

THE POINT

ISSUE 55
SPRING 11

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS



NEW APP BOARD

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FROM THE EDITOR



JAMES WEBER

APP President

Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

This issue marks the close of an era for this publication and the beginning of a new one.

A new one because with this issue we are dramatically increasing our print circulation—by one-third—in order to have enough copies to distribute from the APP booth at the four different tattoo conventions on our annual event calendar. This coincides with a new phase of outreach for the organization, one I am very excited about. [See “President’s Corner,” in *The Point* #53.] If you are holding one of these print copies in your hand, you will also notice that with this issue we have made the move to full-color! With a new printer, we have made the long-overdue jump from black-and-white, and the photos and layout have never looked better.

This issue also marks the end of my six years on the APP Board of Directors. This is the last one I will be overseeing as President and as a member of the APP’s Board of Directors.

I still remember my first board meeting, in early 2005 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. This was the transitional meeting, attended by both incoming and outgoing Board Members. That year, the entire Board transitioned at one time, and part of the agenda of that meeting was passing projects over to the new group. Elayne Angel was coming off six years of overseeing the publication, and with what I imagine was hesitation and trepidation, she passed over the responsibility for editing *The Point* to me.

Like all new Board Members, I had incredible ideas about how to improve the organization (beginning with *The Point*), and also like all new Board Members, upon taking up my position, I was immediately blindsided by the reality of the work. I spent much of my first year attempting to extricate my head from my ass, and I only managed to get out three issues before the next Conference. After that—even though deadlines were often little more than suggestions—I managed to organize and oversee the publication of four issues per year. In my six years as editor, I have been directly responsible for the publication of twenty-three issues—almost half of the fifty-five issues put out by the APP since the first issue of *The Point* in late 1994. I am incredibly proud of my part in taking what started out as an intermittently-published members’ newsletter and turning it into a bona fide and respected quarterly journal.

In the beginning—besides some occasional help with text editing and proofing—it was just me. I was either incredibly passionate about my job as editor or too inexperienced to see the need for an organized committee to help me with each issue. Looking back, I can see it was a bit of both.

By the time I was elected to a second Board term, I was still handling *Point* duties in addition to my responsibilities as a Board Member and chief Officer. Soon enough, I realized I couldn’t (and shouldn’t) do it all myself any longer, and with issue #46 I finally had consistent help. Elayne Angel had just finished writing and editing her book, *The Piercing Bible: The Definitive Guide to Safe Body Piercing*, and was back on board as co-editor. Jennifer Heimborg, a graduate of the journalism program

at The University of Central Florida and partner of the head piercer at my studio, was also on as a volunteer. Since then, this committee has grown to include Kimberly Zapata (operations manager at my studio and undergraduate student in English) and Angela Smith (technical writer and former employee of mine). All of these people share my love of writing and passion for the magazine—coupled with an inexplicable urge to do large amounts of thankless editing work for free. Add to this one Jon Loudon—the graphic designer who has been with *The Point* and the APP for more than five years now—and you have an amazing staff moving forward.

But what about me?

I would be lying if I said I wasn’t looking forward to some time off after serving on the APP Board of Directors. There may be a hard-to-fill hole in my life come June, but I’m *quite* confident I can find things to occupy me. But as anxious as I am for a break from the duties of my position, the one thing I can’t walk away from is *The Point*. As of this writing, I have made an offer to continue on as editor. In Las Vegas, at the first meeting of the new Board, they will vote on my proposal. If it is accepted, I will continue on as your editor-for-hire. If not, *The Point* will continue with an all-volunteer editorial staff. I can say with complete certainty that I will be okay with whatever decision is made. Like I wrote in my very first “From the Editor” column in 2005, for issue #33: “I’m excited and proud to be part of this next step forward.” Whatever it may be.

In the meantime, welcome to issue #55 of *The Point: The Journal of the Association of Professional Piercers*. **P**

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



JAMES WEBER

APP President

Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

This is my last time writing for *The Point* as the APP's President.

This Conference will mark the end of my six years of service on the APP Board of Directors. I was elected as Medical Liaison in 2005, and in 2008 I started my second term, as President. This will end at this year's Conference, the second week of June. It has been a long, strange ride that I imagine I will only begin to be able to put into perspective once I'm no longer on this roller coaster.

I've written before about the APP's election process, but this transition requires a little more explanation.

As President, I've been called upon to write about a diverse set of topics for this column. I've discussed nonprofits and bylaws, the APP's election process, membership categories, copyright and logo usage, and even Robert's Rules of Order. All topics I never thought my career as a piercer would require me to know, much less educate others on.

It's only fitting then that this, my last "President's Corner," is about the Board transition process, and introduces those who will be taking over after I step down. I've written before about the APP's election process [*The Point* #44 and #52], but this transition requires a little more explanation.

Four members of the APP's Board of Directors have terms expiring at this year's Conference: Elayne Angel, Didier Suarez, Eduardo Chavarria, and myself. At the last election, Elayne and Didier ran for a second, consecutive term. Ed declined to pursue re-election, and I was at the end of my second term and not eligible to run again. (The APP's bylaws limit members of the APP's Board of Directors to two consecutive terms.) As stated in last issue [*The Point* #54], those with the most votes received in the last election were Elayne Angel, Didier Suarez, John Johnson, Rick Frueh, and Mike Martin. Since that last announcement, Didier—citing increased demands on his time from his studios, in addition to his personal life—has declined to serve for a second term. This leaves the nominee with the next-highest number of votes to fill the seat: Sarvas Berry.

Brian Skellie and Dana Dinius are continuing in their positions, and this Conference marks the beginning of the second year of their three-year terms. After Bethra Szumski stepped down from her position on the Board at last Conference, John Johnson—the nominee with the most votes after the re-elected Board members—assumed her seat. (Again, see last issue.)

As I wrote previously [*The Point* #52], the bylaws of the APP specify the positions and duties of the Officers of the corporation

(President, Secretary, and Treasurer) and Vice-President, but the other titles and duties assumed by members of the Board are determined by their individual strengths—and by their willingness to take them on. As agreed upon by the current and future Board of Directors, as of Conference 2011, the APP's new Board of Directors will be:

ELAYNE ANGEL

President

JOHN JOHNSON

Vice President

BRIAN SKELLIE

International Liaison

DANA DINIUS

Outreach Coordinator

RICK FRUEH

Medical Liaison

MIKE MARTIN

Legislation Liaison

SARVAS BERRY

Membership Liaison

The selection of the President showcases one of the idiosyncrasies of the APP election process. Titles and positions on the upcoming Board are decided upon at the last quarterly meeting before Conference, which took place this year in February, in Atlanta. The responsibility for filling the officers' positions is the Board's, but, the Board that elects the next President is not in power until after the old Board Members step down, at the annual banquet dinner. This leaves the situation as follows: Elayne has agreed she will seek the position of President, and the rest of the Board has agreed to vote her into that position when they have the power to do so. This will happen on the last day of Conference, when the new Board officially convenes for the first time.

As for the other Officers' positions: Paul King will continue on as Treasurer, and Bethra Szumski has been contracted to continue on as the Secretary. Both will maintain their respective positions into the future at the discretion of the new Board.

As for me, I am looking forward to having my time be my own again. I wish the new group the best, and I feel confident turning over my position as President to Elayne. I can think of no other person more qualified. **P**



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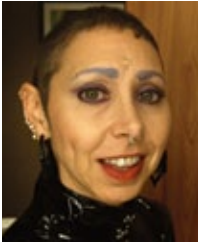
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INCOMING BOARD MEMBERS



ELAYNE ANGEL
Incoming APP President
Yucatán, Mexico



MIKE MARTIN
Incoming Medical Liaison
Flesh Skin Grafix
Imperial Beach, CA

When the most recent APP elections were announced, I considered whether to run for the Board yet again. My initial impulse was to take a hiatus since I'll be finishing up my *ninth* year of service (third full term) by the time the new Board will be taking office. I thought, "I've put a lot of time and energy into the organization and it has been very rewarding, but I feel like I could use a break."

Then I reflected on the fact that for many of the years I served on the Board, I also ran my own studio in New Orleans. I managed somehow to juggle the responsibilities of my business, my Board position, and the rest of my life successfully. My studio closed after Hurricane Katrina, and I moved to the Yucatán in Mexico; I don't have a studio any longer. Now my work life consists of promoting my book, *The Piercing Bible—The Definitive Guide to Safe Body Piercing*, and doing guest piercing at studios around the U.S.

I realized that I'm in a very unique position: I'm still heavily involved in the world of body piercing, yet my schedule is extremely flexible. The more I thought about it, the clearer the realization became that I should have sufficient time and energy to handle my workload and still be able to devote a lot to the organization.

Further, in the past, we as Board Members used to take on all of the work of the APP without any help. Now we have experienced personnel handling important duties and active committees maintaining a smooth and efficient work flow. This crucial support makes serving on the Board quite a different (and more pleasant) experience than it used to be!

Once I made the decision to run again, I felt very excited and enthused because I now bring an added element to the APP. Along with my years of experience as a professional piercer and a Board Member, I've seen that being the author of the first major book about safe body piercing has provided me with additional credibility. People in the medical community, health inspectors, and other members of the industry treat me with greater respect. Doors have been opened, and the information I've shared has been readily welcomed (for example, the Wikipedia entry on "body piercing" uses my book as a reference more than a dozen times, and it is also being cited in articles related to body piercing that appear in medical journals). This legitimacy is an additional benefit I can lend to the organization through my affiliation.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to work with the last Board over these recent years. I'm very much looking forward to serving on the next Board with a terrific group of colleagues, and to continue to pursue the mission of the organization: to disseminate vital health and safety information about body piercing. **P**

Here I go again, doing something I told myself I wouldn't do anymore: I'm flying east from San Diego in February, the coldest month of the year. Being a SoCal kinda guy—just like the guy I am traveling with: Didier Suarez, Vice President of the Association of Professional Piercers—something pretty important has to be happening for me to travel east into the "zone of the frozen ones." I am flying to my first meeting of the APP Board in Atlanta—which is not as cold as their neighbors to the north, but it is still way colder than San Diego.

The funny thing is, I am also the Vice President of the Alliance of Professional Tattooists.

Something very strange is going on, not only with my trip but in our culture: there is a crossover occurring, a melding of the tattoo and piercing worlds. This has taken a long time to occur—almost 20 years—and I hope to make a difference to both the tattoo and body piercing sides of our industry. I have been placed in a position of trust by all who voted me onto the APP Board of Directors, and I am thankful and motivated to do everything I can to make a progressive difference with the APP as well as the APT.

I have seen this evolution myself over the past 26 years; some of it is amazing, and some of it is scary. I have been invited to take part in writing both tattoo and body piercing regulations for the state of California and represented APT while doing so. Now, along with Paul King and Steve Joyner, I am representing the APT and APP in the "Be Smart With Body Art" outreach campaign at Sacramento State and the University of California, Davis. Those are just a few of the good things the APT and APP are involved in while working together to educate the public. Unfortunately though, we all have seen the scary stuff: tattoo equipment flooding the United States from China and Israel for sale in head shops and malls across the country to anyone with the money to buy it, and tattoo schools that promise to teach you everything you need to know to become a tattoo artist in three weeks (for the low price of \$5,000). Scary, scary stuff. (Though I did recently fly to China to present the APT Preventing Disease Transmission in Tattooing, PDTT international seminar, which was well received.)

Now, I am flying east for a very important reason: I am going to my first APP Board of Directors meeting. It is an honor to be on the Board of APP and APT. I love both industries, and I love working with the people who make these things happen. I am sure I will survive the cold weather and be welcomed to the Board. I am looking forward to working with each member. I may be the first to hold such a position on both Boards at the same time. That's heavy. **P**

[On April 5th, as this issue was in layout, Mike Martin was in a hit-and-run accident while driving his motorcycle. He is recuperating after surgery with a fractured leg, broken ribs, a broken wrist (his tattooing hand) and multiple contusions. While he will still be active on the new APP Board via email, he may not make it Conference this year. We wish him the best with his recovery.]



SARVAS BERRY
Incoming Membership Liaison
Evolved Body Art
Columbus, OH



RICK FRUEH
Incoming Medical Liaison
Industrial Primitives
Austin, Texas

When I am doing CrossFit—the rigorous strength and conditioning program—I do it because I want to maintain good health. I do the work to change how I feel about myself. The same goes for my career: I do the work, put in the extra effort, to change how I feel about myself and, to a certain degree, the world. To say I have a strong work ethic would be an understatement, and to say that I have drive and determination would oversimplify what that ethic encompasses. Something else that must be present, an element beyond drive—a willingness, comprised of attitude and heart, to sacrifice yourself for your work. It is this willingness that defines me, and this concept that has become the focus of my work and life in the last year.

