

THE POINT

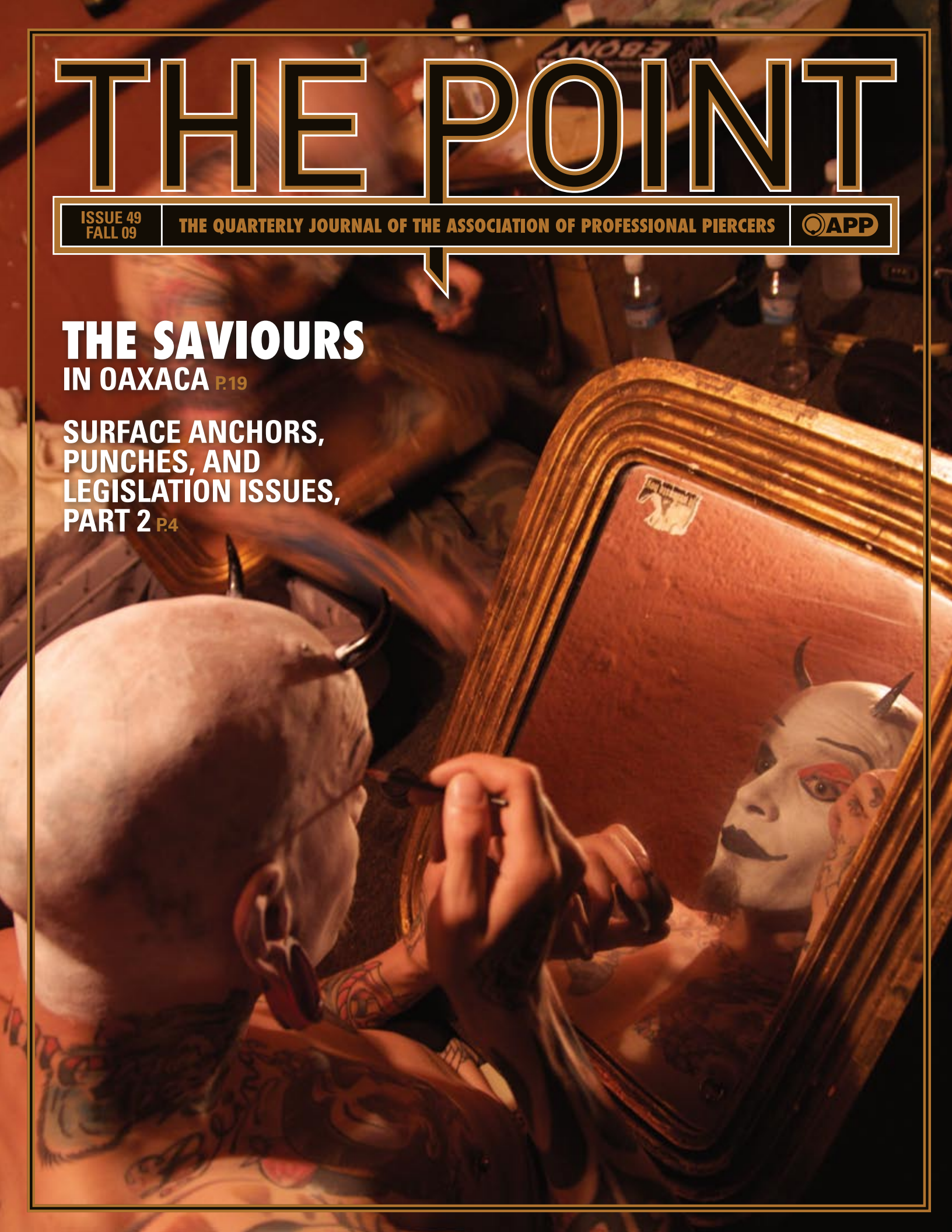
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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS



THE SAVIOURS IN OAXACA P.19

SURFACE ANCHORS,
PUNCHES, AND
LEGISLATION ISSUES,
PART 2 P.4



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FROM THE EDITOR



ELAYNE ANGEL

Medical Liaison

Yucatan, Mexico

For the last few issues I've been hanging back, happy to let co-editor Jim Weber have his say in the "From the Editor" section of *The Point* since I signed back on. But he tossed the ball in my court this time, so here I am, about to bring up one of my favorite subjects.

Actually, it is hard for me not to run around shouting my great news to the four winds: my book, *The Piercing Bible—The Definitive Guide to Safe Body Piercing*, was reprinted in September. It was just released in May of this year (the grand debut was at the APP conference in Las Vegas), so the first print run sold out in less than six months. The publisher printed what they thought would be a one-year inventory (or a lifetime supply, if it didn't sell well), so sales have clearly exceeded expectations. I'm thrilled!

This news doesn't relate only to me, it impacts our entire industry in a number of ways. It clearly demonstrates that there is an ongoing interest in piercing and a significant demand for reliable information about the subject. It shows that many people who have that interest are willing to educate themselves. And, hopefully it also means that hack piercers are getting fewer consumers, because any potential piercee who reads *The Piercing Bible* will be well equipped to evaluate piercers and will be savvy enough to avoid those who are unsafe and unqualified.

Another way our industry is affected by this spread of information is that medical and dental professionals, and other people who deal with piercees, are becoming more knowledgeable about the piercing industry. Further, there may even be some increase in the understanding and acceptance of pierced individuals and a diminishing of discrimination as the public becomes more informed. I'm not overstating it when I say that the world has been exposed to *The Piercing Bible*, as I'm aware of copies being read in New Zealand, India, Russia, South America, the UK, all over Europe, and other locations around the globe.

The APP has been retailing *The Piercing Bible* for some time. The books are autographed, and the APP keeps 25 percent of the profits from these sales. Now there's a new development: the book is also available wholesale through the organization. If you wish to purchase quantities of *The Piercing Bible* to sell in your piercing studio or other business, you can obtain copies at \$11.75 per book, plus shipping. The minimum order is just ten units.

In keeping with the mission of the organization, this will foster the dissemination of vital health and safety information about body piercing, though neither the APP nor I will be earning direct profits from these sales.

If you wish to purchase *The Piercing Bible* from the publisher, Random House, their standard discount is 50 percent off the \$20 cover price, and the minimum order is 13 books. Tell the new accounts representative you want to set up a "retailer account for a special market" to get this minimum order, as their usual order requirement is 25 books.

E-mail: newaccount@randomhouse.com or call 800.733.3000, ext. 3840. They require that you set up an account and will not simply take an order on a credit card, which is one reason why the APP is offering special quantity pricing.

Apparently over 75 percent of the books sold have been distributed through non-traditional outlets like specialty stores and online retailers; less than 25 percent were sold through bookstores. Clearly "alternative venues" like piercing studios are the perfect spot. Every customer who walks through your door should leave with a copy. So, if you aren't already offering *The Piercing Bible* in your studio, now is a great time to start!

