, San Diego CA

***Editor's Note:** The aim of this article is to start discussion about a new jewelry design and the accompanying procedure being explored by some of those in our industry. It is not intended to be a "how-to" or instructional article, or to be construed as the final word on this procedure. We are simply hoping to make all readers aware of this development and to give voice to one piercer explaining his own technique. Obviously, simply reading an article does not make one qualified to perform the procedure described in it.

Additionally, this article should not be read as an official APP position on surface anchors. However, this is a new and exciting development in our industry, and *The Point* would be remiss to ignore it.

There are more extreme procedures being done by some piercers—implants, scarification, dermal punching, to name a few. These procedures fall into a legal grey area because of the nature of the processes and tools used. Surface anchors, on the other hand, are in a unique category in that they are piercings in some ways, yet not in others. In the following example, the procedure is performed entirely with piercing tools and therefore legally qualifies as a piercing under most statutes—but not all. Some piercing regulations define a piercing as a jewelry installation procedure that creates both an entrance and exit hole in the skin, thus differentiating between piercings and implants. If you choose to perform surface anchor procedures, you will therefore want to check classifications in your own area to make sure you are within the law.

It is also important to note that not everyone I spoke to when

researching this issue was as excited about the proliferation of the technique as Didier. In fact, I encountered several practitioners and jewelry manufacturers who voiced concern that this technique was far too experimental to justify the number of people on whom it has been performed, perhaps indiscriminantly. One manufacturer in particular was highly critical of the seeming abundance of practitioners installing surface anchors. He suggested that they are hastily popularizing a process that lacks sufficient evidence to attest to its safety. He was quick to point out that first attempts with this design are still less than a year old, and that we cannot vouch for their collective feasibility, simply because we don't yet know the long term effects.

Also, in the interest of full disclosure, we wish to note that Didier works as a sales representative for Industrial Strength jewelry at conferences and conventions.

For different perspectives and insight into the debate on who deserves credit for the initial design, more information can be found on BME: Body Modification Ezine at: <http://www.bmezine.com/news/pubring/20061106.html>.





GENERAL SCHEDULE

A specific schedule of classes and events will be posted on the website(s) in January 2007.

Onsite Registration / Check In

Sunday April 29th 6pm-9pm
All attendees must check in before attending classes. Check in is also available every morning before classes begin.

Classes & Roundtables

Monday April 30th -Thursday May 3rd 10am-6pm
(Some night classes offered)

Exposition

Tuesday May 1st 2:30pm – 8pm
Wednesday May 2nd 12:00-8pm
Thursday May 3rd 12:00-6pm
Friday May 4th 10:00-2:30pm

Opening Party

Monday April 30th 8pm-midnight

Banquet Dinner

Thursday May 3rd 7pm-midnight

EVENTS

Sunday Night "Meet and Greet" for Staff

(Open to Members, Vendors, & Volunteers)
A casual event for those working the Conference to get to know each other. Industry Trivia, Games, Food, and a Cash Bar provided.

The Opening Party! Poolside fun for everyone!

Please join us on Monday evening for the opening social event of the Conference. Food, Games, Entertainment, and a Cash Bar all under the stars in the central courtyard of the Riv. In case of inclement weather, check with the Registration desk for changes.

Banquet Dinner

The Conference's awards dinner, open meeting, and top prize raffle selection will be held Thursday evening at the Top of the Riv North. Tiki/Luau themed – dress accordingly! Dinner will be served buffet style (with vegan options). Be prepared to be entertained, dance, and do the limbo! The hall will be open to non-ticket holders after 10pm for the meeting and raffle drawing.

Raffle

Want the chance to win thousands of dollars worth of goods and services? The APP raffle continues to be the best gamble in Vegas. The APP can never thank its Vendors enough for their continued generosity with raffle donations. This fundraiser for the APP continues to sustain the organization in a huge way. Tickets are \$2.00 a piece. Tickets are now available for purchase online at the time of your registration or can be purchased at the Registration Desk or APP Booth. Tickets purchased online will be picked up with your badge. Keep an eye on the website for a list of prizes!

Yoga - Available daily to all attendees free of charge.

Members Annual Meeting

Open to APP Members only. All members are encouraged to bring their business cards to this year's meeting for a business card exchange. Members who attend will receive a business card holder free of charge!

International Attendees Meeting

Open to all international attendees and those interested in international issues.

Vendors Annual Meeting

Open to Vendors only. The APP requests that all Vendors attend this informative meeting and open discussion with representatives of the APP Board of Directors.

ONE MORE THING...

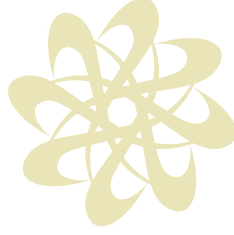
The Point: The Quarterly Journal of the APP

With its new format, heavier stock, and full color cover, the Point is now an even more valuable resource for every piercer. APP members receive a free subscription with membership, or subscriptions can be purchased at Conference or through the APP office for \$10 for 4 issues. (Additionally, donations towards the expense of producing The Point are always welcomed. As a nonprofit organization, all donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.)

THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS

PRESENTS THE

12TH ANNUAL



CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION

NEW TO CONFERENCE? START HERE...

The Association of Professional Piercers would like to invite you to attend our Annual Conference and Exposition in Las Vegas, Nevada. The Riviera welcomes us back for a 5th year. The Riviera Hotel is centrally located in the heart of the Strip, which allows all of the attendees a few minutes walk to all of Las Vegas's attractions. The Exposition is the only one of its kind in this country. There is nowhere else you will see so much great jewelry, products, and body piercing related services all in one spot. We expect our Vendors to donate generously to our Raffle – in past years, total value of prizes has exceeded \$50,000, with more than 300 individual prizes donated. Social events include an Opening Party, a Banquet Dinner, Yoga, and more...

