

THE POINT

A close-up, profile view of a person's face, looking slightly to the left. They are wearing black-rimmed glasses. The person has several piercings: a septum ring, a nostril ring, a lip ring, and several small studs on the nose and upper lip. The background is plain white.

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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS



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AND ACTIVISM** P. 8

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THE TRIPLE
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FROM THE EDITOR



JAMES WEBER
Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

As I write this, the main news story over the last week—especially for those of us who get our news online—is the battle over the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) in the U.S. House of Representatives, and the Protect IP Act (PIPA) in the U.S. Senate. There have been many articles on the debate over this legislation, but for me the most thought-provoking was in a recent issue of the New York Times. In it, Jonathan Weisman writes that we all saw a revolutionary moment, when the old media—in the form of the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), and assorted entertainment industry lobbyists—were triumphed by participants in the new media, “when the new economy rose up against the old” and “netizens” rose up as individuals and made a difference.¹ This all came to a head on January 18, when many of the web’s most high-traffic sites—including Wikipedia, Google, Craigslist, TwitPic, Boing Boing and over 100,000 others—participated in a voluntary blackout to encourage visitors to call their senators and representatives and to urge them to oppose the bills.

Last November, I had the opportunity to see Cory Doctorow speak. He is one of the editors of boingboing.net (one of the sites participating in the blackout) and is an engaging and often brilliant author and speaker. While he spoke about SOPA and PIPA, copyright, digital rights management, and the dangers of the proliferation of limited-use general computing machines, one of the more interesting discussions of the evening happened after his scheduled

talk, during the question-and-answer session.

Someone in the audience asked about the legal environment created by aggressive persecution for online piracy, since everyone (at least everyone in that audience of college students) participates in it. Doctorow’s answer was thought-provoking: He went on to talk about the dangers of this environment and how it leads to selective enforcement of laws. “In the former Soviet Union, it wasn’t illegal to tell politically inappropriate jokes about the Politburo or the Supreme Soviet,” he said. “It was illegal to be a black marketeer. Now, everyone’s a black marketeer—because you starved to death if you weren’t—but they only arrested people for black-marketeering when they told politically inappropriate jokes.”²

As copyright reform advocate Lawrence Lessig stated in his excellent talk on copyright at TED, “We live in this weird time. It’s kind of an age of prohibitions, where in many areas of our life, we live life constantly against the law, and that’s what we’re doing to our kids. They live life knowing they live it against the law. That realization is extremely corrosive, extraordinarily corrupting.”³ How is this pertinent to body piercing? Keep following me, if you would.

Like most everyone else my age and younger, I spend a lot of time on Facebook. I have quite a few friends and followers in the body art community; some who have been around for a while, but many who are younger and just starting out in this industry. One topic that often comes up in the several body art groups on

Facebook I participate in is legislation and the regulation of our industry. The debate goes back and forth on the best way to approach legislators, the most informed/best legislation out there, and the troubles that piercers and other body artists have with their local regulations—or lack of them. There are many different views expressed by people all across the Facebook spectrum when it comes to body art legislation. While most believe in proactively working with legislators, there are also those who advocate a policy they define as libertarian: that the best regulations are none at all, and that as an industry we do fine without them, thank you very much.

Scattered throughout posts on legislation, the questions about the best jewelry for certain piercings, and the you-wouldn’t-believe-what-a-client-did-today stories is the occasional sharing of crazy piercing videos—the kind that make you cringe. (Elayne elaborates in this issue’s “President’s Corner,” on page 4.) There are a *lot* of body piercing videos on YouTube. (Start typing

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1. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/19/technology/web-protests-piracy-bill-and-2-key-senators-change-course.html?pagewanted=all>

2. You can see the full talk here: <http://youtu.be/dkGwNK6bFE0>

3. http://www.ted.com/talks/larry_lessig_says_the_law_is_strangling_creativity.html



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“body piercing” into the search bar and you will get suggestions for what you seek, including “body piercing gone wrong.” A search for “body piercing” turns up over 54,000 results.) Many of these videos not only show the “client” sitting through the worst sort of torture, but also procedures that fall into a legal grey area, depending on process or instruments used. Many of the videos show unsafe practices. These videos are a horrible representation of who we are and what we offer in service to our clients—in fact, YouTube videos are now being cited in several state prohibitions and regulations on piercing, such as in New Jersey.

From watching these videos, and the piercer’s cavalier attitudes toward their work—subsequently broadcast on YouTube—it’s clear that either these piercers don’t know the legal grey area they operate in or they simply don’t care. The “age of prohibitions” has made many of us indifferent. There are piercers who are still unaware of the legality of certain items or services—installing surface anchors with dermal punches, for instance. But there are others, piercers who believe that they have a right to do whatever they want, regardless of safety or ethics. Piercers who believe that there are so many people doing it, that there is no way they could get into trouble. In effect, it’s similar to the questions raised on digital piracy: What happens if everyone’s doing it; when it’s simply the norm to run afoul of the law? Why should we work toward effective regulations when it often seems so easy for everyone to ignore them?

As a piercer, each of us needs to be informed on the legislation that affects and governs our industry, be it federal medical device classification or local health requirements, and whether we are in favor of regulations, take a more libertarian, laissez-faire approach to regulation (or caveat emptor, as the case may be), or believe the industry can and will self-regulate. (Personally, I think a good percentage of those 54,000 YouTube videos show why this isn’t a workable approach.) As piercers, it’s not enough to do things perfectly yourself, at your studio. We all participate in the new media environment that exposes us all to an ever-expanding media landscape, and this increases our responsibilities as participants in it.

This is shown no more effectively than in the content collected for this issue. On page 8, Charles Householder talks about how to become active locally; on page 14, Christina Shull talks about Oregon’s new regulations, including the adoption of APP initial jewelry standards; and on page 22, Bethra Szumski writes about how a single photo has us all doing so many triple forward helix piercings at our studios. Rick Frueh writes about organizing piercers locally, while Brian Skellie writes about the latest educational conference in Brazil, halfway around the world from where he lives.

None of us work in a vacuum. What we do as piercers has ramifications for our entire industry. You are not alone—look at SOPA and PIPA. Once people engaged, things changed. Be active. Cultural anthropologist Margaret Mead said it best when she said, “Never believe that a few caring people can’t change the world. For, indeed, that’s all who ever have.”