Back to the matter at hand: *The Point*. This issue contains a variety of content, from a review of the recent suspension convention in Dallas, to a piece about the Saviours most recent trip to Mexico. Co-editor James Weber provides another amusing account of life volunteering as a member of the APP Board in the form of a travel blog. He's also co-authored an article with the imitable David Vidra on recent legislation issues around Surface Anchors and Dermal Punches, and another on the current situation with Care-Tech Laboratories.

Don't forget that we are always looking for articles on all manner of piercing-related subjects and we welcome them from all sources. So if you have something to contribute, send it on in to medical@safepiercing.org. **P**

THE POINT

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS

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THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS is a California-based, international non-profit organization dedicated to the dissemination of vital health and safety information about body piercing to piercers, health care professionals, legislators, and the general public.

Material submitted for publication is subject to editing. Submissions must be in a digital format, and should be sent via e-mail to medical@safepiercing.org.

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Front Cover: Lassi and Jussi, from the Saviours, putting on make-up before their show. Photo by Eva Alicia Lepiz

Back Cover: Jussi in Oaxaca, Mexico. Photo by Gregory Allen — www.plasticimage.com

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

IN THE OFFICE	2
SURFACE ANCHORS, PUNCHES, AND LEGISLATION ISSUES, PART 2	4
CARE-TECH LABORATORIES	8
ADHA AND NEHA, FIRST AID, CPR AND BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS TEACHER TRAINING, AND THE THIRD QUARTER MEETING OF THE APP BOARD—ALL IN ONE WEEK	10
THE SAVIOURS IN OAXACA	19
DALLAS SUSCON 2009	23

IN THE OFFICE



CAITLIN McDIARMID
APP Administrator

The productivity of a work group seems to depend on how the group members see their own goals in relation to the goals of the organization. -Ken Blanchard

Election time. Any day now, the election will conclude for the two vacating seats on the Board. Initially, I was concerned we wouldn't have that much interest—but we had forty-two nominees (compared to the twenty-nine of the 2006/2007 interim election). Additionally, we had eleven who accepted that nomination, versus the eight in 2006/2007. So it's full steam ahead.

Back in 2003 when I started with the organization, I didn't fully appreciate what it meant to work for a Board rather than for a company with a single boss or "direct report." Like with many things, it has its benefits and its downsides. On the one hand, every decision has multiple people involved; this means that many, differing perspectives are often brought into the discussion—so there's usually more balanced decision-making. On the other hand, since there are so many differing ideals, it takes a lot longer for seven busy people to make up their minds and convey their decisions than it does for one person.

The dynamics of any given Board of Directors are determined largely by the individuals on each Board. They are influenced by the structure in which the Board chooses to operate, and can be affected by what challenges the Board chooses to take on during their term(s). Unfortunately, they are also commonly impacted by events out of the Board's control; personal trials and industry drama being the top two.

I have now worked for four separate Boards in my seven, almost eight, years of employment with the APP. This is because in 2007 the APP replaced two directors mid-term; and, since then, has maintained this interim schedule for those two seats. Staggered terms make sense and are the norm in most board-run operations—this prevents *everyone* from being brand new for any given term, which is very helpful when it comes to the functioning of the organization.

Interim elections mean that soon I will have two new bosses; and then next year I will potentially have five more. It means that the APP will have two new board members with fresh ideas and enthusiastic spirits. We will say goodbye to Eric "Sque3z" Anderson and Danny Yerna when they step down in May, at the end of Conference.

Neither of these fine gentlemen are running for this election. They were given their orientation during a particularly difficult Board meeting. They both went on to make contributions that were key to the progress of the organization. They have made huge sacrifices of time and energy; and these sacrifices (as they often seem to do) have, in turn, changed their lives.

Danny will still be active in our membership. His work with the international community, especially in Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries, has been phenomenal. The APP has done great things in Mexico for piercers and piercees alike—largely due to Danny's efforts. The APP has benefited, and will continue to benefit, both in our mission to disseminate information and financially, because of his donation of Spanish language translation services.

"Sque3z" has gone through life-changing events and has launched a new career as an EMT. He has helped many members define, organize, and put into practice their own successful outreach programs in their communities. He accomplished this in a one-on-one basis and through his courses at Conference. With his ample network of professionals, he has introduced the APP to gifted practitioners and vital resources when we needed them the most. He inspired many young piercers throughout his term, but most dramatically at the 2009 Conference with his instruction in the non-members techniques class.

I am always saddened when Board members leave...and excited and anxious as new ones are elected. The experience is never the same twice. No board member is just another body; everyone brings new challenges and new benefits to this organization and to my experience as the administrator.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has. -Margaret Mead P

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SURFACE ANCHORS, PUNCHES, AND LEGISLATION ISSUES, PART 2



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After Luis Garcia's article, titled *Surface Anchor Legislation Issues*, was published in the last issue of *The Point* (#48), many questions have been raised about the information presented, specifically regarding statements about the legality of using punches to install jewelry.

As an organization, the Association of Professional Piercers has historically declined to address the use of punches by piercers. Their use has always been considered outside of the scope of body piercing—much the same way the organization has viewed branding, scarification, and tattooing. But recent legal regulations, interpretations, and determinations about the use of punches with surface anchors have made continuing this position untenable.

From the APP's position as an educational organization, it has become obvious that many piercers in our industry are in need of education on this subject. This is not to imply there is currently a willful ignorance among piercers, but simply that there is not an educated dialogue taking place in our industry on this topic. Recently, several states have prohibited the installation of surface anchors by body art practitioners. These legal prohibitions are, in many ways, a reaction by local medical and health boards to a procedure without a convincing record of safety. But several of these determinations are a direct result of what many medical and health boards consider the indiscriminate use of punches by our industry.

In his article, Luis stated punches are "illegal to use if the practitioner is not a licensed medical professional." While this is true, this issue is much more complicated than this short statement explains.

Currently, dermal punches are classified, but not regulated by the FDA. They are Class 1 devices, for use by medical professionals only. State medical boards determine who can use each classification of products, and what level of certification, education and/or competency testing each user must have. ***Unless your local health department or medical board specifically allows the use of Class 1 devices by body art practitioners, the use of punches by body art practitioners is prohibited.***

So what does this mean for those of us who are using punches to install surface anchors and other types of body jewelry? The answer, again, is not so simple.