Since I started my professional piercing career in 2002, I have not had the opportunity to give back to the industry or piercing community as much as I would have liked. I've been an APP member for the last five years, and I feel now is the time for me to give back to the APP what it has given me. Among other things, the APP has provided an opportunity to further my education, even before I became a member.

As I step into this new role on the Board as Membership Liaison, I look forward to helping others see the importance of being a member, holding the highest standards, and giving back to the industry on a larger level than simply the self. Thank you for giving me this opportunity. I hope the willingness to express myself through my work never subsides. **P**

For those of you who don't already know me, let me give you a little bit of my story.

I was born in a small town in Illinois, about an hour north of St. Louis, Missouri. I began my professional piercing career in 1999, and I joined the APP in 2002. In 2004 I moved to Austin, Texas, and I opened Industrial Primitives in March of 2005. I have been a guest speaker at several colleges and universities, I am a former President of the Church of Body Modification, and I am also an instructor and consultant for Health Educators, Inc.

I have been to every annual APP Conference since 2001, except one. I had the privilege of representing the APP at the American College Health Association (ACHA) conference in 2008, and I taught my first class at the APP's Annual Conference and Exposition in Las Vegas in 2009. Currently, I am serving on the Membership Committee, and I am taking over as chair of the Procedure Manual Committee, working to update the APP's Procedure Manual. When the new Board takes office, I will become the APP's new Medical Liaison.

I have also had the pleasure to work on the APP's new online roundtable project. The Membership Committee began doing these on a monthly basis in January. The topics vary, and they are open to APP Business Members and Business Members-at-Large. If you are an APP member, be sure to check your email and the APP Facebook page for updates on future roundtables.

I look forward to working for the next three years toward a bigger and better APP. I would like to see the organization grow in both members and sponsors. I also hope to work on the standardization of our curriculum at Conference: to create a more unified voice in our teaching and to make the APP stronger and more respected with government organizations—helping to ensure our classes count as continuing education credits for all those who attend.

I may be quiet, but I am not shy. I love to talk shop or just chat about my kitties, Helga and Yoda. If you don't already know me, please feel free to contact me. About anything. **P**

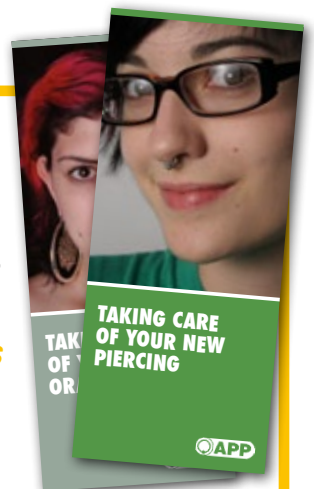


Courtesy Michelle Rubano

COMING SOON! TWO NEW APP BROCHURES

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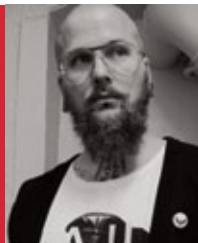


ASAP: ASSOCIATION SAFE PIERCING - SWEDEN



LEX

Federal Body Piercing
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WILLE

Barbarella Bodypiercing
Gothenburg, Sweden

In the early part of the 21st century, a group of body piercers from all over Scandinavia started to talk about forming an organization similar to APP, but smaller in size and with more focus on legislation and the specific difficulties facing body piercing in Scandinavia. During this period, we learned that every country's rules and regulations are different, so we decided to focus only on Sweden. Our hope was that we could have the opportunity to work in tandem with the government to bring a wide variety of issues to light, such as age limits, nickel laws, the use of autoclaves and washer disinfectors, and hygiene standards, to name a few.

After a few years—and in a great part thanks to the APP's International Conference in Amsterdam—we finally sat down, round table fashion, and established the guidelines necessary to create an organization. We also managed to set up a meeting with the APP's then-current Board. In fact, if I recall correctly, it was Paul King who proposed the name ASAP; we just added Sweden to it.

Much work was put into the organization in those first years, and we contributed to a lot of good changes. For example, we worked as a reference group with the Swedish government, creating basic guidelines for the industry, spreading loads of information about risk assessments and what a piercee should be careful about and look out for. But after a few years of tranquility, it was clear the organization needed some new blood and fresh input in order to keep moving forward. ASAP started to look around. At that time, there was a whole new generation of piercers that had grown up and were now ready to be a part of something bigger. The new board dove head first

into all the hard work and made the organization what it is today.

For the second time now we are a part of a reference group, this time with the health department, to set and update their standards and discuss what their inspectors should be looking out for when visiting a studio. As always with ASAP the timing has been perfect. We didn't even contact them, they contacted us. Isn't that great! With all the new members starting to put in an effort, the organization has really grown. We are now, with international measures, a small but very stable organization of 25 members, and we strive to continue growing.

In Sweden, body piercers are not a big group and that makes it hard to balance both members and board. One of the main problems in a small country is the limited number of participants at a conference. ASAP has always worked very closely with the tattooists' organization SRT, and over the last few years we have had a couple of really good conferences with 150 to 200 participants, both piercers and tattoo artists. With the birth of BMXnet a few years back it is easier for people to get out there and learn more without having to travel across half the globe, and that has boosted the input and effort going in to ASAP as well as given us more knowledge of what to offer at our own conferences. It also provides piercers in Sweden who want more knowledge a nice ladder to climb: ASAP to BMXnet to APP Conference.

ASAP is, as of January 2011, proud to be an Associate Corporate Member of the APP, and we are really looking forward to getting closer to and learning from the "mothership." **P**

BIOPATCH: A USEFUL PRODUCT FOR PIERCERS?



CHRISTOPHER GLUNT, CST
Santa Ana, CA

I recently gave up piercing full time to become a Surgical Technologist, which has given me the opportunity to utilize many products and techniques that transition effectively to body piercing and infection control. Recently, I used a product called BioPatch, which prior to this time I had only handed to the doctor or placed around a surgical site during routine bandaging. As I placed it on the patient, I realized it would fit perfectly around a piercing. At this point I thought it might work well as a compression dressing to potentially fight hypertrophic scarring on piercings that may have been bumped around a little too often.

Reading the information on the product package, I noticed it is made by a company that has a technical representative at the hospital. I talked to our Ethicon rep about using this product for application on body piercings. He said that it would work great—as long as the initial piercing followed strict aseptic technique. Additionally, research and test studies on the product further confirmed the practicality of using BioPatch in piercing applications.

BioPatch is a small, round, non-adhesive, foam-like circle that has a small hole in the center and a small split to access the center hole. It is easily placed around orthopedic pins and vascular catheters in a hospital setting. It releases Chlorhexadine

Gluconate (CHG) transdermally for seven days to reduce the ability of resident flora to recolonize following the initial skin preparation.

Infections can often be caused by one's own bacteria entering a break in the skin—it doesn't always have to be introduced from another source. BioPatch can be removed weekly, the piercing cleaned following regular aftercare instructions, and a new patch placed for another week, and repeated as needed. While this may not be practical for all piercings, it can provide a significant decrease in the risk of infection to your clients when used appropriately. (For more information about BioPatch, visit the manufacturer's website: <http://www.ethicon360.com/products/biopatch-protective-disk-chg>).

This article is intended to get as many piercers as possible interested in getting together to set up a similar technique in application, and choosing several piercings to utilize this product on so that we can make a research-proven decision on when, where, and how to use this product. The hope is to increase customer satisfaction and reduce the amount of infected piercings that end up at doctors' offices or get reported to health departments, further tarnishing the medical community's opinion of us as professionals. If you're interested in being part of this discussion, email me at chrisglunt@gmail.com. **P**



“Essential reading...”*

RUNNING THE GAUNTLET

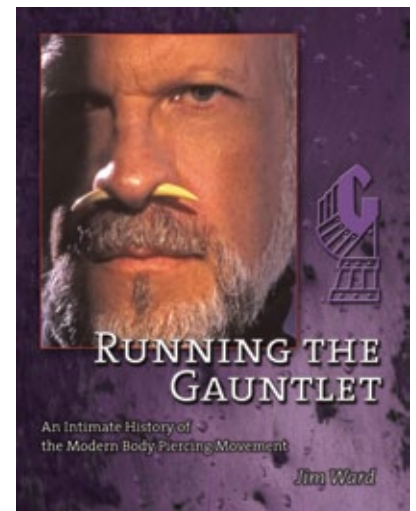
An Intimate History of the Modern Body Piercing Movement by Jim Ward

In this revealing autobiography, Jim Ward, considered by many to be the father of the modern piercing industry, tells the engaging and candid story of discovering his own fascination with body piercing, his founding of Gauntlet, the first body piercing studio, and how he transformed a personal fetish and backroom, amateur pursuit into a respected profession and spearheaded a worldwide, social phenomenon.

Running the Gauntlet will be available at the 2011 APP Conference. Pre-order your personal copy or multiple copies to sell in your studio (<http://www.safepiercing.org/publications/running-the-gauntlet/>). Stop by Jim Ward's table in the vendor area, meet the author, and pick up your signed copies from him!

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“Essential reading for anyone who wants to understand how modern body piercing arrived at the place it currently occupies.”

*James Weber, Outgoing President
Association of Professional Piercers*

BRAZILIAN BODY ART TAKES THE STREETS



CAMILA LIRA

Translation: Emilia Aratanha

One of the people responsible for the contributions that led to the popularity of body art in Brazil is piercer Luciano Iritsu. Since 1998 he has been connected to the body art scene, starting when Gabriel Estevão (Spectrum), the first to perform piercings in Brazil, took Luciano to the Zuba studio in São Paulo for his first piercing. Not long after that, he met with André Fernandes, one of the big influences of the Brazilian scene, who taught him the techniques of body piercing.

Luciano traveled and lived in Japan and England; as such, he was able to see how these different cultures deal with body art. In Brazil, only tattooing was considered an art form. Through conversations with his friends and some soul-searching, he thought, why not show the Brazilian society other forms of body art?

He returned to Brazil in 2005 with new projects and expectations. He encountered a scene that wasn't that different from the one he had left behind a couple of years before, but Luciano noticed something had changed.

"A lot of things happened with body art in the three years I was away, and I had knowledge of very little of that. I think that was due to the growing amount of professionals that appeared in that time frame; we estimate that we are already in the 3rd generation since there is no real research on the subject. Twenty years ago, some professionals started piercing in Brazil. So in the beginning of the 90s we have our 1st generation, then in the end of the 90s the 2nd generation and finally after 2005 the 3rd generation. But that's what we figured out among friends! I would like the readers to know how body art started in our country. Now we have a very strong scene, not only in Brazil but also in South America as a whole. There are innumerable events... I decided to put my ideas into action when I went to the 2005 Leds International Convention in São Paulo, when I saw that space for other types of body modification was lacking. The focus of the events of the time was only on tattoos. Brazilians are enchanted by the colors, but there are a lot of people who are intrigued by other modifications."

While speaking to a friend, Luciano had the idea of doing the first event for the professionals and fans of scarification in Latin America. CONSCAR was formed and took place on October 21 and 22, 2006. The goal was to have an exchange of knowledge, information, and techniques of this art form, which was still unknown in Brazil. The event had the participation of Rata (Argentina), Kor (Holland/Argentina resident), Emilio Gonzales (Venezuela), and André Fernandes.

Due to its innovation, vehicles specialized in body art have

acknowledged CONSCAR, like the website frrrkguys.com. The creator of the website, Thiago Soares (T. Angel), joined forces with Luciano and created a new event like CONSCAR but incorporated other types of body modifications. FRRRKCON was born from Luciano's event and the Frrrk Guys Party, with the goal to unite professionals and lovers of body art.

This time the event had lectures and round tables with professionals and academics, photographic exhibitions, paintings by tattoo artists,



suspensions, freak shows, and of course, a lot of music — both bands and DJs.

This new event didn't only draw the attention of the members of the scene. In 2010, the Secretaria Municipal de Cultura de São Paulo (Municipal Culture Secretary) invited Luciano to organize a show dedicated to body art in the prestigious Virada Cultural center. This was a major event for the history of body art in our country; for even in a big venue like the Virada Cultural, in which there are more than 800 attractions and a public audience of more than 4 million people, the body art stage managed to draw attention and was one of the most commented on. Due to the success of last year's performance, in 2011 the event will happen for a second time.

But it doesn't end here, Luciano said.