Each year, the Board of Directors works hard to design the most current and updated class curriculum for both new attendees and long time attendees. This year, we have again added new classes & roundtables, including many focused on the business of being a piercer. We welcome returning and new instructors, including (but not limited to) Fakir, Elayne Angel, and Paul King. Come join us and all the professional piercers at our 12th Annual Conference!

WHO CAN ATTEND?

Everyone! New Piercers, Experienced Piercers, International Piercers, Apprentices, Counter People, Studio Owners, Health Inspectors, Legislators, Researchers, Retailers, Wholesalers, Manufacturers...(restrictions apply to the Exposition, see below)

EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

What kind of classes will Attendees find at the APP Conference this year?

We offer up even more choices in 2007, with a listing of over 25 classes and more roundtable than ever before. The APP has attempted to provide ample course selections for both the new attendee and our returning piercers. All are welcome to attend any classes, with the exception of the designated Members Only courses. In addition to many new classes, this year we are pleased to offer non-members a Female Genital Piercing class taught by Elayne Angel, based on the well received 2006 Members Only Female Genital Piercing class. In 2007 we also welcome back Fakir who will lead our expanded Grounding Class. Additional classes will be offered in the evening hours expanding our growing schedule of educational opportunities

There are so many classes offered, how can I take them all?

You can't in a single year. The APP encourages studios to send multiple representatives to maximize the number of classes and amount of education a single studio can obtain. This year the APP will offer additional class offerings in the evenings, allowing everyone more opportunities to take their favorite classes. Remember, we have many piercers who attend this Conference every year and we try to offer enough variety for everyone to have a unique experience each time they attend Conference.

What are Roundtable Discussions?

The APP believes that much of the education at Conference takes place from peer to peer. In keeping with that belief we encourage you to find time to participate in these more casual, information sharing discussions, mediated by expert piercers/professionals. There is no charge to attend these discussions. An attendee/vendor badge, however, must be shown in order to attend.

Expected topics:

- Avoiding or Coping with Piercer Burnout
- Inner Studio Relations
- Glass
- Legislation: New Perspectives
- Marketing and Retail Sales
- Ethics: Working on Minors
- Ethics: Investigating New Techniques
- Implementing Change as an Employee
- Women in the Industry
- Modern Rituals
- Interaction & Communication with Health Inspectors
- So, You want to be a Board Member? (Members Only)

EXPOSITION

What is the Exposition?

This is the largest gathering of piercing related vendors in the world. Manufacturers often utilize this event to present innovative and new products/services to the piercing community. This is the venue in which you as a piercer can meet your vendors and manufacturers face to face, and see their products up close before buying. A vendor's presence at the Expo does not constitute APP endorsement. The APP encourages all Attendees to shop responsibly.

What is the APP doing about vendors selling products/jewelry which don't meet APP guidelines/standards?

While the APP encourages vendors to attend who meet or exceed our suggested jewelry standards, the APP does not and cannot screen any or all of the vendor's entire product line. The APP has struggled with this issue for years. Overwhelmingly the majority of our attendees and vendors like the open floor policy of the Exposition. The APP requests all its attending vendors to select products or services that comply with the APP standards and mission for display and sale on the Expo floor. Please review all products thoughtfully and remember that, in many cases, the Conference and Expo are a learning experience for vendors as well.

How much does it cost to attend the Expo? Can anyone attend the Expo?

If an attendee pays for the full conference package price, admission to the Expo for all four days is included in their fees. Daily fees vary, please see the registration form for details. Admittance to the Expo is restricted to those affiliated with the industry as it is considered to be a trade show floor. These restrictions protect our vendors, who are selling to retailers at wholesale prices. Attendees who purchase an Expo pass will be asked to show proof of industry affiliation (business license, business card with name, other documentation). The APP will refuse entry to this event without proof of industry affiliation.

HOUSING

Where can I stay?

Do we get a reduced rate at the host hotel?

The Riviera is our host hotel, and the APP has a block of rooms for attendees of the Conference. When making your reservation, request rates for The Association of Professional Piercers. Our classroom spaces are provided based on room occupancy, this means that filling our room block allows the APP to keep prices low for Conference fees. Please support our Conference by staying at the Riviera after conference book as soon as possible, weekend rates are subject to availability.

Single or double per night rates:

Standard Room.....	\$87.00
Petite Suite.....	\$175.00
One-Bedroom Suite.....	\$300.00
Two-Bedroom Deluxe Suite.....	\$400.00

Call 1-800-634-6753 to reach the Riviera or reach the online reservations at www.rivierahotel.com



At the Riviera Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada

ANNOUNCEMENT April 29th - May 4th, 2007

PAYMENT

What does Full Conference or "the package" mean?

What are the advantages of paying this way?

Full Conference or buying "the package" means that you receive an Attendee Badge which allows you into any of the classes (Members Only restrictions apply) and into the Expo Hall for all four days. For anyone attending the Conference for more than two days, or taking more than 5 classes it will probably cost less for you to pay for this option. In addition, the first 200 full Conference registrants will receive a special perk!

I can only attend the Conference for a limited amount of time, or I have limited funds... can I pay less?

Absolutely! The APP offers the option to pay on a per class basis. See the class listing for the individual class prices. Be careful when selecting classes this way so that you don't sign up for classes which are scheduled at the same time. The Class Schedule will be available in late January or February at both the APP website www.safepiercing.org and the registration website.