State medical boards have the authority to decide who can use certain devices based on FDA classification. As of this writing, state medical boards have determined—based on their classification and intended use—to specifically prohibit the use of punches by our industry in Nevada, New Jersey, and Florida. When speaking with several health inspectors and medical board members about the issue, the reason many gave for the prohibition

was the concern over the indiscriminate use of dermal punches in installing jewelry—as evidenced by videos of piercers they had seen on YouTube. ***Currently, the biggest problem with the increased popularization of the use of punches is not their legal status, but that in several states their wanton—and very public—use has contributed to the prohibition of surface anchors and other body art procedures.***

In Nevada, not only is dermal punching and performing single-point piercings specifically prohibited, but also suspension, branding, scarification, and implants. In Florida, a determination by the Florida Board of Medicine stated dermal punching constituted the practice of medicine. Suspension is similarly categorized, as is branding, tongue splitting, implantation, and labia reduction. In New Jersey, the same medical board determination that specifically prohibited the use of punches by our industry—and classified surface anchors as implants—also prohibits branding and scarification if performed by a body art practitioner.

Other states that do not currently address their use by our industry will almost undoubtedly begin doing so after prohibitions are in place in other states. Anyone who is familiar with legislation knows that, quite often, states adopt other state regulations—often word-for-word—after the first state has done the work writing them. As a piercer and body modification artist, the debate on whether to use punches to install jewelry is not as simple as what will be better for healing. There are legal implications, and these extend far past the relationship between you and your client; all piercers should be fully aware of the ramifications and possible repercussions of their decision to use punches.

In response to this, there are many among us who loudly proclaim, "It's my right to use punches!" There is not an argument—at least from us—against it being our ethical right. But unfortunately, in most states, it is clearly not our legal right to use them. There is a big difference.

There are also those who argue for the punch as being an "industry standard." Unfortunately, this argument doesn't carry much weight, as needles have been the industry standard for the insertion of jewelry since the beginning of modern piercing. Admittedly, there is a history of punches being used, but not as the predominant instrument of choice. (And to many legislators, our industry simply didn't exist before about twelve years ago—around 1997—which is when the first regulations on body art went into effect in Ohio and Oregon.)

Lastly, few responsible piercers will offer their services to clients without first securing liability insurance to protect themselves and their studio, both legally and financially. While both Professional

Program Insurance Brokerage (PIIB) and National Insurance Professionals Corporation (NIPC) offer liability insurance that covers surface piercings and surface anchors, their coverage does not extend to procedures where the jewelry is installed with punches. (Western States Insurance does not specifically exclude coverage of anchors inserted with punches, but the company representative I spoke to stated the coverage is not valid if the instrument used for the procedure—or the procedure itself—is prohibited by local or federal law.) If no other argument affects a practitioner’s personal decision on whether to use punches, this one should.

In closing, we urge all body art practitioners to carefully consider every side of this debate when choosing what tools to use when installing surface anchors on their clients. All of us should be aware of the legal ramifications, for not only yourself and your clients, but for the rest of the industry.

And if you choose to use punches, please—for all our sakes—don’t post the videos on YouTube.

[This article is intended to start a discussion on the use of punches and the implication their use has on legislation. It is not to be considered the definitive argument for or against their use, but simply an effort to educate all industry professionals on some of the possible legal repercussions this use may bring to our industry. A lot of help went into researching this article. We would like to thank Jonny Needles and Luis Garcia for their help with New Jersey legislation, Maria Pinto from Industrial Strength Needles for her help with FDA questions, and the various members of health and medical boards who were able to clarify their state’s position on punches and surface anchors.]

Anyone who has comments or corrections about information contained in this article, or has information about similar legislation issues in other states, is invited to e-mail us.]

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David Vidra

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LEGISLATION LINKS

Florida:

- <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/community/body-piercing/>
- <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/community/body-piercing/newinfo.htm>

On October 5, 2002, a determination by the Florida Board of Medicine stated dermal punching constituted the practice of medicine. The practice of suspension is similarly categorized, as

is branding, tongue splitting, implantation, and labia reduction. While the Medical Board has prohibited the use of punches by body artists, the authority to enforce this prohibition has not been granted to the Florida Health Board. As the Health Board oversees inspection and licensing (not the medical board) this leaves the enforcement of this determination in question.

Nevada:

- <http://www.cchd.org/body-art/tattoo-regs-sec8.php>

Dermal punching and single-point piercings are specifically prohibited, as is suspension, branding, scarification, and the “implantation of jewelry under the skin.” The Nevada Board of Medical Examiners determined surface anchors are to be categorized as implants, therefore prohibiting their being performed by body art practitioners. The Nevada Health Board then enforces this prohibition.

[I was fortunate to speak to Jamie Hulbert, an Environmental Health Specialist for the Southern Nevada Health District, at the annual American Public Health Association conference in Philadelphia in early November. She stated the concern of the Health Board was about the risk of anaerobic bacteria with surface anchors, and listed this as one of the reasons for classifying them with implants. She said there was currently no discussion about repealing the ban.]

New Jersey:

- <http://www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/phss/bodyart.pdf>

Earlier this year, the director of the Health Department approached the New Jersey Health Board with questions regarding surface anchors. The Health Board then contacted the Medical Board, and was advised that surface anchors are to be considered implants, and are therefore prohibited under New Jersey Administrative Code 8:27-2.6. As stated in the preceding article, this same determination prohibited the use of punches by body art practitioners, in addition to implants, branding, and scarification.

[Jonny Needles, of Dynasty Tattoo and Body Piercing in Newfield, NJ, has been in conversation with Tim Smith, New Jersey Public Health Sanitation and Safety Program Manger and head of the NJ Body Art Department in Trenton. Together with Luis Garcia (former APP Board member), they have been working to repeal the prohibition on surface anchors. According to Jonny, Mr. Smith has stated the intention of the NJ Health Board was to start a pilot program. This program, starting before the year’s end, would give an as-yet-undetermined number of piercers the authority to perform surface anchor piercings. Jewelry quality will be specified, client numbers are to be monitored, and clients will be provided a number to directly contact the Health Board to report complications. If this program is considered a success at its completion, other piercers can apply for the authority to perform this piercing. This program is to be open to all piercers who have three or more years of experience.]

Both Jonny Needles and Luis Garcia are optimistic that the two groups can come to an agreement on the best way to allow this procedure while still looking out for the public interest.] P

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CARE-TECH LABORATORIES



DAVID A. VIDRA
Health Educators Inc.
Cleveland, Ohio



JAMES WEBER
APP President
Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

Most of us in the body modification industry are familiar with Care-Tech Laboratories, as they provide products that not only protect our clients, but us as well. Care-Tech develops these products from ingredients that are already controlled by federal monographs and the United States Pharmacopeia (USP). These monographs outline what guidelines their research and development section must follow, specifically in regards to what percent of an “active ingredient” is present in a product. They also dictate how these products should be labeled, their intended use, and the dissemination of safety and product testing information. As long as a product and all of the ingredients it contains fall within these guidelines, there is no additional approval process; these products are non-prescription items and therefore do not require drug applications.