"My idea is not for everybody to start doing suspensions or any other type of body modification. It is that society knows about and comprehends this art form. I believe in it and fight the prejudice and false information that surrounds us, since most of it is due to lack of knowledge of what we are doing." **P**

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BRASIL DEIXA PRECONCEITO DE LADO E MODIFICAÇÃO TEM ESPAÇO RESERVADO EM EVENTO PÚBLICO EM SÃO PAULO



CAMILA LIRA

A contribuição para abertura de espaço para este fato ocorrer partiu da vontade do body piercer Luciano Iritsu. Desde 1998, Luciano está inteiramente ligado à área de modificação corporal, quando o Gabriel Estevão (Spectrum), o primeiro fabricante de piercing no Brasil o levou até o estúdio da Zuba em São Paulo para fazer sua primeira perfuração. Logo após conheceu André Fernandes um dos grandes motivadores que o ensinou as técnicas de aplicação de piercing.

Viajou pelo Japão e Inglaterra, onde morou por algum tempo e se deparando com uma realidade diferente quando o assunto é arte corporal, quando no Brasil a maioria da população reconhece apenas a tatuagem como arte corporal. Refletindo sobre o assunto e conversando com outros amigos Luciano pensava: Porque não levar conhecimento sobre outros tipos de arte corporal para a sociedade do Brasil?

Em 2005 retornando para o Brasil cheio de expectativas e idéias para colocar em prática Luciano deparou-se com uma realidade não tão diferente de quando havia saído do país, mas algo havia mudado, explica Luciano: “aconteceram muitas coisas em relação à arte corporal nesses três anos que passei fora do país e pouco sobre o que acontecia aqui tive conhecimento. Acho que isso deve ser pela quantidade de profissionais que apareceram nesse curto tempo. No Brasil já estamos na terceira geração de perfuradores. Não existe nenhuma pesquisa para afirmar isso corretamente. Essa teoria é conversa entre amigos que estão há muito tempo no meio. Por volta de uns vinte anos atrás alguns profissionais introduziram o piercing no Brasil. Assim temos no início da década de 90 o que seriam a 1ª geração, depois veio a 2ª geração entre o fim dos anos 90 e começo dos anos 2000, e a 3ª geração que vai a partir de 2005. Mas como eu disse isso é apenas uma teoria que surgiu entre amigos! Gostaria que os leitores soubessem como se propagou no Brasil a arte corporal. Aqui existe uma cena forte quando o assunto é arte corporal, não só no Brasil, mas como toda a América do Sul, onde existem eventos que fazem isso funcionar muito bem... Fora as convenções. Mas tive certeza que deveria fazer algo sobre o que já havia refletido quando retornei ao Brasil definitivamente em 2005, onde participei da Convenção Internacional em São Paulo organizado pelo Leds, e percebi que ainda faltava um espaço para outros tipos de arte corporal, o foco continuava sendo apenas tattoo, o brasileiro se encanta pelas cores, mas existem muitas pessoas interessadas em outros tipos de modificações”.

Em uma conversa com um amigo Luciano teve uma ideia que poderia movimentar o espaço das artes corporais em território brasileiro e desenvolveu o primeiro evento ligado a outras técnicas de modificação corporal—um evento que uniu profissionais em escarificação. Nascia o primeiro CONSCAR, o primeiro evento de escarificação da América Latina, ocorreu nos dias 21 e 22 de Outubro

de 2006. O evento trouxe como proposta o encontro aproximação de artistas e entusiastas da prática, um espaço para pessoas interessadas em body modification (modificação corporal), proporcionando a troca de conhecimento, informação e ampliação de técnicas desta arte pouco conhecida e explorada no Brasil. Contando com a participação de vários artistas da América do Sul e América Latina, como o piercer Rata (Argentina), Kor (holandês que reside na Argentina), André Fernandes (Brasil), Emilio Gonzales (Venezuela) entre outros.

Devido à inovação o Conscar atingiu reconhecimento alguns meios de comunicação voltados para arte corporal, como o site FrrrkGuys, que após o 2º Conscar o mentor do site Thiago Soares (T. Angel) foi convidado por Iritsu a unir forças e desenvolver um novo projeto seguindo a mesma linha que o Conscar, porém abrangendo mais elementos do mundo dos modificados. O FRRRKCON tem como origem dois grandes eventos paulistas o Frrrk Guys Party e Conscar. Tendo como proposta reunir profissionais e adeptos da arte corporal, possibilitando a troca de informações durante o evento.

Dessa vez um evento completo com palestras e discussões com profissionais da área, exposições fotográficas, telas de tatuadores conceituados, apresentações de suspensão e freak shows e também muita música (bandas e DJs).

A ideia de Luciano Iritsu deu tão certo que não atraiu a atenção dos adeptos a modificações. Em 2010 a Secretaria Municipal de Cultura de São Paulo convidou Luciano Iritsu para organizar o primeiro espaço de arte corporal da Virada Cultural. A Virada Cultural que é um evento anual promovido desde 2005 pela prefeitura da cidade brasileira de São Paulo, em que proporciona a população 24 horas ininterruptas de eventos culturais dos mais variados tipos, como espetáculos musicais, peças de teatro, exposições de arte e história, entre outros. Um convite que deu muito certo, considerado sucesso e um grande marco na história da arte corporal brasileira.

E neste ano a modificação corporal será tema de uma dos espaços da Virada Cultural pelo segundo ano consecutivo devido o grande sucesso do ano anterior onde entre as 800 atrações do evento, o espaço reservado para arte corporal foi o mais comentado em um evento que reúne mais de 4 milhões de pessoas.

E essa história não termina por aqui, o propagador dessa ideia tem muitos objetivos e idéias que almeja alcançar... “A minha idéia não é que todo mundo faça suspensão ou faça alguma modificação corporal, mas que toda a sociedade conheça essa “nova” arte. Pois acredito e luto párea que cada vez mais se propague informações verdadeiras para a população, acabamos com o preconceito que é gerado devido às pessoas não conhecerem o que realmente é a modificação corporal e os ideais e resultados que causam em quem admira é adere à arte corporal”, finaliza Luciano Iritsu. **P**

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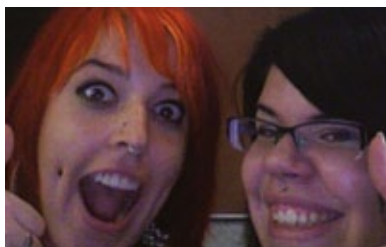


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CASSIDI BALLOU

Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA



After working the APP booth with Cassidi Ballou at both last year's Baltimore Tattoo Convention and this year's Philadelphia Tattoo Arts Convention, I must say, we make the perfect team! At the most recent Philadelphia event, the APP booth was sandwiched between the Bombshell Brats and Club Risqué (a Philadelphia "gentleman's club"), and long lines forced the convention center to temporarily suspend sales of new passes midday on Saturday. With all the madness a tattoo convention brings—amid the chaos, punches, and PBR—Cassidi and I were able to work together to educate the public about the APP and safe piercing. And yes: there really was a fight this year at the convention.

Fights aside, working both conventions has enabled me to see and better understand the wide variety of individuals that the APP booth attracts, and why. Since it was a tattoo convention, I wasn't surprised when tattooists and shop owners stopped by to pick up materials for their shops and piercers back home, but piercers were also on hand—some asking about the specifics of becoming a member, others simply picking up some copies of *The Point* to catch up on what's happening in the industry. Add concerned parents and teens to that mix—gathering information on everything from "Picking Your Piercer" to the APP's "Suggested Aftercare Guidelines" pamphlet to a simple safepiercing.org sticker—and you have a wide variety of people, with varying interest in and knowledge of piercing, all leaving with the same thing: information about obtaining and maintaining a safe piercing.

Volunteering at these events allows me to be a part of something greater, a part of the APP's overall mission: to disseminate "vital health and safety information about body piercing to piercers, health care professionals, legislators, and the general public." Thanks to Cassidi Ballou, the Infinite crew, and, of course, Troy Timpel, who generously donated the booth space and gave the APP (and me) this opportunity.

On April 8th, 2011, Cassidi and I were back on the road again; this time our sights were set on Baltimore. Having worked the Baltimore Tattoo Arts Convention together in 2010 and the Philadelphia Tattoo Arts Convention just last month, in March 2011 (also see "Philadelphia Tattoo Arts Convention," above) Cassidi and I were fairly prepared for whatever the weekend might bring. (Though all our preparedness failed to help us set up the booth itself, which requires a certain degree of height neither Cassidi or I have.) But with the booth hanging on by a string, and armed with coffee, we settled in for the weekend ahead.

With our booth set up directly next to the registration booth, we were busy almost immediately. By Saturday evening, a mere 36 hours after we began, almost all of our materials were gone (with the exception of a few lingering pamphlets). Many visitors stopped by for the first time, but several were actually returning piercers, piercees, parents or shop owners, who not only remembered us from last year, but sought additional information about membership, how to obtain a subscription to *The Point*, or simply to say "Hi." By Sunday, when we left, what was once a trunk full of boxes was reduced to a mere five, which were almost entirely full of Spanish brochures; the mark of yet another successful convention. **P**

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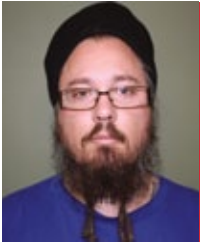
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VOLUNTEERING



JOHN JOHNSON
Incoming APP Vice President
Outer Limits
Long Beach, CA

The APP's teenage years are almost over. Every year brings growth, and I think it's a fulfilling experience for everyone who has ever been a part of the organization. Conference is better organized, outreach is more effective, finances are well managed, and the office has been its most productive since finding a permanent home in Lawrence, Kansas in 2007. These are important elements in the APP's success because of the people involved. For most of us, the first step was to volunteer.

Ed Chavarria, for example, finished his piercing apprenticeship in 2003 and started volunteering at Conference as an Al D. Scholarship recipient. (The Al D. Scholarship is available to eight people trying to make it to Conference who need financial assistance. Email info@safepiercing.org to learn more about this volunteer opportunity.) His next big contribution followed his election to the APP Board in 2008. In 2009, for his years of hard work, Ed was given the Josh A. Prentice Volunteer Appreciation Award at Conference. This June, his term on the APP's Board of Directors will end, and he has stated this was "one of the most challenging and rewarding times" in his career.

Piercers, apprentices, and counter staff at studios with APP Members have an advantage. They work in an environment with an existing appreciation for the association and its mission statement, the "dissemination of vital health and safety information about body piercing." For many of them, opportunities to help are abundant—especially at Conference. Sarah Wooten, owner of Immaculate Body Piercing in South Carolina, had an apprentice who volunteered at the annual Conference in Las Vegas and thought the experience was invaluable. "You can get something from volunteering that you can't get from class," she said. Volunteering at Conference as an apprentice is important because it's the first opportunity some get to network within our industry and connect with people from studios outside of their own.

Many others would like to help but don't know where or how to be involved. When you attend Conference, you're making your first contribution. Taking advantage of the classes and applying what you've learned in your own studio makes APP goals a reality. Becoming a member is the next great way to help. We are a member-based organization, and there is strength in numbers. For piercers who don't own their own studios it can be challenging to convince owners to see the benefit to meeting environmental criteria for membership, but minimum standards are necessary and help membership maintain its prestige. Every piercer in the industry should consider membership.

But a lot of us want to do even more, and that's the spirit of non-profit work: it's easy to do when it's for something you love. Evidence of the APP's growth in recent years is the prominence of committees. Previously, almost every task the organization undertook fell on the shoulders of the Board. Finally in 2008, the Conference Committee was reborn and worked hard to organize

and plan the 2009 Conference. That same team worked on the 2010 Conference and again this year for 2011. The success of the Conference Committee opened the door for other committees to take shape once again. The Outreach, Legislation, Membership, and Media committees are all currently hard at work.

Each of these groups is staffed by APP Member and non-member volunteers who want to be more involved and help not only the

What it comes down to is joining the volunteer team at Conference is the best way to start getting involved.

APP, but our industry as well. Anyone interested in joining a particular committee should consider their skills and interests. If you have good writing and editing skills you might be a great candidate for the Media Committee, and a piercer who has worked on body art regulations in their state could be perfect for the Legislation Committee. Committees are a great way to work closely with colleagues who

may live and pierce far from you but have similar ideas and goals. Will Spencer from Cheap Trx in St. Louis, Missouri is a member of the Conference Committee. He told me it was intimidating at first because it was a lot of work, but once he was involved he found a lot of support from the other committee members, "We're all working as a team."

Writing for *The Point* is another great way you can help the APP. Every industry has its own professional journal, and *The Point* is ours. It has evolved from a folded newsletter to a full-color publication and reaches more people than ever before. Editor James Weber says he is always looking for more contributions. Anyone is eligible to submit an article if they have written something of interest to piercers.