I am a Health Inspector, can I attend the Conference? How much does it cost me?

Yes, and for the 3rd year in a row the APP invites Health Inspectors to attend the Conference free of charge. In order to enhance your experience, we are offering a class on Inspecting the Piercing Studio and a roundtable on Communicating with your Health Inspector. The only requirement for this offer is that the person(s) attending reserves and stays in a room in the host hotel within the APP room block. Book early to get your room. If you need documentation confirming this offer, contact info@safepiercing.org or 888-888-1277.

How can I register? How can I pay?

Registration can be done on-line at www.safepiercing.org Starting in December we will accept full conference registrations only. Once the schedule of classes is available January/February we will begin to accept registrations for individual classes on-line. Mail in registration is possible using the enclosed form.

Checks should be made payable to:

Association of Professional Piercers or APP

We accept Mastercard and Visa only.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Hablo español. ¿Me puede ayudar usted?

El APP anuncia felizmente que estará proporcionando a intérpretes españoles profesionales otra vez para el español que habla a asistentes. Por favor contacto info@safepiercing.org o international@safepiercing.org si usted necesitará los servicios que interpretan.

The APP happily announces that it will be providing professional Spanish Interpreters again for the Spanish speaking attendees. Please contact info@safepiercing.org or international@safepiercing.org if you will need interpreting services.

I have a disability. Can you help me?

The APP wants Conference to be a great experience for all its Attendees. If you have a need for special services or concerns about access etc. please do not hesitate to contact us. 1-888-888-1277 or 785-841-6060 or info@safepiercing.org

I have no money. Can you help me?

The APP has a limited number of scholarships available. Before he passed away in February of 2001, Al D. Sowers devoted much of his piercing career to the education of piercers. It is only fitting that this scholarship be named for him. This is funding for four to six piercers in need of financial assistance to attend the APP conference.

Accommodations and Conference registration are included in the Scholarship. Scholarship recipients are expected to share a room with other recipients and work more than 25 hours during the Conference. In addition, they must provide their own transportation to and from the conference. Contact the office for application materials, deadlines, etc.

I am easily stressed. Can you help me?

The APP encourages all participants to take care of themselves during Conference. Due to long hours and the excitement of the event, many attendees find themselves overwhelmed. Daily morning Yoga classes are free to all attendees. The Friends of Bill W. have a meeting during the week. The staff and volunteers at Conference are available should you need assistance in finding emotional support, medical care, or a quiet place to rest - please let us help.

CONFERENCE REGULATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS

Can I get pierced at the Conference or do piercings in my hotel room?

Absolutely Not! To maintain space in our host hotel and comply with insurance requirements, absolutely no piercing, scarification, branding or implants; or any other form of body modification from hotel rooms will be tolerated. Any APP members participating in these types of activities risk losing their membership. Any member or non-member risks expulsion from the hotel and/or Conference. This type of behavior contradicts everything the APP represents and promotes in its educational outreach and mission.

Smoking Policy: Important News!

The Riviera Hotel and Casino in accordance with the Clear Air Act now prohibits smoking in all public spaces except for the casino proper, bars in the casino area, and designated outdoor smoking areas by the pool. No smoking is allowed in any of the Convention areas, or any of the corridors, lobbies, restaurants, special meeting rooms in the Hotel. The APP supports this change and encourages all attendees to comply with the new regulations.

DISCOUNTS

APP members in good standing receive \$50.00 off the full conference package price. International attendees receive \$50.00 off the full conference package price.

Vendors receive one free class per company registration. You must register for this class.

CANCELLATIONS

Prior to April 15, 2007, the Association will refund 50% of the registration price. After April 15, the attendee forfeits the entire amount paid.

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

To pay online please go to our conference information page at www.safepiercing.org

Name: _____

Studio: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Country: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Do you need English / Spanish Translation? _____

I am Health Inspector for: _____

* Payment must accompany registration.

* Each individual must complete a separate form.

Full Conference Before April 15th \$300.00 _____

Full Conference After April 15th \$350.00 _____

Banquet Dinner \$35.00 _____

Individual Classes
(total class prices/not needed if purchasing pkg) _____

Exposition Pass _____

1 day \$20.00 _____

2 day \$30.00 _____

3 day \$35.00 _____

4 day \$40.00 _____

Point Subscription \$10.00 _____

Extra donation amount: _____

Raffle Tickets \$2.00 per ticket _____

Discount on Full Conf -\$50.00 _____
(APP Member or International Attendee)

TOTAL: _____

COURSE OFFERINGS:

- Aftercare: Basic Principals \$35
- Aftercare: Natural Alternatives \$35
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- Anatomy: Oral & Facial \$55
- Aseptic Technique & Infection Control \$55
- Basic Female Genital Piercing \$55
- Basic Photography \$35
- Basic Studio Set-Up \$35
- Bedside Manner \$35
- Blood Borne Pathogens \$60
- Business Management & Marketing \$35
- CPR \$50
- First Aid \$40
- Grounding \$55
- History of Modern Piercing \$55
- Improving Your Retail Environment \$35
- Initial Piercing Jewelry: Materials \$40
- Initial Piercing Jewelry: Size & Style \$35
- Investigating Surface Anchoring (Members Only) \$65
- Male Genital Piercing (Members Only) \$65
- Medical Risk Assessment & Troubleshooting \$50
- Modern Rituals of the Americas \$40
- Professional Writing: From Ads to Articles \$35
- Sterilization & Equipment Management \$40
- Stretching \$40
- Studio Inspection \$50
- Surface Piercing \$55
- Woods \$35