However, despite Care-Tech Laboratories’ long-standing history of safety and efficiency in their product development, they are currently undergoing a monograph review process. This review, being conducted by the FDA, encompasses all of Care-Tech’s antimicrobial products that have been developed since 1968—even though many of their products and formulas were on the market prior to this date. This process, at Care-Tech’s expense, is to ensure that all of their products and labeling claims are in compliance with these monographs. This expense also includes business losses as, during the audit, Care-Tech Laboratories has

been required to dispose of any pre-existing products and suspend any and all future business until the audit is complete. What’s more, due to “gray areas” in the monograph itself, it remains open to interpretation by the FDA—creating both confusion and additional delay. Care-Tech Laboratories has retained the services of a monograph expert to provide a report on each of the hundreds of products they produce to help expedite the process by presenting them to the FDA for certification.

If the FDA determines Care-Tech is making claims outside of the monograph’s guidelines, they will be required to change their labeling or, if any product is deemed to be outside of the monograph’s specifications in formulation, they will be required to fill out and file a new drug application. Care-Tech believes this process will be completed shortly, pending, of course, successful FDA certification.

Care-Tech Laboratories, Inc. has always been a strong supporter of the body modification community. There has been a lot of speculation about the situation, including inferences to labeling inaccuracies or unsubstantiated product claims. While the FDA audit continues, information is still limited, but before those in our industry make unfounded accusations, we should know the facts. You now have them.

If you have any further questions, you can contact David Vidra at vidra@hlthedu.com or Yolanda at Care-Tech Labs. **P**

THE APP IN THE DECEMBER ISSUE OF PENTHOUSE

Check your local newsstand for the December issue of *Penthouse* magazine. Elayne Angel has a three-page spread of material from *The Piercing Bible*—with information from the APP. This article features advice on how to go about getting pierced cleanly and safely, in addition to discussing some of the more sexual aspects of body piercing (of course). The text is accompanied by photographs from Sean Hartgrove—the APP’s Conference photographer.

So run out and buy a copy of December’s issue of *Penthouse*. Just tell the news seller you really are reading it for the articles...



FDA NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Sept. 8, 2009

Media Inquiries: Christopher Kelly, 301-796-4676,
christopher.kelly@fda.hhs.gov

Consumer Inquiries: 888-INFO-FDA

CARE-TECH LABORATORIES AGREES TO STOP MAKING, SELLING AND DISTRIBUTING UNAPPROVED ANTIMICROBIAL PRODUCTS

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today announced that St. Louis-based Care-Tech Laboratories Inc. and its principal officers, John C. Brereton and Sherry L. Brereton, have signed a consent decree, agreeing to stop the illegal manufacture, marketing, and distribution of over-the-counter (OTC) antimicrobial drugs used to treat and prevent infection.

Inspectors found that Care-Tech violated numerous provisions of the FDA's current good manufacturing practice (cGMP) regulations that direct how antimicrobial drugs are made. Additionally, the products do not conform to any applicable regulations for OTC drug products and have not undergone an FDA review, and therefore are considered unapproved drug products.

Under the terms of the consent decree, Care-Tech may not resume manufacturing and distribution of the drugs until it corrects these and other violations.

"The FDA is concerned about Care-Tech's products because they lack FDA approval, do not conform to any applicable over-the-counter drug monograph, and are not appropriately manufactured," said Deborah Autor, director of the FDA's Office of Compliance, Center for Drug Evaluation and Research. "Companies have an obligation to consumers to ensure that their products are safe, effective, and high quality, and the FDA recommends that Care-Tech's customers seek alternative products."

Care-Tech products are sold online and through telephone orders to hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities. They are not sold in retail stores. The FDA is not aware of any reports of injury or illness related to the use of these products. Consumers should contact Care-Tech at 1-800-325-9681 to return products in their possession, which include:

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Care-Crème	Loving Lather II
Caricia Care	Loving Lotion
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Clinical Care	Satin
Consept	Tech 2000
Formula Magic	Techni-Care
Humatrix	Urban Skin

Health care professionals and consumers may report serious adverse events (side effects) or quality problems for these or any products to the FDA's MedWatch Adverse Event Reporting program, online, or by regular mail, fax or phone.

* Online: <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/default.htm>

* Regular Mail: use postage-paid FDA form 3500 available at: <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/HowToReport/DownloadForms/default.htm> and mail to MedWatch, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852-9787

* Fax: 800-FDA-0178

* Phone: 800-FDA-1088

For more information: Facts About Current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMPs) <http://www.fda.gov/Drugs/DevelopmentApprovalProcess/Manufacturing/ucm169105.htm>

CARE-TECH® LABORATORIES, INC. SUSPENDS MANUFACTURING AND DISTRIBUTION OF OTC DRUG PRODUCTS

ST. LOUIS, MO, September 14, 2009 — Care-Tech® Laboratories, Inc. announces that it has suspended manufacturing and distribution of its drug products to address concerns raised by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Specifically, the FDA has informed Care-Tech® that it believes the company's over-the-counter (OTC) drug products have not been manufactured, processed, packed, and held consistent with current good manufacturing practice for drugs, which makes them presumptively adulterated under the law, even where, as here, no finished product has been found to be defective. FDA also has informed Care-Tech® that it believes these products do not conform to an OTC drug monograph, and so are considered unapproved drugs. Accordingly, Care-Tech® has agreed to suspend manufacturing and distribution of our drug products until we have fully resolved these

concerns. Care-Tech® has already taken significant steps to address the issues FDA has brought to our attention, and we are working closely with agency officials to ensure any remaining issues are resolved as expeditiously as possible.

Neither FDA nor Care-Tech® is aware of any reports of injury or illness related to the use of these products, and FDA has not requested that previously distributed product be recalled. "The company is committed to ensuring that each of its products reflects the highest standards of safety and purity," says John C. Brereton, President. "For over 100 years, patient safety has been Care-Tech® Laboratories' first and foremost commitment. And I can assure you, it remains so today."

The company intends to update its customers as further information becomes available.



Julia Grow at ADHA

ADHA AND NEHA, FIRST AID, CPR AND BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS TEACHER TRAINING, AND THE THIRD QUARTER MEETING OF THE APP BOARD—ALL IN ONE WEEK



JAMES WEBER
APP President
Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

THURSDAY, JUNE 18

7 a.m. The alarm goes off, and I drag my all-too-tired body out of bed. It's times like these I, once again, ask myself, "Why do I volunteer for these things?"

8 a.m. I'm at the shop going through the last of the mail and waiting for UPS to arrive with the packages I've been promised before 10 a.m. The editing and layout revisions on the APP brochures, *Oral Piercing Risks* and *Troubleshooting for You and Your Healthcare Professional*, took longer than expected, so they weren't ordered until Monday—and have been sent overnight to arrive before 10 a.m. They'll be here, but they won't be folded—we'll have to do that ourselves while we're at the booth.