A new opportunity to help has been developed in the last few years and has been very successful. It's the Mentoring Program, which was introduced in 2009 to give Conference veterans and newcomers the chance to team up. Conference can be overwhelming and sometimes intimidating for newer and younger attendees. We thought giving them a chance to speak with a mentor throughout the week may help them get the most out of Conference. Attendees wishing to be mentors or to meet one should contact Ryan Ouellette, from Precision Body Arts in Nashua, New Hampshire. His email is ryanpba@hotmail.com.

Board Member Dana Dinius, from HTC Body Piercing in Phoenix, Arizona, is the association's Outreach Coordinator. He says, "Being a Board Member is the pinnacle of volunteering time

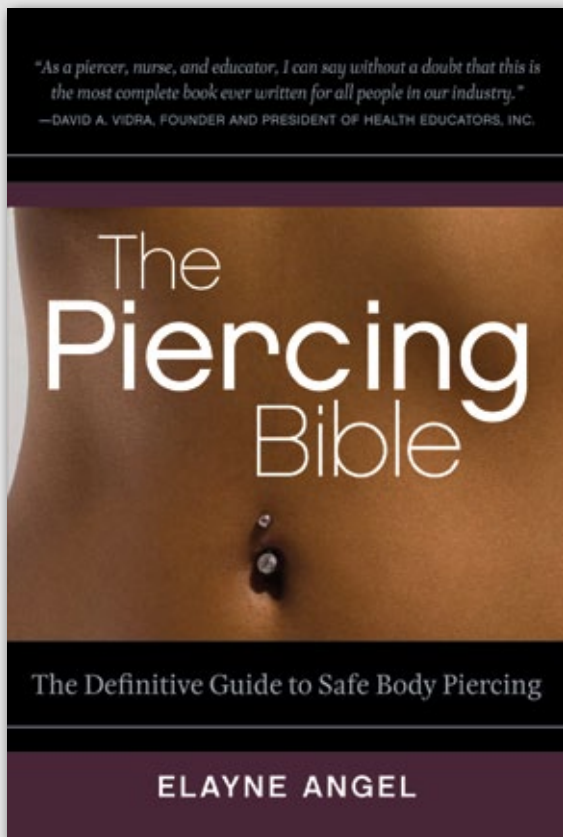
and effort for the APP.” Not every member aspires to sit on the Board; it takes a tremendous amount of time away from your studio and personal life. But members interested in a future Board position should start volunteering right away to get first-hand experience with how the APP operates. The more experience you have the better prepared you’ll be if elected. Dana is also part of the Outreach Committee. They have a very intense schedule of staffing APP information booths at tattoo conventions and health-related conferences around the U.S. It requires time and professionalism to represent our industry at the conferences for the American College Health Association, National Environmental Health Association, and the American Public Health Association. Volunteers work all of these booths for us.

So what’s the best way to get involved? This is a very common question asked every year at Conference. This is no surprise; new attendees are really inspired and old timers often feel a renewed interest in the community, and everyone wants to take part. Once Conference is over and everyone goes home, most attendees go right back to work and their daily lives. Soon, the interest in volunteering fades. For some, the day after Conference means getting right back to work on the next project and series of deadlines. (For example,

planning for the following year’s APP Conference begins before most attendees even get home.) What it comes down to is joining the volunteer team at Conference is the best way to start getting involved. We always need someone to organize classrooms or boxes of office supplies, help clean up, or run basic errands. The way to get started is to let us know you’re interested. If selected to volunteer at Conference, you get your foot in the door for future opportunities. While not everyone can receive the Al D. Scholarship, there’s almost always room for you to contribute if you want.

Caitlin McDiarmid, who leads the Conference volunteers, had this to say: “I rarely have a volunteer that doesn’t get something amazing out of the experience. I’ve had volunteers get job opportunities, find their partner, or even discover a new career. Every year volunteers form bonds with other volunteers in the work process, and have a truly different experience by working the Conference versus just attending. Neither the APP nor any part of the Conference would even be close to what it is without volunteer help. Our volunteers are our heart.” Contact her at info@safepiercing.org. Let Caitlin know where your interests and skills might be useful, whether it’s joining a committee or volunteering at Conference next year!

Conference is a huge event for us, and your help is appreciated. **P**



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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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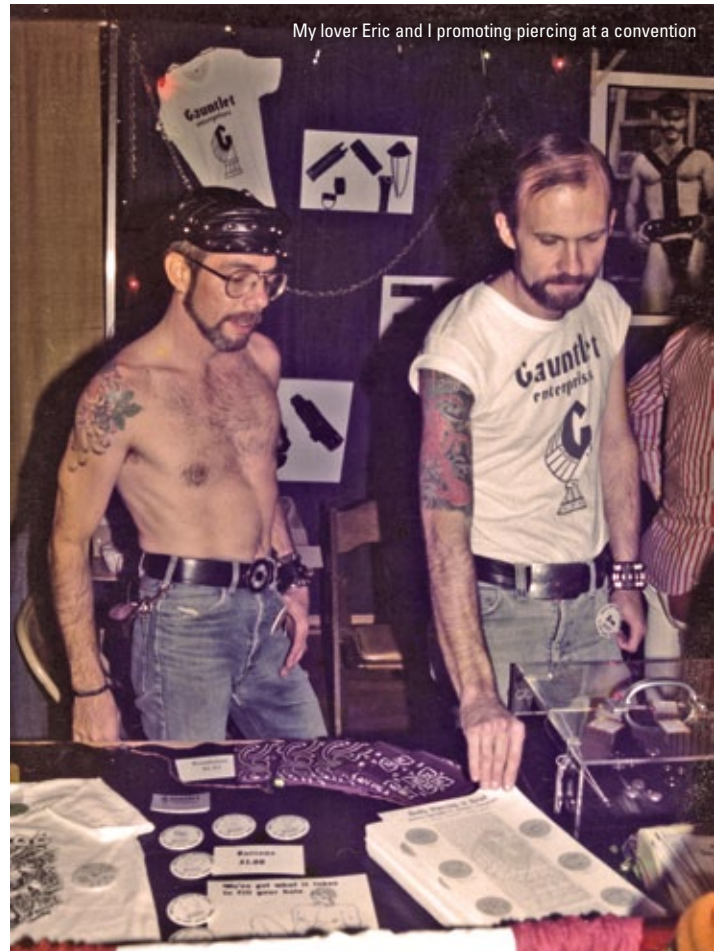
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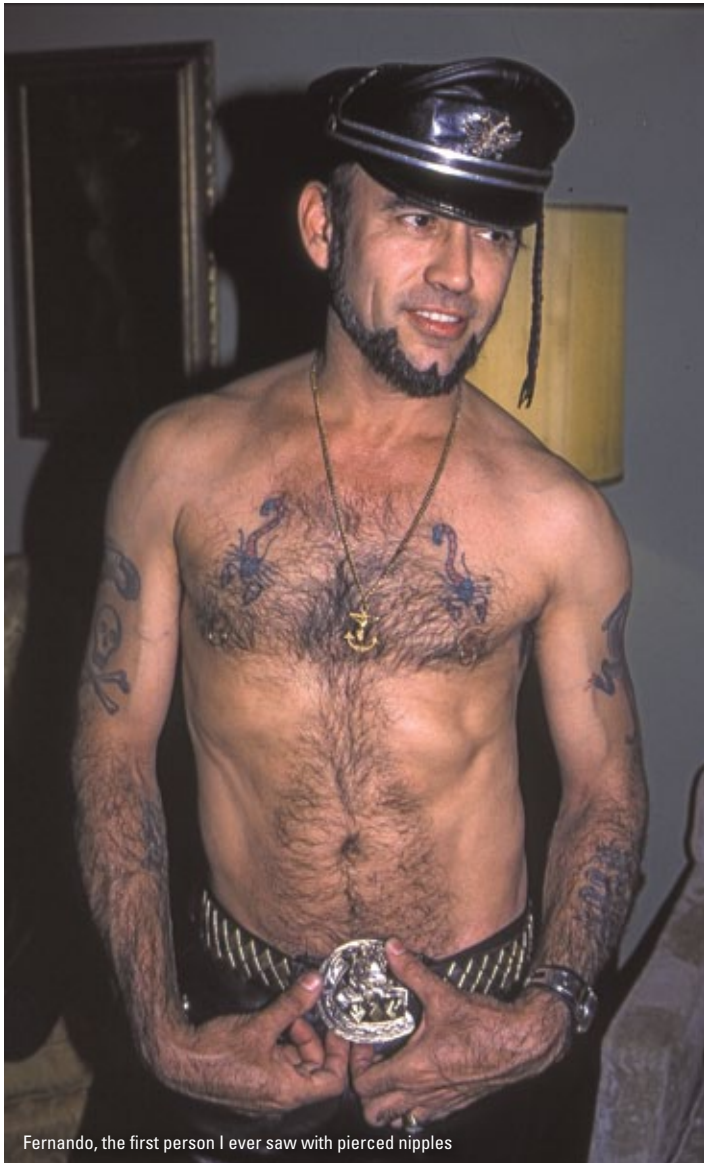
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The cover of issue #15 of PFIQ, from 1982

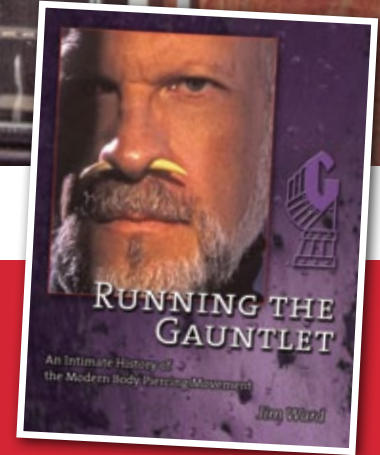
At the front counter of the new shop. The wallpaper was certainly dramatic.



RUNNING THE GAUNTLET



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



“What kind of book is it?”

This was my first question to Jim Ward, several months ago, after reading the rough draft of his book, *Running the Gauntlet: An Intimate History of the Modern Body Piercing Movement*.

Is it a memoir? A history of the gay leather community? The biography of a business? A piercing primer? A history of modern body piercing?

Actually yes, it is.

It's an unflinchingly honest memoir. It follows Jim Ward's life, from a childhood that was “just as barren and desolate as the Oklahoma landscape” where he grew up, to coming to terms with his homosexuality in 1950s America, to being introduced to the leather and S/M community in New York City in the mid sixties, to moving to Denver and then Los Angeles and finally San Francisco. With decades of pictures, he chronicles his life and the lives of those closest to him—and the roles they played on his path to self discovery. It chronicles moves, friendships, and lovers along a journey that led him to establish the first retail store anywhere devoted exclusively to body piercing.

It's the story of growing up gay in the 1950s, at a time when homosexuality was still categorized as a mental illness. It's about finding community, “coming out” a second time as a leather and S/M enthusiast in the 1960s, and about finding a place among fellow piercing and tattoo devotees in the 1970s.

It's about Gauntlet, the business that grew from a one-person jewelry-making operation to stores in Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York, Seattle, and Paris, only to go bankrupt as a result of poor decisions, misplaced trust, dishonesty, and avarice. It's about *PFIQ*, the quarterly journal published from 1977 to Gauntlet's demise in 1998. Over fifty issues and twenty years, this magazine helped define

our aesthetic, our philosophy, and with their “Pierce with a Pro” series of articles, taught many of us how to pierce—myself included.

It's a primer on modern body piercing, about why we use the techniques, the tools, and the jewelry we do. About the ideas, breakthroughs, and years of trial and error that went into determining which piercings work, and which don't—and why. It's the story of the beginning of a movement; a movement that has long since been co-opted by the mainstream. It's the history of a practice that has become so commonplace it's like it's always been here—so much so that few ask anymore where it came from.

It's the biography of great men—and women—and the culture that created them. It's about not only Jim Ward, but Doug Malloy, Roland Loomis (and Fakir Musafar), Mr. Sebastian, Sailor Sid, Elayne Angel, Michaela Grey, and dozens of others. It's about friends, enemies, lovers, employees, and business partners. It's about people who helped to shape our industry, either by good ideas, hard work, luck, greed, or simply being around at the right place at the right time.

Running the Gauntlet is all of these things. Every time I go back to it (once through is not enough), what was at first a book with a bit of an identity crisis has shown itself to be the story of our industry. It's about me, you, and all of us. It's essential reading for anyone who wants to understand how modern body piercing arrived at the place it currently occupies.

Jim Ward's book can be ordered through the APP's web site, safepiercing.org, for delivery at the APP Conference and Expo, or through runningthegauntlet-book.com. P

ALCOHOL AND POVIDONE-IODINE SWAB RECALL



ANGELA SMITH
Philadelphia, PA

Two more products popularly used in piercing studios have been recalled for potential contamination.