Welcome to issue #58 of *The Point: The Journal of the Association of Professional Piercers*. **P**

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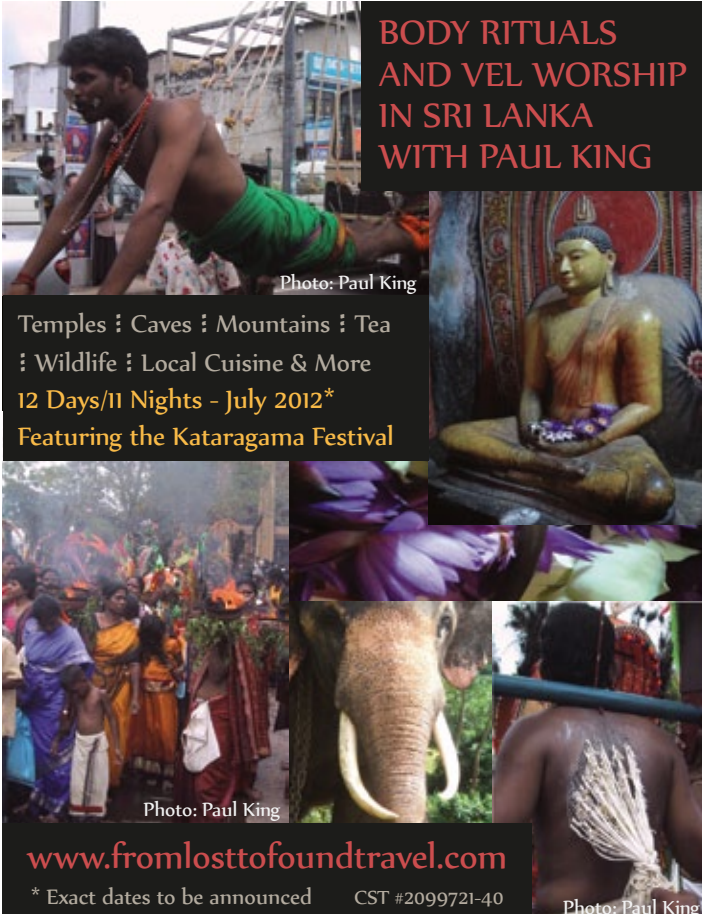


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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



ELAYNE ANGEL
APP President
Yucatán, Mexico

When I'm not on the road piercing or teaching at a conference, I spend time at home on the internet answering piercing questions, blogging, and promoting my book, *The Piercing Bible*. Through my exposure to the web, I've come to the realization that we as professional piercers are working against a serious public relations nightmare in the form of an enormous and pervasive online representation of truly **bad** piercings. This unprofessionalism comes in many forms: websites, blog posts, photos, and worst of all, videos. More than 70% of internet users currently view video content,¹ so there are a lot of people out there watching.

My research for this column actually left me feeling nauseated. In a matter of minutes, I witnessed various piercings done with no gloves, no cleaning, and no marking. I saw marks that were made and then missed by miles (or the piercing equivalent). I viewed piercers—lots of them—who literally took five minutes or longer to push the needle and jewelry through, sometimes with multiple sticks for an individual placement. I thought they might have been trying to use the wrong end of the needle; I couldn't figure what else could possibly make it take so shockingly long.

I saw forceps painfully locked onto numerous body parts, and slotted forceps slide right off in the middle of procedures. Heaps of inappropriate jewelry styles and sizes were inserted. Piercers engaged in cross-contamination with reckless abandon and obvious ignorance, and piercees were routinely permitted to manipulate their new jewelry and touch their fresh piercings with bare hands. I watched in alarm as a piercer accidentally stuck herself with a needle while trying to

insert jewelry in a nipple, and witnessed failed attempts at navel piercings performed with the client standing up. I could go on and on. And these were all done in piercing studios! I can't even bring myself to think about what I viewed in the home piercing videos.

Having devoted a sizable portion of my life to the advancement and professionalization of body piercing, it's hard not to be dismayed and demoralized. The sheer quantity of badly done piercings in internet videos is beyond appalling, and the horrors I've seen are inexcusable. During the painful hour or so I spent perusing these "highlights," I noted that the clips were obviously shot by friends of piercees and not the piercers themselves. The hacks with starring roles in these videos would probably rather not have evidence of their fumbling posted for all to see. (Side note to bumbling untrained piercers: If you don't do a slick job, at least don't let anybody film you working!)

Perhaps worst of all, this ineptitude has been viewed by hundreds of thousands, and in some cases, *millions* of people. One single video of a woman's shrieking and protesting reaction while getting her nipples pierced was watched by over eight million viewers.

So many piercees are tortured and traumatized by these so-called "professional" piercers, it's almost a wonder that our industry still exists. One critical concern is that when such a low quality of piercing becomes the

accepted standard, people do not demand or even seek better. Incompetent piercers flourish in the environment of a poorly educated public.

I believe the piercing industry itself, and the ability for us to make a decent living at it, are potentially at stake. It is, in fact, quite likely that many individuals who would have become our customers will never get pierced after seeing videos of prolonged, agonizing piercings and inappropriate piercer

Through my exposure to the web, I've come to the realization that we as professional piercers are working against a serious public relations nightmare in the form of an enormous and pervasive online representation of truly **bad** piercings.

behavior. And those who went through horrendous experiences may have decided against additional piercings they would have otherwise desired and sought.

Prohibition is another grave problem that can result from bad online piercing videos. Certain practices (such as installing surface anchors) have been banned by legislators in various regions as a result of regulators viewing poor practices by inept piercers. There have also been legal issues raised and problems

1. <http://www.brafton.com/news/more-than-70-percent-of-web-users-view-video-content>

2. http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/generation-app-62-of-mobile-users-25-34-own-smartphones/

caused by piercers using dermal punches in videos. These difficulties have been discussed in previous issues of *The Point*. [See issue #49.]

Though shaken up, I also feel mobilized. I've realized that we, the legitimate expert piercers with skill and experience, must wage a war against these pretenders. We've got to launch an all-out crusade to combat this predicament by flooding the internet with sound information and videos of good piercings to show the world how it should be done. We need to circulate videos en masse demonstrating what proper piercing procedures look like. Once potential piercees see that superior (and less painful) piercing is available, they are going to be less willing to suffer at the hands of hacks.

Please make a commitment to boost the online presence of professional piercing. Include healing and aftercare tips on your websites, blog about new high quality jewelry as it comes into your studio (and how it differs from cheap junk). Write about the current

body art trends in your area or improved techniques or products you're using. There's no shortage of topics you can pick to convey the finer points of our industry to the public.

And, importantly, record and post videos of safe, swift, competently done procedures. Get commentary from your clients afterwards in which they talk about how easy and comfortable the process was for them and how pleased they are with the results. When clients return with well-healed piercings, show how nice they look, and tape client testimonials about their untroubled aftermath. Share, educate, and elucidate. We need to overwhelm the web with a surge of factual piercing information and fantastic videos.

Nowadays, many cell phones have the ability to easily record video and upload it to the web. Studies show that nearly half of U.S. mobile phone users have a smartphone, and over 60% of those 25-34 years of age own one.² Many piercers have large client populations in this age group, so if you don't have your own, ask a

friend, or your clients and their friends.