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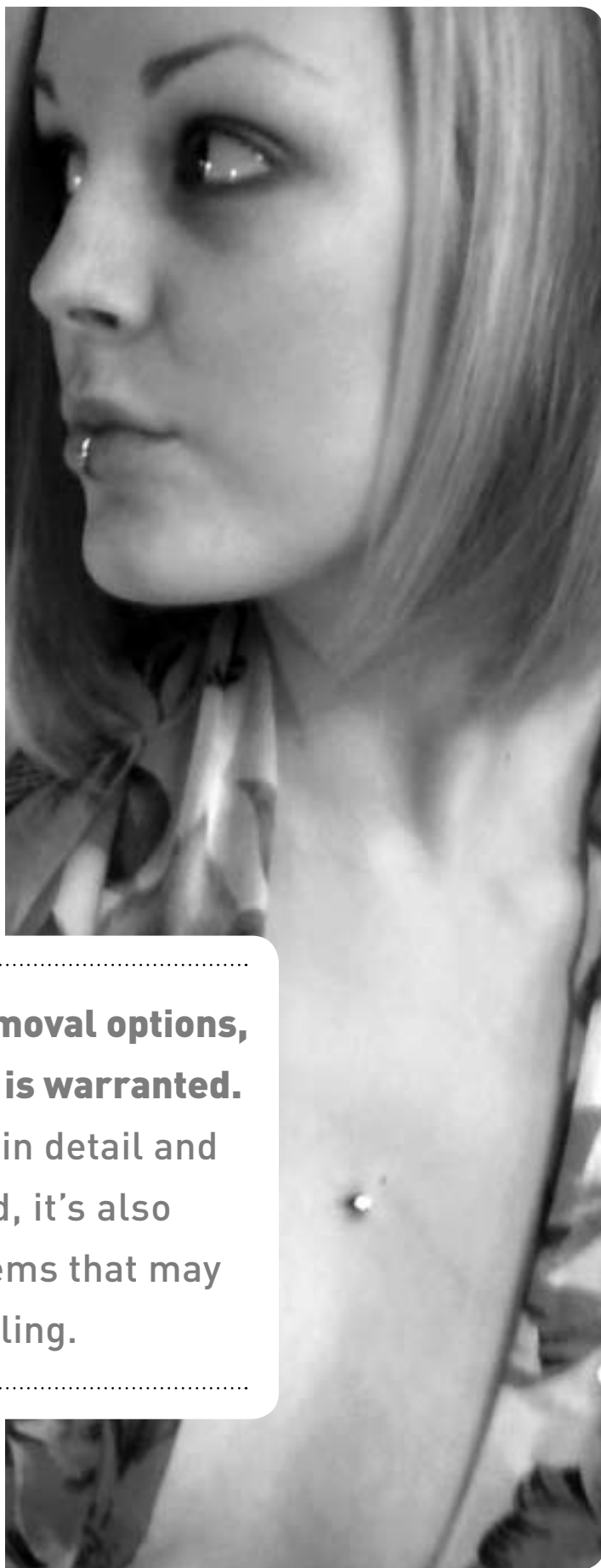


Association of Professional Piercers
Post Office Box 1287
Lawrence, KS 66044

So... What is this surface dermal trans micro anchor thing?

It's not often you can say you have something completely new to offer your piercing client. After much experimentation with different jewelry designs, a single point surface piercing is quickly becoming an option. This new piece of jewelry is now being commonly referred to as a "surface anchor" and is currently in production by Industrial Strength Jewelry (*pictured opposite*). This is a smaller, modified version of what has often called a trans-dermal implant, but one that can be installed and removed with either a piercing needle or simply by hand. The Industrial Strength anchor is equipped with a 14g post on which can be threaded with any 1.2mm compatible jewelry end. The post has a base that features two evenly sized holes on one side and one smaller one on the opposite end—these holes are intended to assist the body in anchoring the jewelry in place. The post is placed off center, creating a toe (long side) and heel (short side), making it look like a design mix between a barbell post and a bone plate (a device used by surgeons for anchoring broken bone pieces together as they heal). There are several different jewelry designs that have been introduced to do this procedure, with different methods of installing them. My experience is in using a needle ranging from 12g to 10g, and the Industrial Strength surface anchor.

The design now commonly in use is the result of a long evolution by piercers and body jewelry manufacturers. Before the current anchor was devised, the initial attempts at this procedure used crudely bent nostril screw or fishtail labrets. Many (myself included) found this method unappealing. A needle was typically used for jewelry installation, but more as a cutting/elevating tool. There were other designs similar to the surface anchor, but most were not adequately tested and/or lacked certain design qualities that would have made them

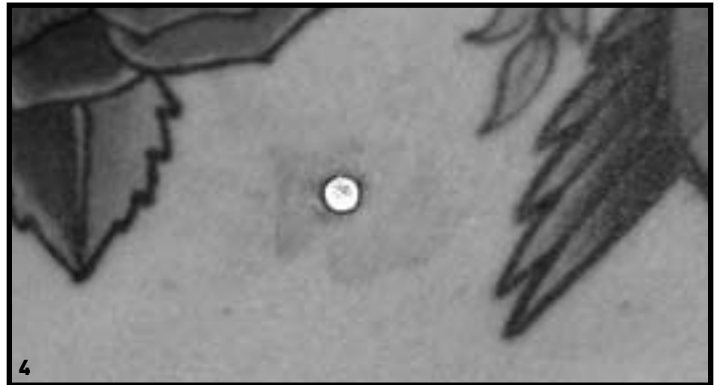


I find a consultation stressing removal options, possible migration, and scarring is warranted.