On February 16, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced a voluntary recall of isopropyl alcohol prep pads and swab sticks manufactured by Triad Group, now using the name H&P Industries, Inc. The swabs and wipes, sold under the Triad name as well as many private labels, were found to be contaminated with *Bacillus cereus* (*B. cereus*). Often found in soil and on improperly cooked grain, it usually only sickens humans when ingested (causing food poisoning), but if it enters the bloodstream it can cause life-threatening infections. At particular risk are individuals whose immune systems are already compromised. The bacteria are resistant to heat sterilization, and can survive immersion in the isopropyl alcohol solution in the sealed swabs.

Then, on March 15, the FDA announced a recall on all lots of non-sterile povidone-iodine swabs manufactured by H&P Industries. The swabs, made with some of the same production materials as the recalled alcohol swabs, were found to contain *Elizabethkingia meningoseptica*. This bacterium, extremely common in water and soil, can cause meningitis in infants, as well as necrotizing fasciitis (known as the “flesh eating” disease) and other infections in immunocompromised adults. The affected swabs were sold under seven different labels, including Triad.

MSNBC.com has published several articles tracking the recalls and their ramifications. A Texas couple is suing H&P Industries after their toddler died from complications of *B. cereus*-related meningitis following surgery. More than 100 other people alleged that infections they suffered were due to the contamination. According to MSNBC, inspectors from the FDA reported concerns about the cleanliness of the manufacturing facility as early as 2009. The inspectors noted that, among other concerns, plant workers packaged acne cleansing pads with their bare hands and failed to add the active ingredient to a batch of cold medicine. A batch of “sterile” lubricating jelly that caused vaginal infections in dozens of women was made in the same plant [see article, “Surgilube Recall” on next page].

Despite the inspection records, the FDA chose not to send a warning letter or take any punitive action against H&P, instead choosing to work with the company on a voluntary basis, believing that the conditions in the plant did not represent an imminent danger to customers. (This was the same approach taken with the Triad sterile lubrication jelly recall, see next page.) The FDA did not launch an investigation until staff at a hospital in Colorado tested the swabs in their own laboratory, finding that 40 of 60 alcohol pads sampled were contaminated.

The plant that manufactured the affected products used a gamma radiation sterilization process that was not tested to

confirm its effectiveness. Unfortunately, while the APP requires its Member studios to perform spore tests to ensure autoclaves are working properly, the FDA has no such requirement for manufacturers of medical supplies.

Piercers who use povidone-iodine swabs or alcohol prep pads can check the FDA’s website to see if their supplies are included in the recall. If you are in possession of any of the products, you should return them to your distributor for a refund, or contact H&P Customer Service Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Central Time, to arrange a return and refund.

In the meantime, medical patients who use alcohol swabs are being advised by distributors to seek products made by a non-Triad/H&P manufacturer, or to simply use bottled isopropyl alcohol along with a gauze pad. Piercers should be able to adapt these techniques by dispensing their isopropyl alcohol or povidone-iodine into single-use cups, then applying the product to the skin with sterile gauze or cotton swabs.

REFERENCES:

alcohol pad recall notice: <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm239219.htm>

povidone-iodine pad recall: <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm247658.htm>

alternate method recommendation: <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/Recalls/ucm242736.htm>

2/16/11: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41588330/ns/health-infectious_diseases/

2/22/11: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41694606/ns/health-infectious_diseases/

2/25/11: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41768587/ns/health-infectious_diseases/

3/7/11: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/41914778/ns/health-infectious_diseases/

3/11/11: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/42018220/ns/health-infectious_diseases/

3/18/11: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/42144671/ns/health-health_care/

3/24/11: http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/42240430/ns/health-infectious_diseases/

Editor’s note: On April 6, the FDA announced that, at their request, U.S. Marshals have seized \$6 million worth of products from Triad’s facility in Hartford, Wisconsin. These included povidone-iodine and benzalkonium chloride antiseptic products, cough and cold products, nasal sprays, suppositories, medicated wipes, antifungal creams, hemorrhoidal wipes, in-process drug products, and raw materials. The raid came after evidence that the Triad Group—and its parent company, H & P Industries—continued to fail to comply with the FDA’s manufacturing and record keeping standards.

<http://www.medpagetoday.com/PublicHealthPolicy/FDAGeneral/25779> P

SURGILUBE RECALL



KIMBERLY ZAPATA

Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

In February 2011, our Head Piercer at Infinite, Kellan Smith, realized that our Surgilube supply wasn't only diminishing; our orders were not being fulfilled at all. Reports were mixed, and varied from vendor to vendor: the product should have been shipped overnight to us more than four weeks ago, and distributors didn't seem to know why we had not received it (and why they had yet to obtain it). At this news, Kellan contacted multiple medical suppliers only to discover that they were all sold out of Surgilube.

This raised the question: what's the deal with Surgilube and the FDA's recently issued sterile lubrication recall?

In late February, we acquired an adequate amount of Surgilube, only to receive our long-awaited—and overdue—shipment just days later, on March 1. This raised the question: what's the deal with Surgilube and the FDA's recently issued sterile lubrication recall?

ABOUT THE RECALL

According to MedPage Today, on December 22, 2010 the FDA issued a voluntary recall on behalf of Triad Group (a manufacturer of Surgilube and

various other products), now using the name H&P Industries, Inc., of "sterile' lubricating jelly as Class II due to the product's potential lack of sterility." The lubricating jelly, "which was [also] included in a number of kits, packs, and trays under several brand names, may pose an infection risk in patients who are already immunocompromised" (as was the case with the recent alcohol swab recall). [See "Alcohol and Povidone-Iodine Swab Recall" on previous page.] This recall

involves all "Triad Sterile Lubricating Jelly in 5-g tubes, 2- and 4-oz tubes, 4-oz bottles, and 3- and 5-g packets," and, as noted above, this includes products that are branded as Triad as well as those that are not. Additionally, the affected lubricant packs "have lot numbers beginning with 7, 8, 9, or 0. Kits, packs, and trays packaged with the lubricant will have the lot number listed on the pack, [and t]he affected products were distributed from January 2007 to December 2010, though products containing the recalled jelly may have been packed and distributed after December 2010."

ALTERNATIVES?

The obvious alternative is to order non-Triad manufactured sterile lubricant. Unfortunately, the unforeseen recall of an indispensable medical and piercing product—with numerous practical applications—has increased demand for an already-diminished supply. Distributors are struggling to meet these new demands, but many are unable to or have, as a precaution, *ceased shipping any TRIAD Lubricating Jelly until further notice*. Simply put: the obvious alternative is not so simple.

But the good news is that (at the time of this writing) non-Triad manufactured lubricant is still available; it may just take a little bit more time and energy to locate it. However, since the other alternative is simply to not use lubrication, this is certainly time—and energy—well spent.

For more information on the Surgilube recall (and other FDA suggested/required recalls), go to:

- <http://www.medpagetoday.com/PublicHealthPolicy/FDAGeneral/24932>
- <http://www.fda.gov/Safety/MedWatch/Safety/Information/SafetyAlertsforHumanMedicalProducts/ucm243552.htm>
- <http://www.fda.gov/MedicalDevices/Safety/RecallsCorrectionsRemovals/ListofRecalls/ucm243399.htm> P

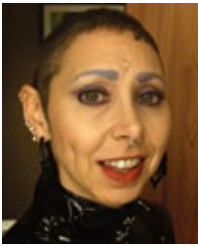
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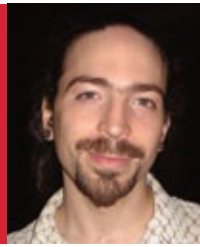
TITLES INCLUDE: *Joyería Para Perforaciones Iniciales* (Jewelry for Initial Piercings), and *Joyería Para Perforaciones Cicatrizadas* (Jewelry for Headled Piercings)



TONGUE JEWELRY: BIOFILM AND BACTERIAL COUNTS



ELAYNE ANGEL
Medical Liaison
Yucatan, Mexico



BRIAN SKELLIE
International Liaison
Barcelona, Spain

This past January, the *Journal of Adolescent Health* published a study titled, “Tongue Piercing: The Impact of Material on Microbiological Findings.”* It reported on the attempts of researchers in Austria and Switzerland to investigate “whether there are microbiological differences in bacterial samples collected from tongue piercings made of different materials.” While the study addresses some interesting issues, it unfortunately did not take into consideration the type of threading (internal or external), or other specifics of the jewelry (such as post length or ball size), which appeared to have a significant impact on their results.

In reviewing the details of the study, we can draw significantly different conclusions from their findings:

- Externally threaded metal jewelry does not seal as well as the same design in plastic.
- This study suggests that bacteria is introduced to the inside of the piercing when externally threaded jewelry is removed.

We would need results of a similar study using jewelry with tightly sealed internally threaded posts and highly polished surfaces that are fully cleaned and passivated (treated to form a corrosion-resistant oxidized layer) before sterilization in order to eliminate bias and more effectively test the hypothesis of materials.

This study used externally threaded posts of an unspecified material and surface finish quality. The bacteria found in the piercing channel was measured after a colonized exposed screw thread was pulled through the piercing, leaving debris behind. The study would have been more accurate had the researchers swabbed the area before removing the ball ends, and swabbed both sections of the threads as well before removing the jewelry.

Externally threaded plastic posts sometimes have a tighter tolerance at the closure than their metal counterparts, and a better seal means less bacterial colonization. This alone does not demonstrate that

plastic is a better body jewelry material than metal. Instead, in this context, it indicates strongly that the quality of the closure is of importance, without regard to the material.

The study does not mention the manufacturer of the jewelry used, nor the surface finishing and passivation processes. It does not specify that the appropriate ASTM F86, ANSI/ASME B46.1 or ISO 25178 standards were followed, or the specific surface roughness—only that PTFE was the roughest surface they used. The surface finish and the quality of the mechanical closure of the jewelry makes a huge difference in biofilm formation. In this study, differences in surface roughness between the materials was mentioned, but not quantified.

When mainstream media outlets cited this study, it was framed as more proof of the alarming dangers inherent in body piercing—with the intention of frightening people away from tongue piercing rather than enlightening consumers to the actual risks so they can make more informed decisions.

Kristina Fiore’s article on medpagetoday.com, “Bacteria Colonize Tongue Piercings Differently,” was one such article. It cited confusing statistics and included a variety of scare tactics before coming to a conclusion, in which the original study was quoted: “Kapferer and co-authors concluded that the generally low bacterial counts from piercings suggest that having the tongue pierced ‘doesn’t contribute to an increased risk for oral infection.’”

Our responses can be seen in the comments section below the article at: <http://www.medpagetoday.com/InfectiousDisease/GeneralInfectiousDisease/24245>

For more information on the subject of oral piercing risks, please refer to the APP brochure: <http://www.safepiercing.org/publications/brochures/oral-piercing-risks/>

**Ines Kapferer, et al., Tongue Piercing: The Impact of Material on Microbiological Findings, J Adolesc Health (2010), doi: 10.1016/j.jadohealth.2010.10.008*



David Wojnarowicz is in the news again—eighteen years after his death.

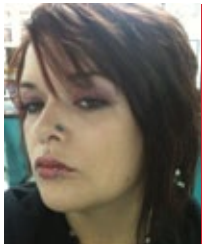
This past November, Martin Sullivan, the Director of the Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery, caved in to demands from the Catholic League and several prominent Republican congressmen—including House Speaker John Boehner and Representative Eric Cantor—to remove one of Wojnarowicz’s videos from display. The offending video, a four-minute excerpt of a 30-minute work called “A Fire in My Belly,” was being shown as a part of a temporary exhibition on the theme of American portraiture and sexual difference called “Hide/Seek.” John

Boehner’s statement reads, “American families have a right to expect better from recipients of taxpayer funds.” The statement from Eric Cantor’s office adds, “This is an outrageous use of taxpayer money and an obvious attempt to offend Christians during the Christmas season.”

Wojnarowicz is a respected painter, photographer, writer, filmmaker, performance artist, and AIDS activist. In the piercing community, he is well known for the iconic image above, from his 1990 film, “Silence = Death.”

The offending video can be seen at <http://vimeo.com/17692112>

BULLOCH COUNTY, GA BANS EXTERNAL THREADING



JULIE MOODY

Now or Never Tattoo and Piercings
Statesboro, GA

As a piercer of six years, I advance every day. A little more than a year into my piercing career I switched to internally threaded jewelry; shortly after, I landed a job at Planet 3 in Savannah, GA. Piercing at Planet 3 meant that I got to work for a great company and know that everything we sold was the best of the best.