11 a.m. Julia arrives, and I still don't have the brochures in hand. After going online to track them, calling UPS for redelivery, and finally sprinting down the street to catch the brown truck, I have the boxes we need for the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) conference.

Noon: Andi arrives. We grab a quick lunch and make our way to Home Depot. After years of back-breaking load-ins to conferences, lugging 20- to 40-pound boxes of brochures, magazines, posters, stickers, and manuals, I decide to buy two folding hand trucks. I'm proud of my foresight this time, even if it does push back our leaving by a bit.

1 p.m. We're finally on the road. The booth, boxes, luggage, Julia, Andi, and I are stuffed into Julia's friend's BMW sedan. It's a tight



Attendees at the ADHA conference

fit, and Julia once again says she's glad to have this car, instead of her small Volkswagen Golf. Originally, we had planned to take the train (or even the bus) but Julia's offer of a car was hard to resist. We left later than the 11 a.m. to noon departure I had hoped for, but the trip from Philadelphia to Washington, DC should only take about two hours or so. We ought to arrive there in plenty of time to get to the host hotel and set up the booth before the exposition set-up period ends at 5 p.m.

7 p.m. We arrive in Washington, DC. The two-hour trip takes almost five, with intermittent rain causing us to pass two separate accidents on the highway that caused stop-and-go traffic for hours. I regret not having organized things better to make an earlier departure, but Julia says she's grateful that we didn't leave earlier and that we're not one of the six cars that successively skidded on the wet highway, slamming into the car in front, and, in turn, getting crushed. Andi agrees, but I still think we could have beaten all the trouble by leaving earlier. This late arrival means we will have to load in and set up the booth between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. tomorrow morning in order to be ready by the time the attendees are let into the expo hall at 9 o'clock. We check into our hotel: a cheaper one down the street from the conference. The beds are soft and wonderful. They have a pool, and we all regret that we didn't bring swimsuits.

8 p.m. We leave the hotel in search of sushi. Each of us, being volunteers on this crazy adventure in service to the APP, decide we will eat well after our horrendous car trip—even though we know we can't be extravagant. We're just a ways from Dupont Circle, and right in the middle of the gay district in DC—at the end of Connecticut Avenue—along a large strip of restaurants, clothing stores, and assorted boutiques. We decide to hunt down swimsuits so we can enjoy the hotel pool at least once while we're here.

We find ourselves in front of the Leather Rack, the leather shop where Luis—a former employee of mine, and a former APP Board member—used to pierce back in the mid-90s. Figuring they may have some men's swimsuits, we make our way upstairs. The two employees behind the counter show a practiced indifference to me—and a suspicious contempt for Julia and Andi—as I look at the

small selection of swimsuits, suits that are obviously intended to show off more than they conceal. I try on a small black suit that, while looking at least marginally modest on the rack, when worn, proves to be little more than a sling in the front (a "banana hammock" as some might say.) I decide to get it anyway and hope that there are no families in the pool later. While I'm trying it on, the women finally get the attention of the salespeople when they express interest in some of the sex toys...

FRIDAY, JUNE 19

7 a.m. We're up and out of our hotel, and the three of us are driving toward the host hotel in hopes of getting the booth set up by time the expo opens at 9 a.m. After several attempts to find the load-in area, steam starts to billow out from under the hood as we arrive.

Crap.

After the steam dissipates, we start to unload the car. We are told by GES exposition services that we are allowed to move in only what we can carry, union rules. We start to see how much we can each carry, only to be given clarification: one person, one trip. We have to pay GES to load us in. And I even bought those damn hand-trucks for the trip.

After the GES rep wheels our boxes to our space, Julia parks the overheating car. We assemble the booth, grab a quick breakfast at the hotel coffee shop, and wait for the crowd.

9 a.m. The convention floor opens. The response to the APP booth at this year's ADHA Conference is the same as many of the conferences we attend: some come to the booth wondering why we're there, a few walk past us staring incredulously, but most—especially those that remember us from last year—come up and talk to us about what we do, about what they do, and about how our organization can help educate their industry. We hand out several hundred pamphlets: *What is the APP?* is the one we push on everyone, and *Oral Aftercare* and *Oral Piercing Risks*—reprinted just in time for this conference—are the most popular.

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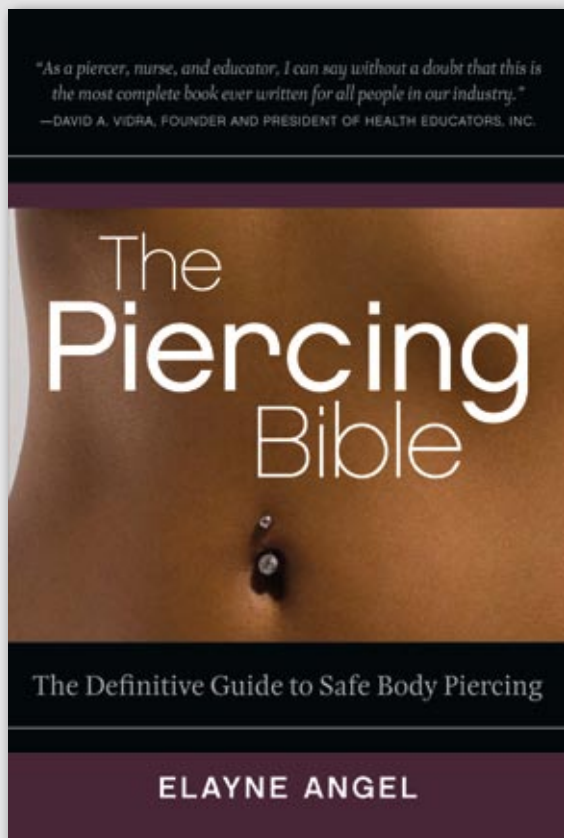
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR - ELAYNE ANGEL has been a professional piercer for more than 20 years and has performed over 40,000 piercings. She was awarded the President's Lifetime Achievement Award by the Association of Professional Piercers in 2006 and is a contributing writer for *PAIN* Magazine. She lives in Mérida, Mexico. Visit www.piercingbible.com for more information.

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After spending so much time writing content, editing, and overseeing the layout of our promotional materials, brochures, and other publications, it's always so rewarding to see where they are going and to hear that people are happy to have them and to use them.

Noon: Julia's friend John—the owner of the overheating car—arrives in DC by driving Julia's Golf there. He quickly determines it's a busted coolant hose and is off to get parts to fix it.

3 p.m. The expo closes. John picks us up in Julia's car. He drops us off at our hotel, and then he heads to the broken-down vehicle to see what he can do.