After discussing all these issues in detail and educating the clients beforehand, it's also easier to troubleshoot any problems that may arise with the procedure and healing.

more successful. The Industrial Strength anchor went through a handful of changes to its design in a short amount of time before it became a functional piece of jewelry. In addition to this standard size, I am also currently experimenting with an

INSERTION



REMOVAL



REINSERTION



even smaller 16g prototype for facial piercings. Other than concerns with the thread of the 16g ends, I see this small version being even more appealing for some clients.

This is a completely new sort of piercing—the first ones done with this type of jewelry are not even a year old yet. Because of this, I exercise the highest degree of discretion when offering

this procedure to clients. I find a consultation stressing removal options, possible migration, and scarring is warranted. After discussing all these issues in detail and educating the clients beforehand, it's also easier to troubleshoot any problems that may arise with the procedure and healing.

Being able to put a piercing on surface skin (instead of tissue which protrudes from the body) has opened a new door for us as piercers. With all the experience we've accumulated through the years, we are still refining techniques and struggling with long term healing and scarring with surface piercings. With surface anchors, I've seen scarring and migration reduced considerably. I've found the anchors tend to heal faster and have more possibilities for placement than typical surface piercings, although much of the same

placement concerns apply because of the possibility of catching the anchor or pressure from sleeping on it. I have experimented with placement in areas that the stretching or shape of the body did not allow me to do a traditional surface piercing with much chance of success. In addition to expanding the boundaries of surface work, I have used the surface anchor in the place of oral

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Many piercers are applying traditional piercing skills to the installation procedure with great success, and aftercare is minimal and manageable for a typical piercing client.

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piercings that would have typically caused gum recession, and changed them to non-oral facial piercings. Also, it can be an alternative to longer healing and often heavily scarring cheek piercings. I find them to be a great option for piercing some higher risk areas, but I still feel some placement choices must be compromised on because of anatomy. This is another reason

having experience with techniques for other piercings is needed to use the surface anchor effectively.

As I mentioned before, I use a needle ranging from 12g to 10g for installation of the surface anchor. I have found my experience with freehand piercing to be crucial. The success of the piercing relies heavily on utilizing a “scoop” method to create the entrance for the anchor. When installing the anchor I approach the surface skin with the needle at a 90o angle to it, with the tissue pinched up between my fingers (or in some “meatier” areas, being pulled taut). As the needle is inserted, I scoop the bevel down and in until the needle is almost parallel with the surface, and the tissue is halfway down the bevel. As well as with the piercing, the insertion of the anchor requires understanding of the behavior of the tissue layers. The anchor is inserted toe first, mimicking the technique just performed with the needle. The heel can be inserted one of two ways: If the skin is loose, the tissue can be pinched up and the heel’s side inserted on an angle. If the skin is tight, it can be pulled toward the toe

side of the incision and the heel can be dropped in. Insertion is completed with the disk or end sitting flush with the surface. If left tilting, whether side-to-side or heel to toe, migration is very likely. The end sitting high above the surface of the skin can also result in tilting and possible migration. If this is the case, at this point I save the client and myself a lot of time by removing the anchor and re-inserting it immediately during the initial sitting. Adjustments and corrections are always easier for the client (and for me) if done right away.

In the beginning, some discomfort and minor swelling is to be expected. In some cases there may also be bruising. A cool saline pad may help bring down any swelling and help soothe irritation. The swelling of the surface should obviously be watched so it does not exceed the length of the post. Once imbedded, an end that has receded into the body will not resurface, and there is also the risk of large amounts of scarring and additional discomfort for the client if the anchor is not removed promptly. I have found there is greater danger of the end sinking into the surface using a 3mm or smaller disk or gem when piercing with a 10g needle. Assessing the elasticity of the tissue and the depth of insertion is crucial in helping to avoid embedding the anchor.

Afterwards, aftercare is usually minimal. For my clients, I recommend cold saline pads be applied for the first day and several warm saline compresses done daily thereafter. This regimen should be followed until the area seems free of discharge—usually two to four weeks. (I have not typically seen large amounts of lymph secretion during the healing period.) Many of my clients have also successfully used a sterile saline aftercare spray in addition to daily compresses. I suggest my clients wear some type of band-aid or bandage overnight to keep the disk flat for



Piercing: Dustin Robbins at Iris, Salt Lake City, Utah Photo: daisyjohnson.com

I have experimented with placement in areas that the stretching or shape of the body did not allow me to do a traditional surface piercing with much chance of success.

the first few days—this is sometimes necessary, especially when starting with gems that may tilt the anchor. Any discharge, including dried blood and lymph, should not be allowed to sit under the base of the threaded end as this may cause it to tilt or start the migration process, in addition to contributing to other problems with healing.

Although it initially may seem intimidating, removing the anchors is surprisingly simple. I have removed and reinstalled many, and in some cases the procedure was as painless as the initial piercing. Most of the removals have been done due to maintenance issues, and many locations are more likely to snag on clothing and require a higher level of return visits and adjustments. (By the time the client comes back, ideally I have discussed removal and reinsertion at least three times with them previously.)

When removing an anchor, I screw a threaded taper into the top to gain more leverage on the piece. If the anchor is unstable it can usually be removed easily. If an instrument is necessary, I commonly use a 12g needle, piercing at the base of the anchor post and exposing the heel. If the toe of the anchor will not break free with a gentle tug, I use the needle to free the tissue along the bottom of the foot. If a decision to reinsert the piece has been made, you can wait until the surface is healed to help judge scarring on the individual—and allow them time to decide if they want to try again. If the client is insistent on reinserting immediately, I've found it can be done just as successfully as waiting, but waiting for healed tissue is the closest you can come to a fresh start.