After moving an hour away from Planet 3 to finish my degree, I returned to work at the shop I started at. The problem: I couldn't switch back to externally threaded jewelry, so I spent every penny I had stocking the cases with high-quality merchandise. However, it seems most clients think only about how much money they have to spend; they don't consider the value of high-quality jewelry. To keep up with the competition, I have made drastic cuts in my piercing fees so people can buy the jewelry they really need, which has left me with an empty pocket.

When these circumstances threatened my hard work and accomplishments, I saw fit to tackle the Bulloch County Health Department regulations so people would have to pay attention. Unfortunately, getting through to the Board of Health to make changes is like pulling teeth. Bulloch County is a pretty small place, with a medium-sized college population that comprises seventy-five percent of our customer base.

As the result of accusations from a staff member at another local studio, my health inspector recently visited me to inquire whether I used a scalpel to perform sub-dermal implants. (I was shocked and furious.) I explained that I did perform surface anchors, and had shown these to him before. After discussing how they work, and expressing my concern about people getting them from piercers who are not qualified, he decided to put a stop to them until regulations could be put into place.

I knew that body art regulations would have to be changed if the health inspector was going to bring surface anchors to a vote. Since the regulations were being updated, I resolved to do as much to improve them as possible.

Brad Wiggins, Environmental Health County Manager for the Bulloch County Health Department, allowed me to perform a video demonstration of surface anchors for the Board of Health meeting in February. The video, along with a presentation from Mr. Wiggins, had everyone in the room intrigued. (It helped that Mr. Wiggins prepared for the meeting by reading *The Piercing Bible* by Elayne Angel.)

Afterward, during the question-and-answer session of the meeting, I asked the Health Board to clarify the criteria for acceptable piercing jewelry in the current regulations, which clearly stated should be "free of nicks, scratches, and irregular surfaces." I passed around four jewelry styles with different types of threading for them to examine. Since the current regulations could be interpreted to read that externally threaded jewelry was not ideal for piercings, a vote was conducted during the meeting. With both officials and volunteers of the Southeast Health

District present, it was determined that externally threaded jewelry is, in fact, unsuitable for piercing. The new interpretation was announced March 1, 2011 in a letter from Environmental Health Services to tattoo and body piercing studio owners. The letter states:

According to our regulations: "appropriate jewelry has no nicks, scratches, or irregular surfaces that might endanger the tissues." We have interpreted this to mean that only internally threaded jewelry can be used.

We are still waiting for a decision on surface anchors, and as of this writing, permission to perform them is still suspended in Bulloch County.

From this experience, I learned to keep hope for a better industry, and to take every opportunity for improvement that presents itself. While I have not seen the increase in business that I had hoped for—since we are the only shop in the county with internally threaded jewelry—I do hope the Health Board will take the necessary steps to enforce this new regulation. Plus, I can take comfort in knowing that I tried my best; hopefully one day this standard will be followed by everyone. **P**

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▶ APHA

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October 29 - November 2, 2011
Washington, DC

IACONO VS. JOHNSTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT



ERIC GUSTAV "GOOSE" JOHNSON

In the Skin Tattoo and Piercing
Victoria, TX

During my semi-weekly ritual of searching through the Internet for body piercing news, I was surprised to see numerous news clips, including Bill O'Reilly and the ladies of *The View*, talking about the Church of Body Modification. I had heard the name for a number of years now, but this was the first time I saw it in mainstream news.

They were all discussing Ariana Iacono, a 14-year-old student at Clayton High School in Raleigh, North Carolina, who was suspended for violation of the dress code after wearing a nose stud to school (as reported by the Associated Press¹). What set this case apart was that Ms. Iacono is a member of the Church of Body Modification, and she was fighting the school board for her religious freedom to wear her jewelry.

In 1969, *Tinker vs. Des Moines School District* established that students don't lose their constitutional rights at the school door; in this case, students fought for the right to wear black armbands to protest U.S. involvement in Vietnam². Other cases have passed through courts, supporting and refining that initial decision, but none involved body piercing until 2008. *Bar-Navon vs. School Board of Brevard County* involved a 16-year-old girl who sported a number of facial and surface piercings. With the support of her parents, she fought the school district on the grounds of artistic freedom to modify her body. She was unsuccessful and the court upheld the right of the school to establish and maintain a uniform code of appearance for students regardless of artistic expression³.

In Ms. Iacono's case, "the Johnston County school system has a dress code banning facial piercings, along with short skirts, sagging pants, 'abnormal hair color' and other items deemed distracting or disruptive," but "allows for exemptions based on 'sincerely held religious belief'". The code clearly states that the principal and designees are not permitted to judge whether a religious belief is valid, but "only whether they are central to religious doctrine and sincerely held."⁴

After Ms. Iacono's fourth suspension from school, her mother sought help from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). The ACLU filed a lawsuit on behalf of the family claiming the school violated Ms. Iacono's constitutional rights, and sought an immediate court order for her return to Clayton High School.

Amid the media storm that followed, Ms. Iacono was granted an exception to return to classes. "School officials had given Ariana the option to return to the high school if she concealed her nose stud with a bandage," reported *The Clayton News-Star*, but the "latest ruling by U.S. District Judge Malcolm J. Howard enable[d] Ariana to return to classes with her peers and prevent[ed] the school from disciplining her for wearing the nose stud. Howard concluded the Iaconos are likely to triumph in the lawsuit filed on their behalf by the ACLU."⁵

As this article was written, news of the case hit BME's *ModBlog*⁶. The commentators expressed a full gamut of opinions, boiling down to three points: clear retainer alternative jewelry, her minor status, and the validity of the Church of Body Modification.

As far as a retainer, early jewelry changes can generate scar tissue and inflammation. If she was looking for a safe, healthy piercing, I can see her

not wanting to risk that for her religious practice.

Legally, a child is an extension of his or her legal guardian. In this case, her mother fully supported her decision and helped her fight for her rights; and federal and state laws allow the piercing of minors.

The point that most of the national media seemed to dwell on was the validity of the Church of Body Modification. In response, from the Church of Body Modification website: "Usually, when people talk

What set this case apart was that Ms. Iacono is a member of the Church of Body Modification, and she was fighting the school board for her religious freedom to wear her jewelry.

about a church being real or 'Federally recognized,' they are talking about two things – incorporation as a non-profit entity doing business within a particular state, and a tax-exempt status from the IRS as a non-profit entity. In both of these ways, yes, the Church [of Body Modification] is real. You may search for the Church of Body Modification's legal status [and] read the IRS's position on Churches [online]."⁷ Now personal opinions may differ, but as the case involved U.S. citizens and a U.S. government-funded public school in a U.S. court of

law, the standard to meet is the U.S. government's. They say the Church of Body Modification is valid.

The twisting together of religious belief and body modification is not new. I daresay that religious modification is infinitely older than aesthetic modification, but recognition that modern ritual body modification practices are as valid as the ancient traditions is a new battlefield.

1. Tom Breen for Associated Press, "ACLU Sues NC School Over Student's Nose Piercing," <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory?id=11812663> (October 6, 2010).

2. U.S. Supreme Court case summary, FindLaw website, <http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/cgi-bin/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=393&invol=503>

3. United States Court of Appeals 11th Circuit website, <http://www.ca11.uscourts.gov/unpub/ops/200715639.pdf>

4. <http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory?id=11812663>

5. Laura Crosio, "Court Order Allows Iacono to Return to CHS," <http://claytonnews-star.com/court-order-allows-iacono-to-return-to-chs-p1591-106.htm> (October 11, 2010).

6. "ModBlog News of the Week," <http://news.bmezine.com/?s=iacono> (October 8, 2010).

7. Church of Body Modification website: <http://uscobm.com/questions/#real> **P**



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MEDICAL RESEARCH ON BODY ART



SCOTT DEBOER RN, MSN, CFRN
Flight Nurse, University of Chicago Hospitals
Founder, Peds-R-Us Medical Education

My name is Scott DeBoer, and I am an emergency/flight nurse at the University of Chicago Hospitals. In addition, it is my honor and pleasure to serve as a medical consultant for the Association of Professional Piercers. In my medical career, I have the opportunity to lecture nationally and internationally on a number of subjects, including neonatal and pediatric emergencies. I also speak and write regularly on the subject of medical myths vs. research realities regarding body piercing, tattooing, and other body modifications. Some audiences find it very interesting that I have neither body

If body art procedures are going to be performed, they are best performed by professionals who can minimize the risks and complications.

piercings nor tattoos; but rather, just an intense interest in how the piercing and tattooing communities are perceived by the general public and especially by medical professionals. While becoming aware of many of the medical issues and concerns associated with these body art procedures, it has become a personal goal to help enlighten and educate the health care community.

For the past several years, I have compiled a comprehensive list and summary of available published medical literature that relates to body piercing and tattooing. In addition, I regularly meet with professional piercers and tattoo artists from around the world in order to better understand and be able to communicate their perspective.

Archaeologists have found evidence of body piercing and tattooing in societies that date back more than 5,000 years. Simple observation and current research show that the practice is definitely not going away. A recent study of undergraduate college students found that 51 percent have had something pierced besides their ears. (Not to mention those who had only ear piercings.) My personal experiences of more than 20 years as an emergency room nurse certainly support those findings. The prevalence and interest in tattoos and piercings is strong enough that one just has to turn on the TV to see a variety of people with body modifications or tattoo-related reality shows. And from a medical perspective, the fact that body mods have exploded in numbers over the years, and that I found 106 medical articles related to body art published in 2010 alone says that the medical community is truly interested in this area as well.

In my ongoing review of more than 1,600 published medical

articles, there is no denying that there are documented risks and complications from body piercing and tattooing. However, when the procedures are performed in a setting that employs regularly trained professionals, utilizes aseptic techniques, and has a strong focus on aftercare and follow-up procedures, the incidence of complications in proportion to the number of piercings and tattoos being performed is statistically quite low. When the procedures are performed by a family member, friend, or by the person themselves, the complication rate is documented to be quite high, and understandably so.

Tattooing, piercings, and other body modifications have been performed for thousands of years, and these procedures, for whatever reason they are done, are not likely to reduce in number. If body art procedures are going to be performed, they are best performed by professionals who can minimize the risks and complications.

Piercing and/or medical professionals: to be added to the mailing list for the annual "Short and Sweet Summary of Medical Issues with Body Mods" please email me at Scott@Peds-R-Us.com **P**

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DEVELOPING A STUDIO EXIT STRATEGY



DARRIN WALTERS
Blue Star Tattoos
Concord, CA

More and more people are opening up studios with partners and family members. As you put your business plan together and start looking for capital investors (someone who contributes money to help start the business), you also need to work out an exit strategy. Creating a successful studio doesn't happen overnight; it requires good planning, long hours, a lot of work, and perhaps a little luck. Most studio owners don't have an exit strategy in place in case of disability, death, or if they decide to leave. Any of these factors can be devastating to a studio. The unfortunate truth is that many studio partnerships do not have happy endings. An exit strategy should be part of your studio's business plan to show your investors that their investment in the studio is safe.

The idea that your studio will provide you with income your entire lifetime might not be a reality; sorry to burst your bubble! It is essential that you have a comprehensive plan. Take the time to look at the four D's of a studio exit strategy: Death, Disability, Divorce, and Departure. In order to have a successful long-term studio, you must plan for all four D's. If not, your hard work could be taken away by circumstances outside your control, creating a hardship for the people closest to you: your family and colleagues.

THE FOUR D'S OF AN EXIT STRATEGY FOR YOUR STUDIO

Death: Yes, we all are going to die, but the death of a studio owner or one of its partners should always be considered during the studio start-up. If, in the course of establishing the studio, you plan to purchase a building or get a Small Business Association (SBA) loan, then the investor will want to have life insurance on the owner in case of misfortune. In the creation of many buy-sell agreements, the issue of death is addressed and life insurance will be requested or required by the investors. During start-up, you will be asked to arbitrarily decide how much insurance you can afford and how much your company is worth; this is very tricky when you do not yet know the value of your studio. You might want to get help from your CPA on this issue.

Disability: Death is not as likely to end the business relationship as disability. The studio's survival will often take precedence over paying a disabled partner. If the person is important to the company's operations, there is a financial strain to the business and the family that depends on the income of the injured party. Disability could have a huge impact on the company's financial health and its day-to-day operations.

Divorce: You can imagine the torn feelings if a disability or death occurs in the studio, but what if two partners can not get along anymore? It can be hell on the staff to work in that kind of environment, and it could have a huge impact on the company's financial picture as well. How do you split a partnership without financially ruining each other? The situation may be complicated by the involvement of many personalities. Some may not even be a part of the dispute, yet they may be affected financially.