We need to inundate with excellence. If you don't already have a YouTube.com channel, make one **now**. It is simple and self-explanatory, even for the technophobe. You can actually do simple editing of the video content once it has been uploaded—such as adding your website's URL and other studio information. It is also extremely easy to add the YouTube videos to your own website. There's no doubt that using recordings of great piercings to promote your studio, yourself, and your services would prove positive for your business even if all the awful videos out there didn't exist.

If you've worked hard to develop your expertise and you do a first-rate job, the internet is the place to shout about it. If every proficient piercer supplies good information, especially visual information, it will help to counteract the scourge and put a more professional face on piercing for the public. The future of our careers may depend on it—so just do it! **P**

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IN THE OFFICE



CAITLIN MCDIARMID
APP Administrator
Lawrence, KS

Conference may not be until mid-June this year, but that doesn't mean we aren't in the thick of it already. Registration has opened for both attendees and vendors, and that means the office is starting to get a bit busier. We have started working out who our core volunteer workers will be, and their training will start very soon. Returning attendees will see some familiar faces in leadership roles among the volunteers this year—it's exciting to have such great people to work with during the intense week of the Conference. Part of our volunteer work force each year are the recipients of the Al D. Scholarship.¹

Some of the scholars become regular attendees of Conference and some become trusted leaders, working for us each year; some have even gone on to serve on the Board of Directors of the Association and to teach others at Conference. However, many of our scholars seem to disappear after their experience, which leaves us wondering if they are even piercing anymore. I have decided to try to find out where scholarship recipients landed, what they are doing now, and what they have to say about their experience after some time and distance.

In the last nine years we have given the scholarship to 58 piercers. Three of them I haven't been able to locate through social media, their former studios, or the contact information that I have on file. I have emailed the others a short survey in the hopes that many will participate. I asked them how getting the scholarship affected them, whether it impacted their careers, what they would suggest to the organizers of the Conference, and what advice they would offer

applicants to the scholarship program.

I hope to have a few more responses for upcoming issues of *The Point*.

CHARLIE STILES - 2011 RECIPIENT

Subculturez Tattoo and Body Piercing -
Body Piercer;
Orange City, FL

It's been one year since I have been to the APP Conference.

It made it feasible for me to attend; if I had not received the scholarship I probably would not have gone. I now can't wait to figure out how to make it happen.

I always look back at what I learned. I have a support system now that I can rely on. Just today I talked to Rick Frueh, the Medical Liaison for the APP, and he helped me discover a critical mistake I've been making for years and fix it.

Attendees should stay open-minded and think hard about the classes they take. I took some classes I needed, but overlooked others thinking I already had it covered. Turns out I had way more to learn than I thought.

[The APP suggests utilizing our Mentor program to assist you in course selection if you are a new attendee.]

NOEL ULLERY - 2009 RECIPIENT

Marvel Tattoo - Body Piercer;
South Bend, IN

It's been three years since I have been to the APP Conference.

Getting the scholarship, and being able to attend APP, gave me a broader view of the piercing world. South Bend, Indiana is a bit behind in piercing trends, and I have never worked at another shop, so being at APP showed me many things that I had never heard of, or even seen, before.

Attending APP made me a more knowledgeable piercer. I like to impress my clients by telling them the difference between a keloid and hypertrophic scarring, how to properly prime earlobes for stretching, and by using anatomy lingo to explain why cheek piercings are a terrible idea. This is information that none of the other piercers in my area can provide.

Be ready to work *very hard* at conference.

WARREN HILLER - 2007 RECIPIENT

Hospital for Sick Children -
Medical Device Reprocessor;
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

It's been three years since I have been to the APP Conference.

It was one of the most important moments in my career as a body piercer. It *finally* allowed me to meet, in person, piercers from all over the world. It allowed me to really display to the community who I was and what I knew in person, not through the Internet realm. It also was a moment that will stay with me forever, especially

1. Before he passed away in February 2001, Al D. Sowers devoted much of his piercing career to the education of piercers. It is only fitting that this scholarship be named for him.

The scholarship offers funding for approximately 8 piercers in need of financial assistance to attend the APP Conference. Accommodations and conference registration are included. Winners are required to share a room with other recipients and work more than 30 hours during Conference. In addition, they must provide their own transportation to and from the conference. Applicants must either be in a well-established, active apprenticeship or working as a piercer.

Applications will be accepted for the 2012 Scholarships through February 29. Please contact the APP office for application materials.

when Tom Brazda, my friend and someone I view as my mentor, said he was proud of me for how I was carrying myself at the conference.

I took *everything* I absorbed in the classes and implemented it into my skills as I transitioned from working in Niagara Falls, Canada to working in Darwin, Australia. It gave me the confidence I truly needed to realize that I was a skilled and competent piercer and that I should believe in my abilities.

The confidence I gained at the APP Conference and by being an AI D. Scholar remained even when I retired from body piercing. The self-confidence I had afterwards made me realize the bigger picture and pushed me to go back to school, allowing me to be a certified Medical Device Reprocessor.

To be honest, the APP and the managers of the volunteers do an amazing job each year, especially when it comes to the volunteers. You make them understand that although they will learn so much at the conference, they need to step up and work hard at making the conference a success.

Listen and learn and, most importantly, be willing to work your butt off. You are “on the grand stage” and everyone has their eyes on you, especially the APP Board. With being a potential AI D. Scholar you are a representative of the APP as well as the body piercing community. Scholars need to realize this and encompass that entire concept and not let down the APP nor the community.

JESSICA GERE-BRADDAM - 2003 RECIPIENT

Freaky D Tattoo - Head Piercer,
Eaton, OH

It's been nine years since I went to the APP Conference.

It opened my eyes to so much and allowed me to meet many wonderful people in the industry. It also gave me the opportunity to learn things I had very little knowledge about, e.g., different types of metals and the make up of those metals. It made me want to be an even better piercer. I also realized how important it is to keep an open mind because this industry is full of so much new information.

By giving me new knowledge I was able to provide clients with more information. It also allowed me to meet some awesome people, who ended up giving me guest spots at their studios.

It is an honor to be accepted into the program and there may be a little bit of hard work while at conference, but it's all worth it. **P**



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BODY ART AND ACTIVISM



CHARLES "CHUCK" HOUSEHOLDER

Director, Alliance of Professional Tattooists

Dragonfly Tattoo Studios

Kansas City, KS

Editor's Note: While this article is primarily about issues related to tattooing, legislation and regulations concerning tattooing are often tied to those for body piercing and other forms of body modification. (See issue #53 of The Point: "Tattooing is Ruled 'Free Speech' by U.S. Court of Appeals.") Its message is one that is equally applicable to the body piercing industry.