Although the surface anchor is still in its infancy, it is a very successful means of obtaining a piercing on the surface of the skin. Like most new procedures, success relies on the skill and experience of the technician performing the procedure, as well as the design of the jewelry and proper care given by the client. Many piercers are applying traditional piercing skills to the installation procedure with great success, and aftercare is minimal and manageable for a typical piercing client. I foresee the applications of surface anchors greatly expanding in the body piercing industry in the near future. **P**



Image courtesy Industrial Strength

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POCKETING



Luis Garcia
International Liaison

Pocketing is a procedure that has been around for a number of years, initially developed by Jon Cobb in the mid nineties. The initial technique involved using slightly curved, solid bars with bulbous, or “turtle head” shaped ends to keep the jewelry in place. Pockets were made in the skin using piercing needles, and then the “turtle” ends were pushed into the pockets. The majority of the initial few failed to heal, and the ones that were healing either fell out, or were removed for reasons unrelated to healing. While an intriguing concept at the time, most in the industry considered it a bad idea and moved on. Some theorized that due to the curve of the jewelry there was too much upward pressure on the tissue above the pocket. Others thought that the placements might have been a little off, not taking body movement into account. Either way, the initial idea planted a seed that allowed others to build on later.

The next evolution in pocketing technique came about five years ago. One was termed “flesh stapling,” after the staple shape of the jewelry (*fig A*). A derivation of surface bar theory, this method calls for two piercings to be done at angles (usually 30 to 45 degrees) off the horizontal line that the visible part of the jewelry would sit on. The piercings are done longer than the “legs” of the jewelry, keeping them in the skin to serve as anchors for the visible bar. Though this method does improve over the initial idea, some problems still arise due to the design of the jewelry. The angling legs usually do not offer enough support, resulting in the bend of the jewelry on the upper leg slowly migrating down and out.

The other technique offered a slight variation on flesh stapling—one that would make

pocketing much more viable. Instead of angling the legs of the jewelry inward like a staple, the legs are angled outward, and kept on the same horizontal line as the visible bar of the jewelry (*fig. B*). This jewelry design offers more support for the jewelry, limiting any sliding or shifting.

The procedure for this jewelry style can be done in two ways: The first is to do two separate piercings, similar to the flesh stapling procedure, with an entrance and an exit for each side. Since one can pull the jewelry all the way through the first piercing, insertion into the second piercing is much easier. Once the second leg is pushed into the second piercing, the

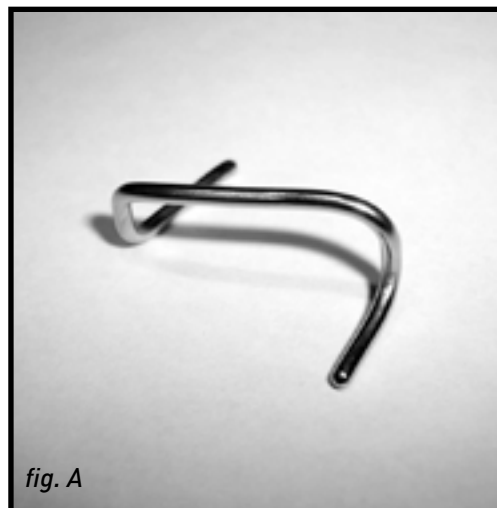


fig. A

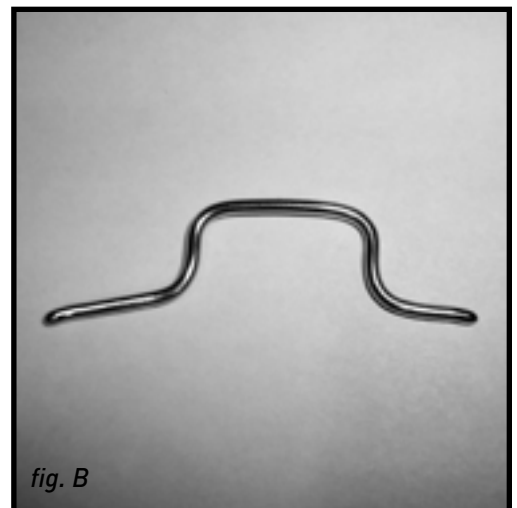


fig. B

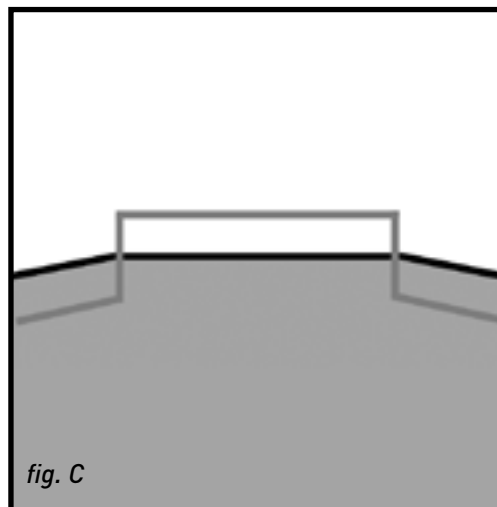


fig. C

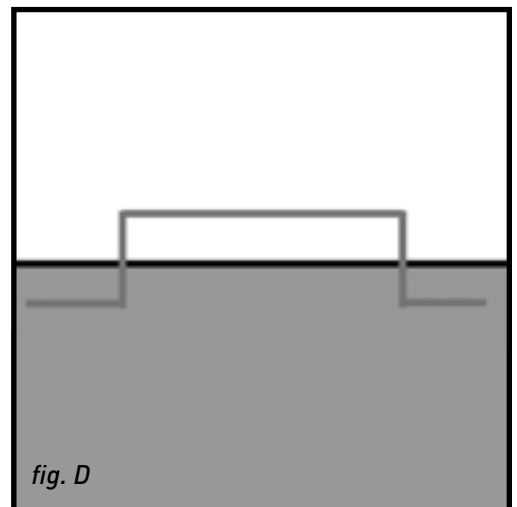


fig. D

first leg slides under the skin, allowing the jewelry to fall into place and the initial perforations in the skin to close, anchoring the jewelry in place.