5 p.m. We meet John down the street from the hotel, where he continues to sweat over the car. He is quite a sight: a long-haired, tattooed, country-loving horse dentist, stooped over the bumper, head under the hood of a broken down BMW on a high-rent street just off Dupont Circle in DC. He told us he spent the last several hours struggling over the car, while neighbors stared at him disdainfully, some even going so far as to scold him and ask how long it would be before he was able to move his car (and more to the point, himself) from their street. He replied that he didn't have a chance to pick where he broke down. Staying with him as he finished, watching the families walk their purebred puppies, dressed as if they just stepped out of a J. Crew catalog, it was clear they didn't want him there any longer than absolutely necessary.

7 p.m. We—or rather, John—gets the car running, and we head to dinner.

9 p.m. Back at the hotel, we watch two episodes of NCIS while we work on folding more brochures, and then it's off to bed.

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

10 a.m. We're up, caffeinated, and back at the booth.

Today I had more time to walk around and check out the other exhibitors. There were the usual dental hygiene companies: Colgate, Crest, and Tom's of Maine. Wrigley's was there giving out gum. There were companies showcasing mannequin heads with teeth for practicing students, tool suppliers, companies selling dental chairs, lights, and everything else for the modern dental office—and then there was us.

Some attendees are still confused by our presence at ADHA—even in our third year there—but the overwhelming majority are receptive to what we do and only too happy to be given our brochures, posters, copies of *The Point*, and our Procedure Manual. Many talk about using our material, how they hand it out to clients or use it to educate

coworkers and dentists who dictate policy where they work. After spending so much time writing content, editing, and overseeing the layout of our promotional materials, brochures, and other publications, it's always so rewarding to see where they are going and to hear that people are happy to have them and to use them.

(I did have a hard time finding the bathroom today. While those staffing the booths at expos are more often than not men, the attendees at ADHA are almost all female—probably more than 90 percent women. Being a piercer serving a disproportionately female clientele [at last tally, my shop's female clients were figured at more than 70 percent], I was used to the gender breakdown, but it didn't really strike me until today how disproportionate this breakdown was: the closest men's bathroom had been turned into a women's room, and I had to go up several flights of stairs to use the facilities.)

4 p.m. We move out. We started packing at 3 p.m., and when the expo closes, we break down the booth, pack up our remaining boxes, and walk out the front door—avoiding GES and their union requirements.

We get on the road, with Julia and John driving the now-fixed BMW sedan, and me behind them in the Golf, blasting the Beastie Boys, Public Enemy, and 50 Cent all the way back to Philadelphia. We stop only for gas, and for sushi at a conveyor-belt sushi bar in Maryland—the sushi was *wonderful*.

8 p.m. I'm finally back home, with 12 hours to go before I leave again, this time for Atlanta. Google Maps said the trip from DC was supposed to be two hours and 37 minutes; Google Maps lied.

SUNDAY, JUNE 21

8 a.m. Ed and I leave the house to catch the bus to the train to the airport. We have an 11 a.m. flight (Ed Chavarria—the APP's Membership Liaison—has been working at my shop for the past week. He is headed with me to Atlanta to attend the Board meeting.)

2 p.m. We arrive in Atlanta. I spend the flight working on my trip's journal. I had hoped to write each night—as things happen—like I did with my last journal article for *The Point*, but the trip has been such a whirlwind so far that I just haven't had time—and the crazy week isn't even half over.

At baggage claim we meet Elayne Angel—who has also just arrived from Mexico via Houston—rent a car at the Hertz booth, and start on our way.



Bethra, Ed, Didier, and Elayne hard at work in Atlanta

4 p.m. We arrive at Bethra's shop (Virtue and Vice, the shop owned by Bethra Szumski, the APP's Secretary). Elayne and I leave Ed there and head to Bethra's house to pick up boxes of printed materials for the APP booth at the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) conference and exposition. We have two hours before it opens.

6 p.m. Elayne and I arrive at the booth, set up our materials, and put on our game faces for the public.

The APP has had a booth at the NEHA Conference for only two years. (I also attended last year, with Didier.) It is a conference populated mostly by health inspectors and those involved in public health issues (vendors included a manufacturer of sneeze guards for salad bars, one selling systems for public pools, and several dealing with sewage systems). Many attendees came up to our booth to talk about how they were in charge of piercing (and tattoo) studio inspections in their areas. We discussed pending legislation, studio inspections, and budget issues with the attendees. We gave out a lot of APP Procedure Manuals that I know will make it into the hands of people who needed them.

It was good to be working the booth with Elayne. When I first started doing outreach at medical conferences four years ago, it was usually on the heels of the work Elayne did with the Board on her first two terms, from 1999 to 2005. The first year I was at American Public Health Association (APHA) and American College Health Association (ACHA) conferences, people would come up and ask where the "wonderful lady with the shaved head" was that year, and say how much they missed seeing her there.

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Elayne Angel at the NEHA conference

9 p.m. Elayne and I pack up and head back to Bethra’s house where the rest of the Board awaits: Eric, Didier, Bethra, and Ed are there along with Paul King. We catch up, and then head to bed; there are still three very full days ahead.

MONDAY, JUNE 22

7 a.m. The final alarms go off, even though almost everyone is already awake. Ed will be manning the booth at the second and final day at NEHA, and Paul, Elayne, Didier, and I will be taking three-day teacher training classes in First Aid, CPR and Automatic External Defibrillators (AED), and BBP. This is why the Board meeting is scheduled when and where it is; flying the entire Board in for a meeting is expensive, and when we can combine events, we do so. This time, it really makes for a crazy-busy week.

8 a.m. We arrive at the National Safety Council training center. There are thirteen people attending the First Aid, CPR, and AED teacher training classes, and four from our group are also taking the BBP teacher training. We’re a pretty obvious group when we walk through the room to take our seats; we’re in a class with two college-age women and seven others—six of whom I can only describe, generously, as “good ol’ boys.” Paul and I had several whispered conversations about the other attendees and how we felt like we did when we’re in a foreign country. One of the guys spoke with such a severe Southern drawl that he was, at times, impossible to understand—much like Boomhower, a mainstay character in the cartoon *King of the Hill*. I’m sure they are going to have an equally difficult time later, trying to describe to their friends the strange Yankee, the queer California liberal, the guy with the crazy ears, and the American ex-pat with the tattooed fish-legs.

4 p.m. We arrive back at Bethra’s house and shortly call the third-quarter meeting of the APP Board of Directors to order. We take a break for dinner and then adjourn several hours later—although Elayne and I work on the APP site until close to midnight. We still have two more days of teacher training during the day, followed by Board meetings in the evening. When I go to bed I feel like I’ve been run over by a truck...and I won’t be getting back to Philadelphia until Thursday evening.

And that’s where I end, for now.

In the comments to my last crazy travel diary in The Point (issue #41), I wrote that while not typical, the experience then was not unusual. Little did I know how right—and prophetic—I was being. This year’s ADHA and NEHA trip, combined with First Aid, CPR and AED, and BPP training, was just as crazy of a schedule-juggling experience as last year, and maybe even more work.