Back in 2009, a community college here in Kansas attempted to open a body arts school. It was a well-constructed proposal; the program was framed the same as any college-level course of study with structured syllabi, required reading, and daily lesson plans. It was drafted by a prominent body arts practitioner and was backed by the support of the college's board of regents.

Predictably, the local body arts community was not supportive. Artists from all over the state were very heated over everything wrong with the endeavor. The most common and vocal opposition took the form of personal attacks toward the body arts practitioner who framed the proposal—but this type of protesting was not going to stop the proposal from becoming a reality.

The Kansas Board of Cosmetology is the governing agency for body arts (tattoos, piercings, and permanent cosmetics) in Kansas. Under state law, there are two ways to become a legitimate body arts practitioner: either the successful completion of a 1200-hour approved apprenticeship or 600 hours in an approved school, each method requiring fifty documented procedures to be completed during training. In 2009, there were fifty-four approved trainers for body arts, but no approved schools. The student/instructor ratio was made one-to-one following a decision by the Kansas Board of Cosmetology after they noticed an inordinately high failure rate from applicants whose approved trainers had multiple trainees. For this reason the proposed school

was presented as fulfilling a need, as the number of inquiries toward becoming a body arts practitioner was said to be increasing. The school told the cosmetology board that the burden of validating training would be reduced for the state with an approved school, that it would standardize practices, and they further claimed that the school would stimulate economic development with minimum economic impact. Most of the rest of us maintained that no matter how much they denied, deflected, or minimized it, the real reason to start a body arts school was simply to make money.

What the school did not have was a feasible plan for student placement. They cited current body arts facilities as potential employers, but the burden of validating training was upon the instructor—not the state. If the state has doubts, they just deny licensing under public safety laws. Consequently, the economic impact would be detrimental, as hordes of inexperienced body arts practitioners would "graduate" and be dumped into a career where they wouldn't get hired.

As body art practitioners, we saw the school's negative affect on our industry as obvious—but we had to prove this to the cosmetology board. To do so, we embarked on a market study, and got the information for the study with a market survey. I am not a business major, but thankfully most of the information I needed was just a mouse click or two away. After a quick search, I found a template for a market study with definitions of the terminology and an explanation of their functions. I only had to craft a survey pertinent to our topic. I compiled a total of twenty questions. Only four addressed the body arts school directly; the majority of the questions determined the who, what, where, when, and how known as market metrics.

But there was a time crunch to get the opposition organized before the next board meeting. Along with Mace Arnold, the

APT's State Representative for Kansas, I organized an ad hoc group: the Kansas Body Modification Coalition. We were a grass-roots organization with no charter; to be affiliated, you only had to agree with our cause and ask that your name be added to the support roster. Having experience in public speaking and addressing government panels, I offered to be the spokesperson for our organization. We divided the contact information we had and set out to get in touch with every body arts facility in Kansas. We targeted studio owners but passed our message along to anyone willing to listen. We asked those owners to participate in our market survey and more than a third of them responded within the allotted time frame. (All eventually replied.) Their voice was clear, strong, and unified. Of all respondents, only one was in favor of the body arts school—and he was the person who originally proposed it.

Having support from the local body arts community, we moved to gain support on a national level. I contacted Pat Sinatra, the president of the Alliance of Professional Tattooists (APT). The APT has long supported a time-honored apprenticeship program and recognized the predatory nature of the tattoo schools popping up across the nation. Pat drafted a letter stating the APT's official stance on these schools and asked that I present it to the Kansas Board of Cosmetology as a director of the Alliance of Professional Tattooists. (Interestingly, the organizer of the school also contacted the APT asking for their support several months prior. Needless to say, he did not receive it.)

With support on both the national and local front I turned to converting my market survey into a market study, enlisting the help of two close friends: one with his Masters in Business Administration and the other with his Masters in Public Administration. The MBA confirmed what I already knew: the school had a flawed business model based upon an unsustainable "want" instead of a

defined “need,” which would derail a stable and responsibly-growing body arts profession. The MPA confirmed the economic impact of a flood of novice tattooers every twelve weeks would undermine the economic viability of the local body arts economy.

When the time came for me to make my presentation to the board I had a well-constructed plan showing support of both the national and local body art industries. I attacked the presented “needs” declared by the school. I reminded the state of their mandated instructor-to-student ratio of one-to-one. I presented the market study that highlighted legitimate concerns of business viability and its economic impact. I made reference to Arkansas’s unreasonable and ill-informed body arts legislation—in response to the television show *Reality Ink*—that adversely affected its growing body arts economy. This left, I stated, only one reason to have a body art school: the financial gain of the operator. Opposed by every licensed practitioner within a two hour drive, and with the school facing eminent denial, the program proposal was retracted.

Shortly after making the presentation, the position of body arts representative on the Kansas Board of Cosmetology became vacant. I was approached by members of the Board, a past body arts representative, and other body art practitioners and asked to serve the public, the state, and my profession. I took the call; my term runs until 2013.

During my time on the board I have been lucky enough to see how laws and regulations are crafted and how they are defeated—often not over their lack of merit but just out of political chicanery. Whenever I was asked by the executive director, the legal advisor, or an elected official what kind of regulations I would like to see for the body arts industry I always replied, “None. I don’t want any outside regulation of my industry.” They always seemed taken aback, until I continued by saying, “Since there is outside regulation already in effect which is not going away, I would like to see that the regulations are reasonable.” In my time as a director, I’ve learned ways to help wade through the morass of bureaucracy to influence the decision in your favor.

- If you read how laws and regulations are formed, you will always find references to economic impact and feasibility. Look at each of those from every possible side of problem: existing business, established consumer, new business, new consumer, regulating authority, tax base, registration fees, inspection fees, travel costs, startup costs, capital investments, depreciation, market share, etc.
- If you provide a cost on any line, expect to be asked how you came up with that number. Don’t let them leave you looking uninformed by becoming flummoxed or defensive. Humbly state you are a body arts practitioner, not a politician, lawyer, or business mogul, and you have thought as far as you can in determining the numbers assigned to the cost—then ask them how they would determine it. This says, “Yes, I know I am not as trained as you in this field but I am doing the best I can—and I won’t let you walk over me.”
- As Bill Hannong demonstrates in his *Legislation in the Tattoo Industry* seminar at the National Tattoo Association Convention every year, dress conservatively for your presentation. The flamboyance which is so often a social and economic indicator in our profession is like a circus sideshow to legislators. This destroys your credibility, and no matter how well-constructed and presented your information is, they will be thinking only about your appearance.
- Rally support. Typically, only one out of every ten people who say they will attend a political function actually show up. Collect a core group you know will attend; carpool if necessary. Encourage them to rock their ink and piercings so they are easily recognized as body art professionals.
- Behave as a professional to everyone walking past. Make sure you have the roster of your organization, testimonial letters, and handouts showing support for your cause. Your group should be approachable and well-behaved; no

grumbling, booing, or cheering is going to win a decision in your favor. We are a professional industry and should present ourselves to the licensing authorities as such.