Another method would be to make individual pockets similar to how a freehand surface bar piercing is done, except the needle is withdrawn before an exit point is made. The needle is started perpendicular to the skin. Pinching up the tissue, the tip and part of the needle bevel is pierced into the skin then, in a “scooping” motion, the direction of the needle is changed 90° and channel similar to one for a surface bar is created under the skin. The difference between this and the previous technique is the needle is backed out before exiting the skin. Insertion might seem more difficult, but if the first pocket is made longer to accept about half of the full jewelry length temporarily, insertion of the second leg should be a snap.

Utilizing the latter technique, I have had a good amount of success. As with surface bar piercing, there are some areas of the body that do better than others. Nape pocketing tends to have the best healing rate, with vertical bridge and horizontal eyebrow pocketing a close second—all healing in the 6 to 8 month range. The chest and sternum area can be tricky to heal—due to the amount of movement and skin compression in the area—taking about 8 months to a year to heal. I avoided extremities like wrists, arms, and legs because of the obvious risk of snagging.

Sizing for the lifts of the bar is similar to sizing for a surface bar—the easiest way to determine this is to double the length of the uplift one would use in that area on a surface bar piercing. In areas where there is a fair amount of depth available, about 1/4” is sufficient. In areas with limited depth like the forehead, 3/16” is usually sufficient. Length of the legs should be about 3/8” to 7/16” for a pocketing 1/2” to 3/4” in length. For anything longer, 1/2” is an appropriate leg length.

Also important is the angle of the legs. In areas like the nape of the neck (or anywhere that isn’t perfectly flat), the legs should be angled in to match the curvature of that part of the body (figs. C and D). If the legs aren’t angled as such, the ends can cause too much upward pressure, leaving a visible “bump” in the tissue above, ruining the aesthetics of the pocketing (not to mention causing irritation).

Though not something you would want to offer everyone, pocketing is viable enough to offer to your serious piercing clients who would like something a little different. When done properly—on an educated client—the results can be striking.

***Editor’s Note:** As noted after the article on surface anchors, legislation on piercing often defines piercings as having an entrance and exit—often to differentiate them for implants or other prohibited procedures. See the Editor’s Note on page 10. **P**



Piercing at 6 months



Piercing at 11 months

GUEST PIERCING



Christina Shull
APP Secretary

With the modern body piercing industry in a state of constant evolution, most piercers strive to evolve with it. Many opportunities now exist for piercers to exchange information with peers, such as the annual APP conference, events like December 11th Festival and the One Project, and related conventions. Unavailable in piercing's early history, there is now an abundance of opportunities for online interaction, the most prominent being BME (www.bmezine.com, including the forums on iam.bmezine.com) where there are discussions dedicated to all aspects of body piercing. But, with so many avenues for the exchange of ideas and information, there are very few opportunities to personally observe the new procedures and techniques that are currently under discussion.

The body piercing industry is consistently being re-shaped by experimentation and the exchange of ideas and shared experiences. Everything we do, from aftercare, jewelry size and style, anatomy considerations, and technique is part of a constantly evolving process. Even many things we consider basic standards applied in studios today were once seen as experimental.

There are always things to learn from other piercers, regardless of their training or experience. Something as simple as a slightly different way to hold your tools, a new breathing exercise for a nervous client, or a new perspective on marking can be learned by observing another. Every time I've watched another piercer work, I've learned something new.

One of the easiest and most effective ways to exchange information and ideas is by guest piercing at another studio. Being a guest piercer involves working temporarily in a studio needing some additional help, either to cover shifts for an employee who is taking time off or helping out when a studio is understaffed. There are advantages to being a guest piercer and many opportunities arise while working in a different environment.

Working at another shop often provides the opportunity to try new things that one may not be able to do at his or her regular place of employment. This could be the opportunity to work with different materials, perform piercings that another studio normally does not offer, or try different and new piercing techniques. Piercers also benefit from a change of pace, whether it is being able to spend more time with individual clients in a lower volume studio, or improving efficiency and time management in a higher volume one.

By observing new techniques and procedures, a piercer is able to gain valuable insight that could not be achieved through conversation alone. New techniques can be explained,

but observation allows the piercer to more easily determine the difficulty of performing the procedure, predict any complications that may arise, assess how comfortable the procedure was for the client, and choose proper jewelry based on first hand experience. This process provides the visiting piercer the opportunity to ask questions during the procedure and gives him or her the ability to experiment while under the guidance of a piercer who has experience with the particular procedure.

Other differences can also be very beneficial—like differences in aftercare. Many studios have similar aftercare guidelines, but often differ with suggested products and frequency of use. Many shops suggest continue to suggest antimicrobial soaps, others push sea salt soaks or saline rinses as aftercare, while still more lean towards natural alternatives such as herbal soaks and emu oil. Even when I have not wholly modified my general suggested aftercare, I have adopted alternative aftercare products or methods that I worked with in other studios.*

Working in a new environment also provides insight into studio set-up and procedures. New ideas and inspiration can be found in everything from basic organization and jewelry storage to displays and studio decoration. A piercer who is currently in a management position—or looking to take on more responsibilities in their studio—can also obtain a different perspective by spending time in another studio and observing how it runs. This becomes a wonderful opportunity to study marketing techniques, employee management, business documentation, and many other aspects of a successful business.