We take the APP booth to annual conferences for the American Public Health Association (APHA), the American College Health Association (ACHA), the American Dental Health Association (ADHA), and the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA). While this is a lot of work and expense for the organization, the benefit of the outreach is immense. The mission statement of the APP mandates that we work to educate not only piercers and the public but healthcare professionals and legislators as well. These conferences show just how necessary—and effective—this outreach really is. Even though my duties on behalf of the organization are often overwhelming, these outreach experiences always recharge me in a way that nothing else comes close to.

Many thanks to Julia Grow for helping me at ADHA, and taking everything in stride, including some personal craziness during the week that you’ll just have to ask her about yourself... P

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Lassi backstage. Photo by Eva Alicia Lepiz.

THE SAVIOURS IN OAXACA



JASON PFOHL

Gorilla Glass
Oaxaca, Mexico

When they showed up at the airport with baseball bats sticking out of their suitcases, I knew this would not be an ordinary sporting event. Balls would be bounced and stretched, small game animals would be hammered and skewered, but there would be no home runs and definitely no referees.

Jussi and Lassi came to perform in Oaxaca, Mexico from Finland via Las Vegas. This dynamic duo makes up the sideshow group The Saviours. Dedicated to their own brand of modern sideshow alternative theater, they have traveled and performed extensively in Europe and have also made appearances in the U.S. This spring, they helped organize the sideshow round table at the APP Conference at the Tropicana Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas—some may recall witnessing Lassi swing a midget from his penis at the Penthouse Club.

I first saw The Saviours perform at the BMXnet conference in Germany in 2008, where an attempted one-point guiche

suspension failed. This could be payback for Lassi's no-show at the Norwegian SusCon where they were supposed to perform. The Saviours are not known so much for their hardcore stunts as they are for their theatrical style and humorous storyline. Nevertheless, the attempted guiche suspension says a lot about Jussi and Lassi, their relationship, and their willingness to take risks. In the end, they perform not just for the audience but also for themselves.

This was The Saviours' first visit to Mexico and first performance in Oaxaca. Oaxaca is a small city in southern Mexico—very traditional with a church on every other block downtown. Generally, people are conservative, but there is a large art scene with many internationally famous painters and sculptors. The venue, Club Central—owned by a well-known artist—is an alternative club, occasional gallery, and serves as the principal hangout of many writers, painters, architects, photographers, and intellectuals in Oaxaca.





Oaxaca is a small city in southern Mexico—very traditional with a church on every other block downtown.

The culture clash was perhaps the best part of having these crazy Finnish sideshow performers in Oaxaca. When you come into direct contact with something completely the opposite of yourself, it is an opportunity to see yourself from the outside. It is eye-opening for some and mind blowing for others. One young man fainted within the first 10 minutes of the show and was carried outside. My next-door neighbors joined him on the sidewalk, along with a half-dozen others who couldn't stomach the show. I witnessed the open-mouthed shock of the crowd, a contrast to the cheering and screaming that I am accustomed to at most sideshow performances in the U.S. and Europe.

Of course, there were exceptions. I noticed one young man kissing his girlfriend throughout the performance, and the more extreme the show got, the more excited he got. There was also a squad of cheering girls. But the general mood was one of awe and stunned disbelief. The Saviours were a whole new level of avant-garde.

The Saviours' basic storyline features Lassi as a gallant but slightly sinister lover boy making amorous advances on Jussi, the drug-addled bunny who likes to play hard to get. Lassi goes through all kinds of extremes to get attention from Jussi who appears to be more interested in popping pills and getting drunk. A series of sideshow tricks are performed throughout the show—the human pin cushion (the bunny pushes a big syringe through his arm, his cheek and most impressively, his hand), sword swallowing (or rather 12-inch dildo swallowing), fire eating, passing an enema tube through the nasal canal and more. The finale is a keg suspension from Lassi's scrotum, followed by a tug-of-war from hooks.

I have seen The Saviours perform several times in different venues, and what is most enjoyable about them is the theater, humor, and spontaneity they bring to their performances. While working with a basic outline of the show, they make room for improvisation by adapting to the circumstances of the stage and the moment at hand. The piercing, hooks, blood, and other elements create a visceral experience in which you empathize with the performers, and the body play is balanced by humor that can make you laugh instead of cringe.

Special thanks to Jussi and Lassi for coming all the way to Mexico to perform, and many thanks to Yadira and Willy at Club Central for hosting the show. **P**





Allen Falkner and several SusCon attendees

DALLAS SUSCON 2009



EDUARDO CHAVARRIA
APP Membership Liaison

Images by Cookie Haworth

sus•pend /sub-spend/ *Verb (used with object)*

1. To hang by attachment to something above.
2. To attach so as to allow free movement.
3. To keep from falling, sinking, forming a deposit, etc., as if by hanging. *

The year 2009 will leave a mark on the history of body suspension and on the suspension community. No longer is suspension purely an act of spiritual adventure, a type of show to be presented on stage, or an art form to display in galleries. Nowadays, people are putting suspension to the most extreme of challenges with multi-hour suspensions, multiple-transition suspensions, and some suspensions that can be likened to competitive sports.

Presently, body suspension is nearly as common in mainstream life as a navel or tongue piercing. It can be found on television, the internet, or in your local rock and roll club or art gallery. In Oslo, Norway it is even being studied by psychiatrists to see if the long-term effects of suspension can minimize or even stop the

physical acting-out of self-mutilators.

There are several people to thank for bringing body suspension into our realities: Stelarc and Fakir Musafar to name a few. But it is undoubtedly Allen Falkner who we can deem “the father of modern-day suspension.” It is because of him that the “SusCon” (suspension convention) came to be, with the first one he started in Dallas, Texas in 2001. Since then, SusCons have been held all over the United States and world.

During the weekend of April 18-20, 2009, SusCon was welcomed back to Dallas for the first time since 2002. The event was put together for a couple of big reasons. First and foremost, the weekend was a milestone event for Allen, as he celebrated his fortieth birthday. This was an easy way for him to be surrounded by many of his closest friends from around the globe. Additionally, the event facilitated the dissemination of valuable information about suspension safety in a community that has been secretive and, in some cases, conflicted with strong rivalry.

Like the piercing community in the late 1980s and early 90s, the suspension community has been very sheltered and not very open about a lot of its information. If you didn’t know the secret handshake, you weren’t going to get much. This event allowed

* Excerpted from: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/suspend>



everyone to drop their egos and extend a hand. Very importantly, it challenged over 20 suspension groups to work together in a friendly manner and help cross-train one another.