- This year is an election year. Politicians love voters. Politicians make laws regulating our industry. How many people walk into your studio a year? How many are registered voters? How can we use this to our advantage with the least amount of effort? Typically, one in four people who walk through your door will get tattooed. That one client will bring an entourage of at least two other people when they are tattooed. If you average 150 procedures a month, the math shows 900 people entering your shop—and those are a lot of potential votes. Where I live our voter turnout is terribly low, and as little as 35 votes can determine a seat. Get a fish tank, bowl, or barrel and have those unregistered voters coming through your door fill out a voter registration application, then toss their names into the tank for a chance to win a free tattoo or piercing. Keep a roster of those who you sign up. If they are already registered, have them show you their voter registration card and put their names in the tank, too. Call the local TV stations and let them know what you are doing. Remember: you are not buying a vote with a chance to win a free tattoo or piercing, you are simply encouraging participation in our democratic process. Make the drawing the day voter registration closes and try to get the TV station out there again to cover it. (Hell, have the reporter draw it live on the air.)

The one thing you should take away from this article is this: be an active participant in your industry. We are going to be regulated. If the people making the regulations aren’t from our industry—and they usually aren’t—they will base their decisions on what they think they know. Get involved to help them make reasonable and informed regulations which will sustain—and not constrict or dilute—our livelihood. **P**

STEP-DOWN THREADING



RYAN OUELLETTE

Precision Body Arts
Nashua, NH

[Author's note: This article is not meant to promote the use of step-down threading over internally threaded jewelry. It is intended to discuss the design of a jewelry type already in use by a segment of our industry. Don't shoot the messenger!]

attended my first APP Conference in 2002, and one of the first things I wanted to change when I came back home was my studio's jewelry. After coming back from Las Vegas I ordered all internally threaded jewelry; that was a big jump in quality for me. Unfortunately, it was such an increase

during a transfer—can cause additional damage to tissue which may result in several complications during healing. Also, when changing or inserting standard externally-threaded items into healing piercings, additional damage to the tissue can occur.

During the initial piercing, step-down threads are covered by the needle. But what happens when you need to change the jewelry afterward? One step-down manufacturer created step-down-specific tapers with a hollowed out section to accommodate the threading. This works for both jewelry removal and insertion, avoiding the possible tissue damage that can occur from the exposed threads—particularly with unhealed piercings.

One of the more common arguments I hear against step-down is that changing the jewelry too soon (without the use of a step-down taper) can cause the same damage as with externally threaded jewelry. On that point I agree, but the same argument can be made about changing most unhealed piercings to externally-threaded jewelry too soon—regardless of what jewelry was initially installed. Other criticisms include the fact that, due to manufacturing inconsistencies, occasionally step-down threading might not fully fit into a needle of the same gauge as the jewelry. The frequency of this problem is low overall, but not uncommon. This requires anything from the use of a step-down taper for transfer to replacing the jewelry entirely. Other complications—such as posts and ends not fitting perfectly, or cross threading—occur at a similar rate to that of other externally-threaded jewelry, and

Switching to all internally-threaded and threadless jewelry was one of the best things I have done in my studio. It actually increased my profits rather than reduced them.

Few issues cause more polarization between piercers—and APP members—than the debate over internally versus externally threaded jewelry. As a member of the Association of Professional Piercers, I only use internally threaded and/or threadless¹ jewelry for initial piercings,² but like most piercers, I didn't start out that way. I started piercing in the mid-nineties when an internally threaded barbell cost twenty to thirty dollars wholesale. At the time, externally threaded jewelry was my only financial option, and when I opened my own studio in the fall of 2000 it was with externally threaded stock. I am not proud to admit it, but I don't gloss over the truth when I talk to others about the steps I have made through the years to improve my work. I

in my overhead that I could not maintain its re-supply for long. I started looking for alternatives to standard external threading and what I found was a new—at the time—jewelry option: “step-down” threading.

For those of you who are not already familiar with step-down threading: on barbells, curved barbells, labret posts, and circular barbells the exposed external threads are smaller in diameter than the post. This allows you to insert 14-gauge step-down threading completely into a 14-gauge needle, preventing the threads from being exposed during a jewelry transfer after piercing. Standard externally threaded jewelry has exposed threads that are the same diameter as the post and will not fit inside a needle of the same gauge. Standard external threading—when exposed

1. When the terms “threadless” or “threadless jewelry” are used in this article it is in reference to the snap-together threadless system introduced and patented by NeoMetal, Inc. This system is currently in wide use by body piercers. More at neometal.com.
2. All APP members working as body piercers agree to abide by the APP's Minimum Standards for Jewelry for Initial Piercings, which specifies, “All threaded or press-fit jewelry must have internal tapping (no threads on posts).” For more information, go to safepiercing.org/join-the-app/jewelry-standards.

I used step-down jewelry in my shop for years, but always with a focus on growing from that foundation to a larger, internally-threaded and threadless jewelry selection.



Internally threaded jewelry, courtesy Anatometal.



Step-down and external threading



Step-down threading, courtesy Blue Mountain Steel

can typically be resolved by simply having a few spare parts on hand.³

At this time, few companies are making body jewelry with step-down threading, and quality and materials vary greatly from one company to another. One of the more widely used companies now making step-down threaded jewelry is Blue Mountain Steel of California. Blue Mountain makes all of their jewelry in the USA with either ASTM F138 Steel Alloy for Surgical Implant Applications or ASTM F136 Titanium Alloy for Surgical Implant Applications.⁴ They have been producing and selling their step-down EZ Pierce™ line as well as standard 1.2mm internally threaded jewelry for over ten years. Metal Mafia also recently began carrying their own line of step-down threaded jewelry, but it is manufactured in Asia rather than the United States and the steel is not ASTM F138 compliant. When contacted, a sales representative from Metal Mafia simply

stated their products were made with 316L steel equal in quality to their other lines of steel jewelry. Due to lower than expected demand, Metal Mafia is now discontinuing its step-down threaded jewelry line.