For piercers who are considering switching jobs or looking to relocate, guest piercing also provides the chance to pursue other employment options without a long-term commitment. Short-term work at a different studio can help the piercer make a decision about pursuing employment elsewhere and provide the opportunity to familiarize themselves with a studio before accepting a permanent position. It also gives the piercer a better understanding of what the studio has to offer them as an employee. Additionally, this is a benefit for the prospective studio, as it allows them to hire an employee based on their previously seen performance and interaction with their staff and clientele.

Potential guest piercers are often asked to submit a portfolio, solid work references, and a résumé before they are approved asked to visit. Upon arriving, most studios will first require the guest piercer to observe their piercers, allowing the new piercer to become familiar with the studio's policies and procedures.

The body piercing industry is consistently being re-shaped by experimentation and the exchange of ideas and shared experiences.

After becoming acquainted with the studio procedures, the guest piercer then performs basic piercing procedures under supervision until the studio piercers are comfortable with the guest artist's ability to perform at their standards. While daunting, this process is an excellent opportunity for suggestions and feedback, which is just as important to seasoned piercers as those with less experience.

Finding a studio where you can be a guest artist can be relatively simple through networking with other piercers. Many studios are happy to have temporary help and often studios would be interested in a "piercer exchange" where employees can switch studios for a brief period of time, allowing for an exchange of ideas and techniques. Piercers who are interested in pursuing guest piercing positions are encouraged to visit the APP website, www.safepiercing.org, which contains job board where ads are placed for guest piercers as well as permanent piercers.

****Editor's note:** When visiting another studio and comparing aftercare guidelines, it is important to note regional differences in lifestyle and environment. Products that work well in one geographic area may be less effective in another because of differences in tap water, humidity, air quality, and even altitude. Ethnic and racial differences can affect healing and the likelihood of scarring. Body types, lifestyle and nutrition will also differ from state to state—and absolutely from one country to the next—and must be taken into account when making decisions for your client. What may be shown absolutely to work in one region may be a disaster in another. All this is just one more reason to "expand your horizons" a bit by taking working trips to different studios. **P***

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PLEASE LISTEN TO THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS...



April Johnson
APP Vice President

Do you run a piercing studio without front counter help? Do you run such a high volume studio that it is often difficult to answer the phone? Do you find yourself answering a lot of the same questions when your customers call the studio? Do you think you lose business by not providing enough information on your answering machine after business hours? If you answered yes to any of these questions, an automated attendant answering system may be worth looking into for your shop.

The shop in which I work fell under the first scenario: I am in a piercing-only studio without a front counter person, and when I'm with a client I'm unable to answer the phone. This was losing us business. With the help of the auto attendant, we are now able to provide vital information to our clients even when we can't pick up the phone to speak with them personally.

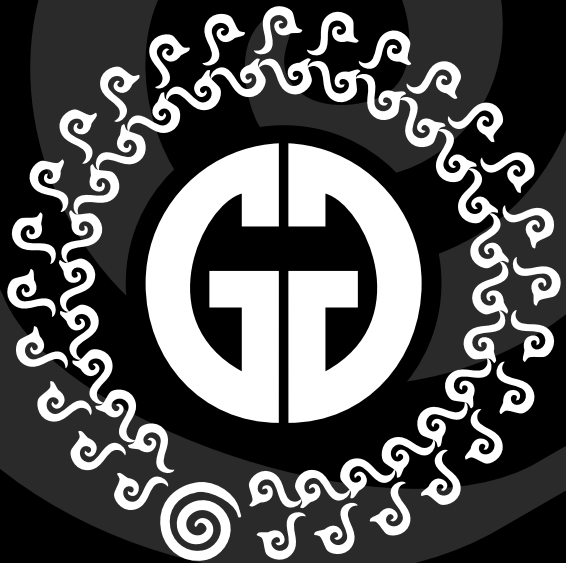
While researching our options, we were initially intimidated by the variety and price range of different units. Styles varied from advanced 4-line systems that handle entire office buildings to much smaller 1-line versions that are similar to a regular answering machine. The prices range from over \$1000 down to just under \$100. We were lucky and found a refurbished unit online for about \$120.

Setting your auto attendant up can be a bit of a trial and error project that involves feeling out your clientele to see what they best respond to. The basic format of a standard automated attendant answering system is as follows: Callers will first hear a greeting message that explains how to navigate the system. They then select a number on their keypad that will direct them to the information they are requesting. If they choose the option to speak to someone, the shop will receive a special ring option so you will know to pick up the call. If you or your staff still cannot get to the phone, then caller will have the option to leave a message.

We chose to record the answers to our most commonly asked questions, but soon found that our greeting message was too long to hold the callers' attention. Often they would hang up before they heard all of the options. We have now changed it to immediately state, "Please listen to the following options: Press one for general information about Virtue and Vice Body Piercing and Permanent Cosmetics; Press two to hear our Minor Policy; Press three to hear our Piercing Prices; Press four if you need directions; Press five for information on our Permanent Cosmetics; Or press six if you need further assistance." We have had a much better response with this concise message.

The first time we heard about an automated answering system being used in a piercing shop was when former APP President, Patrick McCarthy, installed one in his studio, Piercology. We modeled our system off of his, which was very helpful. It was interesting to see what works well in other shops. So if anyone out there decides they want to try this out, please don't hesitate to call our shop at 404-315-6925 and "Please listen to the following options." **P**

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