Departure: You may all be happy working together now, but what

if you or your partner decides to leave for another opportunity, to join another studio, or to retire? Who is going to do the work? What is owed to the partner who is leaving? Where does the money come from?

Exit strategies and other money management techniques can greatly enhance your options by reducing risk and eliminating emotional decision making. These are all important considerations for your studio's exit strategy.

CREATING AN EXIT STRATEGY

Include the following in the creation of your studio business exit strategy:

1. Find a method of determining the value of the business that can be reviewed annually with your CPA and will qualify under IRS standards. This way you will have an accurate buyout rate.
2. Develop a severance package that will assist with the departure of a partner in case of death, disability, or retirement.
3. Plan for who retains company ownership and who gets paid off.
4. Create exit strategies based on fundamental factors geared toward the long term, thereby keeping the business prosperous, even with changes in ownership.
5. Consider incorporating your small business to legally define yourself and your business as separate entities. This helps you in more ways than one. Meet with both your CPA and attorney to find out the pros, cons, and tax advantages of doing so.

A FAIR BUY-SELL AGREEMENT

For studio owners, each of the four D's has special demands on family, staff, income, taxes, and transfer of control of assets. A buy-sell agreement is a binding agreement between co-owners that governs what happens in the circumstances of the four D's. You might want to get some help from your business attorney and CPA to address these issues at the start-up of your studio; you will be glad you did. The concerns of family, staff, partners, or income levels can conflict with the business and cause problems in day-to-day operations. When you start your business it should exist as a separate entity (i.e. a corporation or an LLC). Reduce headaches, fighting, and emotional conflict by developing a mutual buy-sell agreement and establishing a fair level of compensation before you open your studio.

Nearly every studio owner's dream is to see the shop they brought to life thrive. How you plan your exit strategy will determine your financial success. If you take the time now to create an appropriate studio exit strategy, you will have a contingency plan for each of the four D's. Carefully structure your plan to see what liquidity is going to be for you. And down the road, you'll find that you've built a business that has value to others without you having to be there every day to run it. **P**

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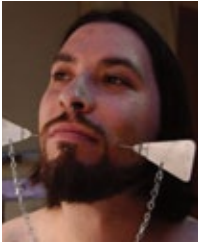


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WHAT TO DO WITHOUT TECHNI-CARE: WHAT WE HAVE ALREADY BEEN DOING

Since September 2009, when production of Techni-Care stopped pending an FDA monograph review [*The Point* #49], piercers have been asking each other, “What are we supposed to use for skin prep without Techni-Care?” After reading Ryan Ouellette’s article, “Opti-Scrub: A Replacement for Techni-Care?” in the last issue of *The Point* [*The Point* #54,] it struck me as odd that so many piercers seemed so concerned—and even worried. When and why did so many of us decide we needed something beyond isopropyl alcohol and/or povidone-iodine?

Now before you start gathering wood for the stake, hear me out, and I’ll explain why there is so much confusion about this issue within our industry.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO NOT ABUSE BIG WORDS

We are not doctors. We really aren’t. We are not doctors, despite our love of using very impressive-sounding medical terms that most of us do not fully understand. (Keloids, anyone?)

We have been involved in countless debates in online forums in which, before you know it, medical terminology comes into play. The worst part is that most of us are not medically trained beyond first aid and CPR. So when we start quoting medical terminology, it’s often hard for us to tell what is correct and what is being used incorrectly or out of context.

For example: last issue’s article states Opti-Scrub is effective against bacteria such as *Candida Albicans*. The only problem is, *Candida Albicans* is not bacteria; it is a fungus. How many of us caught that error? I would not have noticed if not for my doctor friend. When I showed her the article, she spotted that on the first reading.

My intention is not to dismiss the article, nor show whether or not Opti-Scrub is an effective product. Instead, I use this to illustrate a point: Quoting terminology we are not properly educated on makes it difficult to tell what is proven and what is hype—unless we inform ourselves by reading reports of studies that are conducted by those *with* the proper education and training in the medical and scientific communities.

IS ALCOHOL ENOUGH?

We have been doing our best to validate the safety and cleanliness of our industry to the medical community and, more importantly, to the general public. We have come a long way in learning how to perform safe, clean piercings utilizing aseptic technique. But in the vein of advancing and streamlining accepted protocols for things such as aftercare and body jewelry, etc., we found ourselves wanting to take everything a step further.

According to the American Red Cross,¹ 16 million blood donations were collected in the U.S. in 2006. **16 million.** Those are *just* blood donations. This does not include the number of IVs and injections that are performed every single day at hospitals and doctor’s offices. And

they all have one thing in common: isopropyl alcohol is used to prep the site prior to puncturing the skin.

What we are doing is no more invasive than drawing blood. I would argue that what we are doing is less invasive. If isopropyl alcohol is acceptable and most commonly used for skin prep prior to drawing blood, that is, a needle being inserted *directly* into a vein and the blood stream, how could we possibly think that we need something more for body piercing?

Proponents for products such as Techni-Care will likely bring up persistent efficacy. That is, how long the product continues to have a residual effect after it has been applied. A study² conducted in 2007 and 2008 provided by The American Society for Microbiology tested the different rates of contamination in blood cultures gathered intravenously using different antiseptics for skin prep. The report states:

Alcohol provides a rapid bactericidal effect against most gram-positive and gram-negative bacteria, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, and certain enveloped viruses as a result of protein coagulation and denaturation. The effect is not persistent, however. The use of Povidone-Iodine results in the slow and continuous release of free iodine that is effective against almost the same spectrum of microorganisms as alcohol, but it can be neutralized by proteins on the skin surface. Venipuncture of a patient’s arm does not need such a persistent antimicrobial effect [author emphasis], and no data about the different depths to which the antiseptics permeate a patient’s skin are available. If alcohol permeates the skin surface as well as PI [Povidone-Iodine] does, the application of PI theoretically cannot have an additional antiseptic effect.

That is to say, while products such as Techni-Care claimed to have a residual effect that lasted hours after application, there is no evidence to support that it makes any difference in the case of a simple skin puncture, i.e., a body piercing. It is critical to remember that we are not performing surgery. Body piercing is nowhere near as invasive.

Some piercers may argue that getting your blood drawn consists only of a needle in place for a matter of moments, whereas a piercing leaves the site open with a piece of jewelry indefinitely. However, the skin prep is still the same when an IV is inserted at a hospital for a patient that will have that IV in place for several days, if not longer.

The same study also stated:

The extremely low contamination rates in both groups suggest that the type of antiseptic used may not be as important as the use of proper technique [author emphasis].

This is the most critical part for us to understand. Many piercers do not follow the manufacturer’s instructions for how long to apply the product they choose to use for skin prep, nor do they apply it in the proper method, using small to large circles working outward. *Which* product is being used is far less important than how it is being used.

SHELLFISH ALLERGY?

So what about povidone-iodine? This product has been—and is still—used in countless medical practices and procedures every single day. How could anybody possibly think it is a step back for the piercing industry?

The argument that its prep time is too long is an unreasonable one. If you are unable to spare a few extra minutes with your client, you may be cutting some other corners as well.

And of course, there is the shellfish allergy concern.

Studies have shown that contrary to popular belief, there is nothing to suggest a connection between fish or shellfish allergies and allergic reactions to povidone-iodine.³ In fact, in cases of povidone-iodine sensitivity, it is the povidone or other ingredients that caused allergy-like symptoms, not the iodine.

Povidone-iodine also serves as a great skin prep alternative for mucous membranes—since alcohol can be too harsh—though many piercers simply use a sterile saline wipe on sensitive areas (such as genitals or the insides of nostrils) without issue.

LIABILITY ISSUES

As piercers, we need to be ever conscious of the lawsuit-happy times we live in. We invest in insurance coverage, include “Penalty of Perjury” statements on our consent forms, and make sure our aftercare sheets are labeled as “Suggested” Aftercare.

For those still seeking surplus supplies of Techni-Care—and for those who still have their own surplus—why would we continue to use a product about which the FDA has said, “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”⁴

In the unfortunate event one of our studios was presented with a lawsuit regarding a piercing that became infected or led to a health issue, you could very well be leaving yourself open to liability by using a product recalled by the FDA *and* the manufacturer of said product. And wouldn’t it be better to use products that the CDC has stated are acceptable for skin preparation rather than products that most in the medical community have never heard of—much less thoroughly tested or used?

Is Opti-Scrub really appropriate to use for prepping skin when it is not actually labeled or sold as a skin prep? While it may be effective in killing off unwanted bacteria, is it wise to use a product outside of its intended purpose, which is stated as “safe for use as an anti-microbial hand cleanser, a full body skin wash, and may safely be used on the hair or scalp”?⁵ It may not be a bad product for its intended use, but it may not be the best choice for our industry.

And by using products for purposes outside of their intended use, are you putting yourself in a legally vulnerable position?

STEPPING DOWN FROM MY SOAP BOX... KIND OF

When I read the Opti-Scrub article, it made me feel like many of us have been hearing the skin prep debate from one side for too long. There are a lot of piercers who have successfully stuck with other products, such as isopropyl alcohol and/or povidone-iodine, for many, many years.

We always want to find that new product that will make things cleaner and quicker, or something that will make piercings heal faster. We are continually in search of some sort of wonder product. While there is nothing wrong with being on the lookout for ways to improve our industry, we can lose focus and find ourselves going along with the masses—instead of doing our research.

I don’t think any less of any piercer who uses Techni-Care, Opti-Scrub, isopropyl alcohol, povidone-iodine, or whatever their product-of-choice may be for skin prep. None of us can say they have seen a difference in their clients’ healing success or infection rate due to the product that was used for skin prep. There are too many variables to assume the product used was not sufficient. To be confident in our choice of skin prep, we need to focus more on the studies from medical and scientific communities that are available to us. Studies that have been reviewed by *their* peers, people who are thoroughly educated and qualified in those areas of study. Not piercers, and certainly not the manufacturers of these products.

That, and a lot of us really need to slow down and prep skin properly. Small to large circular motion working outward....

-
1. <http://www.redcrossblood.org/learn-about-blood/blood-facts-and-statistics>
 2. <http://jcm.asm.org/cgi/content/full/47/1/54>
 3. <http://www.radiology.ucsf.edu/patient-care/patient-safety/contrast/iodine-allergy>
 4. <http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/ucm181654.htm>
 5. <http://www.opticide.com/optiscrub.htm>

Editor’s note: While isopropyl alcohol and/or povidone-iodine are effective methods of skin preparation, the FDA announced a voluntary recall, on February 16 and March 15, 2011, of all Triad Group manufactured isopropyl alcohol prep pads and swab sticks and non-sterile povidone-iodine swabs, respectively (see page 20 for more information on these recalls). Non-Triad Group manufactured products remain unaffected. **P**

Since last issue’s article about Opti-Scrub [“Opti-Scrub: A Replacement for Techni-Care,” *The Point* #54], piercers have been weighing in on their experience with the product.

One curious piercer noticed what appeared to be a second label under the first. He used a hair dryer and carefully removed the top layer to reveal a label underneath for a completely different product. The NDC number (showing manufacturer, product, and formulation) is the same as Opti-Scrub, suggesting that this is the same product, just sold for a different use and directed toward another market. When contacted, a spokesperson for Micro-Scientific Industries stated it is indeed the same product labeled differently, and that they market it in several different ways.