Differences between manufacturers aside, step-down has its own inherent benefits and drawbacks. The benefits are geared more towards price and ease of use. Step-down jewelry is slightly higher-priced than external jewelry and a fair amount lower than internally threaded jewelry of a similar material quality. A large factor when considering step-down is your operating budget. If you can afford an internally threaded (or threadless) line in your studio I highly encourage you to move in that direction. Switching to all internally-threaded and threadless jewelry was one of the best things I have done in my studio. It actually increased my profits rather than reduced them. If your studio cannot afford to be fully internal/

threadless, then step-down jewelry is, in my opinion, a preferable alternative to standard external threading. When using externally threaded jewelry for initial piercings, you basically have two options: up-size your needles during piercing to hide the exposed threads or use the same size needle and have threads exposed during the jewelry transfer. (Obviously, neither are preferred.)⁵ The design of step-down threading allows you to use the same gauge needle as your jewelry while fully covering the threading. This not only makes for increased comfort for your client and reduced tissue damage, but it can also help a less experienced piercer make a smooth jewelry transfer. Earlier in my career I had occasional transfer issues, and step-down jewelry helped to improve my confidence in that area.

I used step-down jewelry in my shop for years, but always with a focus on growing from that foundation to a larger,

-
3. One issue not covered in the scope of this article is that external threaded jewelry does not seal properly when screwed together. External thread tolerances tend to be larger, and threading gap and size inside the opening invites a larger quantity of contamination to colonize the interior volume. Step-down is not at all apart from this, and the fluid contamination inside the threading is often a greater risk for pathogens than properly countersunk internally threaded and threadless jewelry.
 4. These are criteria from the American Society of Testing and Materials regarding steel and titanium alloys suitable for use in surgical implants. Again, see safepiercing.org/join-the-app/jewelry-standards for more information.
 5. These are the options available for piercers working in the U.S. since it is not legal to use a catheter with a plastic sleeve for insertion in the United States.



internally-threaded and threadless jewelry selection. Since the step-down company I purchased from made internally threaded jewelry as well, it was a very easy transition. I was using standard sizes in 16 and 14 gauge step-down for my most common piercings. At the same time, I carried internally threaded titanium options for more fickle piercings like navel, surface, and genital piercings, as well as anything 12 gauge and thicker. With the financial flexibility step-down gave me, I began to expand into other internally threaded and threadless options from various companies. My region has its fair share of lower-end studios, and being able to offer better jewelry without an inflated price point meant I could maintain a larger market share. In turn, I was able to slowly build up the overall quality of my jewelry selection and studio.

While preparing this article I spoke with piercers of varying backgrounds and experience levels. Switching your studio to only internal threading—and complying with APP membership criteria—can be an intimidating task for many piercers. Those

To be clear: internally threaded and threadless jewelry is the superior choice by APP and most industry standards, but step-down threading on jewelry is a viable improvement over standard externally threaded alternatives.

stuck working with external saw step-down as a way to make improvements towards higher standards without the immediate monetary investment of internal jewelry. I anticipate some criticism of this article from more experienced piercers, for those who already work with 100% internal or threadless will see step-down threading as decidedly inferior. An honest, open discourse is an important part of improving our industry as a whole. To be clear: internally threaded and threadless jewelry is the superior choice by APP and most industry standards, but step-down threading on jewelry is a viable

improvement over standard externally threaded alternatives.

For some piercers and shops, it takes many steps to achieve Association of Professional Piercers' standards; it took me ten years of operating my own studio before I fully met them myself. Jewelry, like any aspect of our industry, has many levels of quality. Step-down jewelry has its place as a stepping stone for piercers who are looking for something better than standard external threading. It can help on the way toward piercing exclusively with internally threaded or threadless jewelry—and becoming a member of the APP.⁶ P

6. The reality is that a very small percentage of piercers use internally-threaded jewelry—and this number is even smaller outside the U.S.

Even though the APP membership voted to adopt the original APP's Minimum Standards for Jewelry for Initial Piercings, the organization remains sensitive to why and for whom the policy for internally threaded jewelry was created in the first place—and is realistic that there are piercers worldwide with different piercing techniques and tools who maintain standards equal to those of our membership. Piercers working outside of North America are encouraged to address this issue in a fashion appropriate to their area.

For more information on jewelry threading from the APP, go to safepiercing.org/publications/brochures/initial-jewelry/

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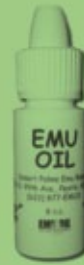
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OREGON BODY ART REGULATIONS



CHRISTINA SHULL
High Priestess Piercing
Roseburg, OR

When Oregon piercers rang in 2012, we welcomed more than the new year. January 1 was the day that Oregon's new body art regulations took effect. Never again will a piercing license be issued without proof of competency. That's right; Oregon now requires a passing score on both a written and practical exam before licensure!

If you get the chance to read the new Oregon regulations you may want to, as they could be coming to your area in the future.

The new higher standards were a satisfying end to a journey that was—at times—quite stressful. Concerned state officials and legislators passed House Bill 2013 with the intent to create standards for the training and education of professional body piercers. Most piercers supported these changes, as a piercing license had been previously obtained with only certifications for First Aid and CPR, Bloodborne Pathogens training, a GED or high-school diploma, a small application fee, and some form of paperwork stating that the applicant had training regarding aftercare. The absence of educational and training requirements, compounded

with a deep concern about “emerging practices”—such as single-point piercing, genital piercing, scarification, and dermal implants—pushed the legislature to action.

With a serious concern for public health and safety, the previous board (governing tattooing, permanent cosmetics, and electrology) was abolished and a new, all-encompassing Board of Body Art Practitioners was created to take effect at the start of 2012. With new regulations slated to be written and approved by January 1, a subcommittee was assembled to advise the Oregon Health Licensing Agency (OHLA). While the subcommittee started off a bit shaky, slight changes were made after which three educated and responsible piercers helped guide the rule-writing process. The APP was well represented, with two of the three subcommittee members being current business members. In the new regulations:

- The APP's Procedure Manual is required reading during training to become a licensed body piercer. It is also cited as a reference for written examination questions and as a reference for “best industry practices.”
- The Association of Professional Piercers is listed in the definitions.
- The APP's *Standards for Jewelry for Initial Piercings* has been adopted into the new regulations and are credited as such.

These new regulations include not just the jewelry materials standards, *but specify internal threading for all threaded jewelry*. With public health and safety as the focus of the new regulations, state officials were very receptive to the importance of jewelry standards as crucial to minimizing metal allergies and sensitivities, as well as reducing unnecessary trauma to the initial piercing and providing the best materials for quick healing.

Public safety was the driving force of the new training standards:

- Both the trainee and the supervisor must be approved by OHLA before starting their training. The supervisor must have a minimum of five years of piercing experience; prove competence by passing the written and practical exams; and, if approved to train, be registered as the educator for the designated student. Shortcomings in training presented during the written and/or practical exam at the time of attempted licensure will be noted and the supervisor will be held accountable.
- A minimum of 1150 training hours are required before a license can be obtained. This is broken up into 250 theory training hours and 900 practical training hours. On state-required training tracking forms, the student must document a minimum of 100 observed procedures, 100 assisted procedures, and 200 completed procedures under direct supervision.
- Upon completion of the training program, the trainee must pass the written and practical exam before receiving a standard body piercing license.