Most impressive about this year's SusCon was that there were classes offered to suspension facilitators. One class focused on taking suspension to the stage. It was led by Steve Joyner of Constructs of Ritual Evolution (CoRE), and Håvve Fjell of Wings of Desire/Pain Solution. The class focused on the safety aspects involved in bringing suspension to the stage. Subjects covered included backstage piercers, on-the-scene and behind-the-scene rigging, and exposure control plans for stage suspensions.

Another class focused on rigging; it was taught by Stewart Stephens, a certified professional rigger whose impressive résumé includes Cirque du Soleil. He truly understands "flying people." The class focus was on proper equipment for suspension, and it clarified what equipment is not safe. Also, the class covered how to inspect your equipment and how to determine the safety rating of the equipment you use, along with the effects of how much a simple knot can minimize the strength of ropes and cords.

Aside from classes that were offered, the hands-on aspect of the weekend was very well put-together and managed to meet all the safety and health requirements one should expect to go along with suspension—predominantly the piercing aspect. There was a separate piercing area that was divided into two parts. Half was for piercing, and the other half for hook removal, fluid clean up, skin burping, and bandaging. There was a table containing individual trays and most of the disposables to set up for the piercing procedures. There was a dirty room equipped to pre-soak hooks and shackles before sending them through an ultrasonic cycle. There were two sinks: one for hand washing and a separate one for rinsing contaminated equipment. For reusable equipment, such as carabiners and rigs, there was a disinfection table. Far above the minimum standard, the on-site sterilization was done with a Statim 5000 for packaged equipment, and a Statim 2000 for quick, unpackaged sterilization. And finally, as if the distinct separation of clean and contaminated areas was not enough, everything was clearly marked on poster-board to avoid any possible confusion.

Big thanks go out to: TSD, CoRE, Rites of Passage, I was Cured, I-hung, Only Flesh, Wings of Desire/Pain Solution, Hooks Suspension Team, Disgraceland Hook Squad, A.G.R.O, Skin Mechanics Suspension, Suspension Syndicate, and the rest of the troupes in attendance. To all the members of these teams, you each deserve a congratulations and pat on the back. The event would not have been as successful without everyone's sweat, tears, and energy.

In closing, I'd like to express my deepest gratitude to Allen Falkner for stepping outside of his circle, facilitating this event, and opening it up to all of us: you did a great job in a brief amount of time and showed us how to lead by your example. I can only hope that next year's event will be as impressive. **P**



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MEMBERS, SUPPORTERS, AND FRIENDS!

The Association of Professional Piercers is asking for artwork design submissions for our 2010 Conference T-shirts to be sold in Las Vegas at the annual APP Conference on May 2 - 7 2010.

If you have ever had an idea for a shirt that you always thought would be the very best thing to ever grace the backs of APP Conference goers, well, now is your chance to shine! Gather up all those witty wisecracks, saucy silkscreens, and impressive images that have been cluttering up your brain, tuck them into a closet someplace and think of something good. Get your artwork into your computer and send it to us, and you may find your idea on the next Conference T-shirt or hoodie.

You can send in as many designs as you like; the more you send us, the better the chances your artwork has of being chosen.

We have had a lot of people ask how they can contribute to the APP and this is a great opportunity. The members and friends of the APP are a very creative bunch, and we are looking forward to seeing what you can all come up with. Not only will the winning designs grace the chests of piercers across the globe, but we'll send the winning designers TWO free shirts and put a special thank you in the Conference program!

So, now that we have made this an irresistible contest and you are foaming at the mouth to get started, there are a few guidelines you will need to follow. Luckily, they aren't too restrictive, so read on and get those creative juices flowing!

Contest Rules:

- You may submit single-color designs or multi-color designs.
- If your design is for a specific article of clothing please specify the type (ie: hoodie, boy shorts, baseball-T, etc.); otherwise we will figure out what to print it on.
- All submissions must be made before January 1, 2010.
- All submissions must be e-mailed to William Spencer at appdesigncontest@gmail.com.
- All submissions must be in a 300 dpi flattened TIFF in RGB. (Please don't ask if some other format is ok, this is pretty clear).

Here is a link to the design templates from the company the APP uses for printing: <http://www.jakprints.com/file-prep/apparel.php>.

- Submissions must contain the following:
 - The current APP logo
 - The words "Association of Professional Piercers"
 - The words "Conference 2010"

If you would like to submit a design that is just for the APP in general and not Conference specific, that is fine as well. We usually have a more basic shirt for sale in addition to the Conference designs. In this case you must still use the current APP logo and the words "Association of Professional Piercers." but you can skip the "Conference 2010" part.

Submissions may NOT contain any of the following:

- graphic nudity
- offensive language
- any copyrighted material
- offensive, nationalistic, or religious symbolism (ie: swastikas, flags, crosses etc.)
- excessive violence

Most of this stuff is just common sense but we wanted to give you a basic idea of what we are looking for. Of course, we reserve the right to reject any ideas we want for any reason, even if we forgot to write it down.

The earlier you send in your designs, the easier it will be for us to decide which ones will be used!

We will be deciding on the winners shortly after the last submission is accepted, and we will send out another e-mail to let everyone know who the winners are; or, you could just come to the Conference in beautiful Las Vegas and look at the shirts for sale in person!

We know that artists don't like their work messed around with, so we don't plan on doing that. BUT if a design would be perfect with just a tweak, we do reserve the right to modify the designs as we see fit. If we find that we need to change a design, we will contact you before we put your name on the modified design, in case you decide you don't like it. Keep in mind, we can take your name off the design if you wish, but we may still use it—even if you think it sucks.

One final thing about legal stuff: by submitting your designs to the APP you are giving ALL rights to your design over to the APP. For any design that is NOT chosen, all rights will return to the artist AFTER the 2010 APP Conference in Las Vegas. The APP will be retaining all legal rights to the designs that are chosen. The APP will e-mail all the contestants with a list of winning designs, via the e-mail addresses used to submit the designs.

If you have any questions about this contest feel free to e-mail William Spencer at appdesigncontest@gmail.com.

Please remember to include your name, address, and phone number in all e-mail correspondence.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter, and thank you for your future participation! If you have any creative friends, please pass this letter on to them. The more designs we have to choose from, the better shirts we can offer to the world!

— APP Conference Committee



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UPCOMING APP EVENTS

- ▶ **APP ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXPOSITION**
May 2-7, 2010
Las Vegas, NV
- ▶ **ACHA (AMERICAN COLLEGE HEALTH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE)**
June 1-5, 2010
Philadelphia, PA
- ▶ **NEHA (NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT HEALTH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE)**
June 6-9, 2010
Albuquerque, NM
- ▶ **ADHA (AMERICAN DENTAL HYGIENIST'S ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE)**
June 23-29, 2010
Las Vegas, NV
- ▶ **APHA (AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE)**
November 6-10, 2010
Denver, CO