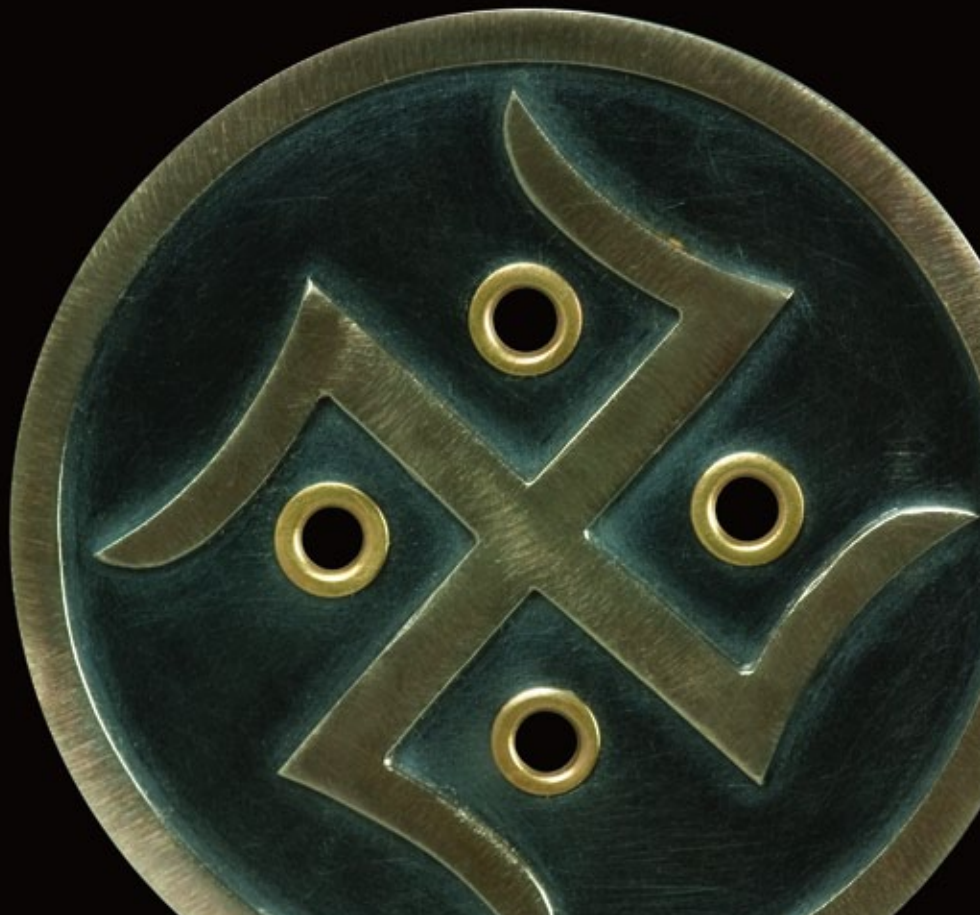
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PRICE VS. VALUE



CHRISTINA SHULL
High Priestess Piercing and Tattoo
Roseburg, OR

Value is what we sell every day in our studios. Value is what we try to explain to our customers when we are asked why we charge \$50 for a piercing when a different studio charges \$20 for the “same thing.” This explanation of our value is essentially an itemized list of benefits the client will receive from purchasing your service.

Potential customers need to know how your studio differs from other studios. People are inclined to make decisions based on price, so it is foolish to think someone will pay an extra \$30 for a service that they view as being identical to the cheaper alternative.

When explaining the differences between studios and how these factors affect price, the client deserves a thorough and honest explanation. Try to avoid negative comments about other studios, which often start with “they.” This may seem like a good way to persuade a potential client to avoid other studios, but may actually dissuade someone from getting pierced at your studio—very few people are impressed by bad-mouthing the competition.

This is your opportunity to dazzle the potential client with the wonderful things that you do. When someone asks, “Why does it cost so much?” you should interpret this as, “Tell me why you are worth the additional money.” If the person understands the benefits you are offering, your service becomes more valuable and they become willing to spend more.

JEWELRY

Jewelry is good information to start with when educating a potential client about the value you provide them. I inform the client that we only offer materials that have been proven safe for use in the body, covering all jewelry material options and giving some basic information about each one. Your presentation of information should be tailored to fit the person you are talking to. A medical professional may be impressed by your knowledge of the significance of ASTM F-136 titanium, while a teenage girl needs information that interests her, such as the assurance that unlike low quality costume jewelry, the gems will not fall out of the jewelry she is going to buy from us, which will save her money over time.

If shown a picture of internal threads vs. external threads and given a good explanation of why you use internally threaded jewelry, most clients will spend more to purchase a superior product. One of my favorite examples of value is the three-piece jewelry that we use for lip piercings. I say to the client, “*Once you have the jewelry for the initial piercing, we can use the same disc and gem, so you only have to spend \$10 for a shorter post. This will be less expensive than having to buy a whole new piece once your swelling has gone down.*” With the right presentation of this concept, even the most hard-to-please teenagers have thought that was pretty cool.

Jewelry styles should be discussed, with highlights about the special things you do that set you apart from the competition. “*While many places sell pre-bent nostril screws, we custom-bend all of our nostril screws based on which side of your nose is pierced, the thickness of your nostril, and*

the angle of your piercing. We also will insert new jewelry free of charge to ensure that the nostril screw fits appropriately and comfortably.”

Nobody within 70 miles of my studio sells threadless press-fit barbells, so we have a great opportunity to showcase our 18-gauge barbells. “We exclusively offer a different style of jewelry that is a long-term alternative to a nostril screw. These barbells are often found to be more comfortable and if you want to change the color, you only have to buy a new gem top rather than a whole new piece.” I can address what we sell in a tactful manner that does not put down our competition.

You should also inform your potential client of the jewelry styles and various options you can use for the initial piercing. The client might not know the \$20 piercing includes a steel captive bead ring, when they actually prefer to start with a stud. Showing them the small gem stud they can get as initial jewelry is a perfect opportunity to justify part of the difference in price. I always explain that they can get what they want in the beginning as opposed to waiting until after healing; they will spend less money overall because they do not have to buy a second piece of jewelry later.

CLEANLINESS OF THE STUDIO AND PROCEDURE

Almost every client will understand that higher standards of cleanliness are valuable to their health and safety, and many are willing to pay more for this. Bring up your adherence to APP standards, and explain why they are important. If you take the time to explain APP standards, most clients are impressed that you took the initiative to follow guidelines you were not required to meet.

Studio tours are an excellent way to prove your value. Give the client a look inside your piercing room and take the time to explain the procedure. I like to don gloves and show the client a pre-sterilized “piercing pack” that contains gauze, q-tips, and a toothpick for marking. I explain to them, “*Everything we use for the procedure is pre-sterilized, including the q-tips and gauze used to clean the area and the toothpick used for marking.*”

I include the sterilization room in this tour. This is an ideal time to explain spore testing and its role in your studio. One of the highlights of this tour is the explanation that all of our locations test our autoclaves on a weekly basis, while the state requires only monthly testing. Most clients—especially those in the medical field—are impressed by this information.

YOU THE PRACTITIONER

Finally, the client needs to know about the person performing their piercing, and nobody can sell you better than you. In a professional manner, let the potential client know how long you have been piercing, what training or continuing education you have received, all certifications and/or licensing you have, and any additional information that would demonstrate proficiency and expertise. The client needs you to be professional, informative, and friendly through the whole experience as you are the most important part of the process.

The client needs you to deliver value to them. Once they have decided your service is worth the price, it is your obligation to deliver all of the value you promised. In a studio that maintains high standards, the client will receive quality jewelry, and if you are doing your job correctly, they will get the clean procedure that you promised as well. The most important part of their experience is often the most overlooked and underrated part of the procedure: your attitude and attention to your customer.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Piercing is one of the most intimate forms of customer service in the world. It is crucial that we listen to our clients to ensure they get what they pay for. If we have a client who starts off asking for the “smallest nose stud possible,” then selects a 2mm gem from the display, we feel the client out, asking if they envisioned “something small and flat, something medium and more noticeable, or large and flashy?” If the client says they want something small, we often suggest the smaller 1.5mm gem and explain that nostril jewelry often appears larger in the piercing than in the display.

Listening to your client is key to the most important part of customer service: understanding what your customer wants and delivering the goods. Listening can tell you why they want to get pierced, what they want, and what they need, which are often very different things. Don't underestimate the importance of why the client is getting pierced.

Sometimes the reason for the piercing is the key to the client's experience.

The first experience I had with one of my most loyal clients was in memory of her child, who had passed away just weeks before. What started off as a potential first-time client wanting an anti-eyebrow piercing, resulted in two anchors below her eye and piercings for her boyfriend, her two daughters, and two other family members—all jewelry bearing the child's birthstone. I listened to their story, cried with them, hugged them, and most importantly, made a genuine connection with them that we have maintained for the last three years.

At the end of the day, your client needs to feel that the procedure and service they received was worth the price. If you sell them a piercing for \$50 and they feel that they got a \$50 value, they will not regret spending more than they planned to. However, if the client feels that your procedure and service were only worth \$20, yet they got “ripped off” for \$50, the last you will see of them is probably a poor review on the Internet.

Many good studios have poor reviews in which the client had no complaint about the studio itself, the jewelry, or the quality of the procedure. But if they are turned off by poor customer service, they will not return to that establishment. The most valuable aspect of the client's experience is the simple act of showing them with your words, your body language, your attitude, and your time, that you value them. A client will happily spend the extra money if they know that you respect them as a client and as a person. **P**

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REMEMBERING ZID



RYAN OUELLETTE

Precision Body Arts
Nashua, New Hampshire

On March 21, 2011 our community lost someone very special. Adam “Zid” Aries passed away from heart failure in his sleep at the age of 28. Anyone who met him already knows what a unique guy he was. No article could ever fully capture his personality or celebrate his life. If I had to use one word to describe him I would choose “authentic” because he never tried to be someone else—he just lived his life.

I’m sure there will be countless teary-eyed conversations about him at Conference this year, but I’d just like to share a few of my memories. I had the privilege of knowing Adam during a lot of changes in his life. There are so many ways to remember him; he was a diverse person: body piercer, bouncer, DJ, friend. I remember meeting this skinny, lanky goth kid named Adam at Hot Topic in 1998, who was wearing the most ridiculous outfit and makeup but couldn’t care less what anyone thought of him. He was always himself no matter what anyone thought. We became friends slowly. We had mutual friends and we were both interested in body art, so there was plenty to talk about.

I did his first piercings, which led to discussions of his passion and desire to one day work in the industry. He had moved on to work at a local head shop that sold body jewelry and needles. I remember having to talk to him about resisting the urge to pierce people underground (even though that’s how I started, too). I told him an apprenticeship was the way to go, so he started to look and found one at a shop here in town. I tried not to pry, but when he told me how it was going I was pretty disappointed that his potential was being wasted on sitting around answering phones.

When things fell apart for him there (and even though my business wasn’t strong enough at that point to support two full-time piercers), I decided that Adam was a special guy and worth a shot. His first day working at our shop, I took him aside to tell him that it might be just a little difficult for people to take him seriously if he was wearing a red vinyl miniskirt with thigh-high stockings. The baffled look on his face was priceless and entirely “Zid.” He soaked up piercing information like a sponge, it was fantastic. He struggled with confidence for a while, but he really started to take off when I gave him a little space and encouraged him to experiment.

Altogether, he was with our shop for about two years, during which time he really became a part of our family.

So many memories are impossible to fully describe: eating dumpster-dived bread out of trash bags at his New Year’s party, his creepy van full of bondage gear, and watching him perform some of the most aggressive suspensions I have ever seen. I have never in my

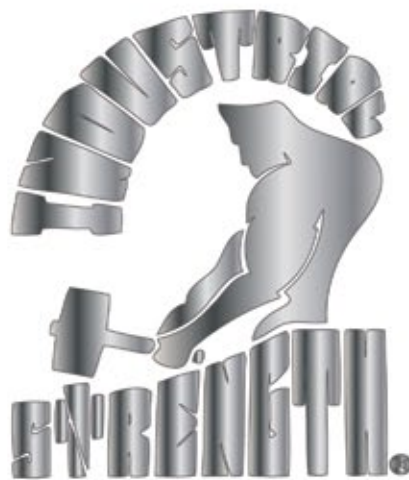
life met anyone as honest as he was. He never held back how he felt: if he loved you he told you, if he didn’t like you he told you. He never tried to back-stab, manipulate, or lie—he just wanted to live his life the way he wanted to live it.

After his apprenticeship ran its course, we had a conversation about how we would need to find him a new shop to work in if he wanted to progress further. Adam was never meant to linger in one place for too long, so a change of scenery was exactly what he needed. He found that at a shop in Boston. That’s when Adam the Apprentice really came into his own as Zid the Body Piercer. He quickly earned his place in the industry and made an army of friends as he traveled and partied across the country as a body piercer and member of the Rites of Passage suspension team. Eventually Zid moved on to Pino Bros Ink in Cambridge, MA where he worked until his passing. He was growing by

leaps and bounds every year, offering surface work, genital piercing, microdermals, and studying scarification; eventually, he began training an apprentice of his own. I never told him how much it meant to me, but one of my proudest achievements is having helped get him started, and seeing how far he went with it.

The last time I saw Zid was when he dropped by the shop a few months ago on his way through town to visit family. We talked about work and about him coming up to learn more about scarification some day, but sadly that day never came. As I write this article, a mere three days after his sudden passing, I find myself choking back tears when I think of the hug he gave me as he left. He never gave one of those pat-on-the-back casual hugs. He would squeeze you and tell you he loved you, and he meant every bit of it. I’m sad over all the experiences I’ll miss with him gone, but I’m heartbroken that I’ll never get one of those hugs from my friend again. We miss you, Adam - safe journey. **P**





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