The new regulations look promising and many of us are hopeful, but it will take time to see how well this works. As of January 13, the Oregon Health Licensing Agency has been contacted by three other states who are interested in adopting similar regulations. If you get the chance to read the new Oregon regulations you may want to, as they could be coming to your area in the future.

For links to the new regulations, updated statutes, and information about the board of body art practitioners, go to: oregon.gov/OHLA/BAP/laws_rules.shtml **P**



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(FULL CLASS DESCRIPTIONS AND REGISTRATION INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT SAFEPIERCING.ORG.)

SUNDAY, JUNE 17TH

6:00-9:00

On-Site Registration and Check-In for Pre-Registrants and Vendors

MONDAY, JUNE 18TH

8:00-9:00

Yoga

8:00- 5:00

On-Site Registration and Check-In for Pre-Registrants and Vendors

9:00-9:30

Orientation
Facilitator: Derek Lowe

9:30-10:30

Mentor Program Kick-Off
Facilitator/Coordinator: Ryan Ouellette

11:00-12:00

Vendor Meeting
Facilitators: APP Board Members/ Luis Garcia

10:45-12:45

Body Anatomy for Safe and Successful Piercings
Instructors: Elayne Angel & Dr. Jack Ward

11:00-1:30

Studio Documentation
Instructors: Rick Frueh & David Vidra

11:30-12:30

Building Clientele Through Customer Service
Instructors: William Spencer & Courtney Jane Maxwell

1:00-3:30

Sterilization and Piercing Room Aseptic Technique (#1)
Instructors: Varied

1:45-3:15

Initial Jewelry Size & Style
Instructor: John C. Johnson

1:00-5:00

Expo Floor: Vendor Move in

1:45-3:15

Practical Usage: Statim
Instructors: Brian Skellie & Chris Glunt

3:45-4:45

Roundtable Discussion: Professional Netiquette
Facilitator: Jef Saunders

3:45-7:45

Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP)
Instructors: David Vidra & Miro Hernandez

4:45-7:15

Sterilization and Piercing Room Aseptic Technique (#2)
Instructors: Varied

5:00-8:00

Expo Floor: Vendor Setup

5:00-6:30

Writing a Business Plan
Instructors John Johnson & Kat Wickersham

5:30-6:30

Friends of Bill W. Meeting

8:00-MIDNIGHT

Opening Party

TUESDAY, JUNE 19TH

8:00-9:00

Yoga

8:00-11:00

Expo Floor Move In & Set-Up

9:00- 7:30

On-Site Registration and Check-In for Pre-Registrants and Vendors

10:00-12:00

The Ins and Outs of Male Genital Piercings
Instructor: Elayne Angel

10:00-12:00

Basic Steel & Titanium
Instructor: Jason King

10:00-12:30

Sterilization and Piercing Room Aseptic Technique (#3)
Instructors: Varied

12:00-1:00

Exposition Opens To APP Members Only

12:30-1:30

Health Inspectors Meeting

1:00-8:00

Exposition Opens To All Attendees

1:00-3:30

Sterilization and Piercing Room Aseptic Technique (#4)
Instructors: Varied

1:45-3:15

Advanced Materials Standards & Applications
Instructors: Brian Skellie & Chris Glunt

1:45-3:15

Aftercare Series #1: Wound Healing Dynamics
Instructors: David Vidra

4:15-5:45

Aftercare Series #2: Client Home Care
Instructor: Steve Joyner

4:15-6:15

Energy Movement & Grounding
Instructors: Fakir, John C. Johnson, & Nick Wolak

4:15-6:45

Sterilization and Piercing Room Aseptic Technique (#5)
Instructors: Varied

6:45-7:45

Roundtable Discussion: Legislation: How it Affects You, Your Shop & Our Industry
Facilitators: Mike Martin & Steve Joyner

7:15-9:45

Sterilization and Piercing Room Aseptic Technique (#6)
Instructors: Varied

8:00

Exposition Closes

8:00-10:00

Evolution of Modern Suspension: Failures & Advancements
Instructor: Allen Falkner

8:30-10:00

Anodizing is Awesome!
Instructor: Brian Skellie

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 8TH

8:00-9:00

Yoga

9:00- 8:00

On-Site Registration and Check-In for Pre-Registrants

10:00-11:00
Modern Surface Piercing and Jewelry: Theory & Hands-On Technique (#1)

Instructors: Didier Suarez, Luis Garcia, & Sarvas Berry

10:00-11:00
Roundtable Discussion: Public Speaking

Facilitator: Jesse Villemaire

10:00-11:30
Jewelry Concept & Design
Instructors: Jimmy Buddha, Janella Brooks, & Ana Paula Escalante

10:00-12:30
Oro-Facial Anatomy for Safe & Successful Piercings

Instructors: Betsy Reynolds & Elayne Angel

11:45-12:45
Roundtable Discussion: Becoming an Instructor
Facilitator: John C. Johnson

11:45-12:45
Roundtable Discussion: Managing Difficult Clients
Facilitator: Bethra Szumski

11:45-12:45
Modern Surface Piercing and Jewelry: Theory & Hands-On Technique (#2)
Instructors: Didier Suarez, Luis Garcia, & Sarvas Berry

12:00-6:00
Exposition Open

1:00-3:00
History of Contemporary Piercing
Instructors: Charles Gatewood & Fakir

1:30-2:30
Modern Surface Piercing and Jewelry: Theory & Hands-On Technique (#3)
Instructors: Didier Suarez, Luis Garcia, & Sarvas Berry

3:15-4:15
New Attendee Meeting
Facilitators: Ryan Ouellette & Mentors

3:15-4:15
International Meeting
Facilitator: Brian Skellie

3:15-4:15
Modern Surface Piercing and Jewelry: Theory & Hands-On Technique (#4)
Instructors: Didier Suarez, Luis Garcia, & Sarvas Berry

4:30-6:00
Medical Risk Assessment
Instructors: David Vidra & Derek Lowe

4:30-6:00
Glass
Instructor: Jason Pfohl

5:00-7:00
Members Technique Workshop (Members Only)
Facilitator: Bethra Szumski

6:00
Exposition Floor Closes

6:30-8:00
Knowing and Selling Stone
Instructors: Leo Ziebol & Kate Ziebol

7:30-8:00
Members Mingle

8:00-9:00
Members Meeting

8:30-10:00
Movie Night
Presenter: Charles Gatewood

THURSDAY, JUNE 21ST

8:00-9:00
Yoga

9:00- 5:30
On-Site Registration

10:00-11:30
Small Business Financial Basics
Instructor: Francine Prophet, CPA

10:00-11:30
Minimizing Tools: An Intro to Tool-Less Piercing (#1)
Instructors: Ed Chavarria, Chris Glunt, Brian Skellie, & Ron Garza

10:00-12:00
Piercing Rituals of the Plains Native Americans: An In-Depth, Pan-Tribal Exploration of the Histories and Variations of the Sun Dance
Instructor: Paul King

10:00-5:00
Exposition Opens

12:00-1:30
Minimizing Tools: An Intro to Tool-Less Piercing (#2)
Instructors: Ed Chavarria, Chris Glunt, Brian Skellie, & Ron Garza

12:15-2:15
Ear Projects (Members Only)
Instructors: Noah Babcock & Luis Garcia

12:15-3:15
CPR
Instructors: Red Cross

1:45-3:15
Minimizing Tools: An Intro to Tool-Less Piercing (#3)
Instructors: Ed Chavarria, Chris Glunt, Brian Skellie, & Ron Garza

1:45-3:15
Stretching: Technique, Tools, & Materials
Instructors: Sarvas Berry & Nick Wolak

3:30-4:30
DIY Displays and Jewelry Marketing
Instructor: Cyrus Rhine

3:30-4:30
Roundtable Discussion: Marking Tips & Tricks
Facilitator: Georg Birns

3:30-5:00
Exploration of the "O" Needle
Instructors: Luis Garcia & Maria Pinto

3:30-5:00
Minimizing Tools: An Intro to Tool-Less Piercing (#4)
Instructors: Ed Chavarria, Chris Glunt, Brian Skellie, & Ron Garza

5:15-6:15
Roundtable Discussion: Creative Marketing
Facilitator: William Spencer

5:15-6:45
Minimizing Tools: An Intro to Tool-Less Piercing (#5)
Instructors: Ed Chavarria, Chris Glunt, Brian Skellie, & Ron Garza

6:00
Exposition Closes

8:00-MIDNIGHT
Banquet Dinner

FRIDAY, JUNE 22ND

9:00- 2:00
Registration Desk

10:00-2:00
Exposition Open

10:00-11:30
Aftercare Series #3: Troubleshooting & Scars
Instructor: Bethra Szumski

10:30-1:30
First Aid
Instructors: Red Cross

2:00
Exposition Closes



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TATTOOISTS & PIERCERS ASSOCIATION OF BRAZIL

BRIAN SKELLIE

One of the most fulfilling parts of my job as the APP's International Liaison is learning and sharing a common love for body jewelry with body artists from a diverse set of social and cultural backgrounds. Visiting studios and participating in events brings the professional and personal sides of this field together for me, and I rarely turn down the opportunity to enjoy a conversation or have a workshop with my peers. On the occasions that I can aid fellow body piercers in the cause of furthering our educations, I prefer to work with not-for-profit organizations, such as the APP, APTPI, and BMXnet. Remaining open to educational possibilities continually improves our professional abilities.

Point readers may recall an article about São Paulo's statewide union of body art professionals (SETAP), formed in 2001, and the resulting changes in the Brazilian body piercing zeitgeist. [Issue #54.] In the spring following the article's publication, the APP was approached with an outreach opportunity by both the author, Ronaldo "Piercer Snoopy" Sampaio of São Paulo, and Marcela Guardioli in Blumenau.

It seemed that many Brazilian body artists were inspired by the notion of the shared knowledge and valuable interaction with fellow professionals that occurs at APP Conferences, and it made sense to encourage a local version. The APP has previously held non-U.S.-based conferences and educational seminars in Amsterdam and Mexico City, and since then has focused international efforts on sharing speakers and materials with associated organizations who host events in their home territories.

In December of 2011, our Brazilian colleagues held an educational congress in Balneário Camboriú. At the event, after I gave a presentation on what the APP is all about (translated by Andres Meyer), they announced the formation of a new national body art organization: Associação dos Tatuadores & Perfuradores do Brasil (ATPB), the Tattooists & Piercers Association of Brazil. As both a cultural and professional entity, ATPB aims to unite body artists in education and health in the same manner as our APP.

For the event, several of us who could not be present in person were able to interact by

videoconference: Andre Fernandes, Mauricio "Banana" Torres, and I each Skyped with the attendees. They were kind enough to welcome me as a participant and representative of the APP, and I remain disappointed that I was not able to attend in person, after being thwarted by bureaucratic complications at the Brazilian border that resulted in my return home.

In discussing the experiences of the other speakers and attendees, I believe strongly that if the ATPB continues it will be able to provide valuable, needed resources to the Brazilian and fellow South American body art professionals and enthusiasts. We welcome them to apply as Corporate Associate members and share in our mission to inform.



A.T.P.B.

COMPANHEIRISMO, ÉTICA E ATITUDE!

ANDRÉ FERNANDES AND EMILIA DE ARATANHA

On December 10, 2011, history was made in the body piercing community of Brazil. This was the date of the first educational congress for South American piercers, an event which brought together experienced local and international professionals to discuss the politics and techniques of their field.

The event suffered some blows when three of the speakers were unable to attend, Mauricio Torres of Chile, Brian Skellie of the USA, and André Fernandes of São Paulo. After a quick meeting, the organization made arrangements so that Skellie and Fernandes were on Skype during the presentation, while Torres made himself present through pre-recorded videos. Because of this, the schedule as originally proposed had to be changed.

The first speaker was André Meyer, one of the country's pioneering piercers, who gave an overview of the anthropological origins of the body piercing culture, ranging from old customs in India to the gay fetish culture of the 1980s and 1990s. This is an important subject, especially because a great number of professionals here have

no idea where their profession originated.

Following Meyer's lecture, Matias Tafel (Argentina) and Ronaldo Sampaio (São Paulo) presented a lecture together on the physiology of skin and techniques from basic piercing to advanced. The topic of sterilization was covered by the videos sent by Torres. Even though all the piercers used standard sterilization procedures, it was most interesting was to contrast the different styles and methodology of each professional.

The lectures which took place over Skype had to be accommodated while other programmed events took place. Unfortunately, as a consequence of different time zones and personal schedules, there was no possible way to re-arrange the lectures for better flow. The first virtual

speaker was André Fernandes, another piercing pioneer, especially regarding teaching. He talked about his personal experiences and unique view of the field. During the lectures, most of the public shared their views and experiences, which made the whole thing even richer. Shortly afterwards, Brian Skellie, the APP's International Liaison, talked about his experiences working with the organization and how they overcame the problems they faced through the years.

The impossibility of rearranging the schedules resulted in a limited time for this lecture. This was the biggest loss the congress had; the group was anxious to hear what he had to say, since building such an organization is one of the goals of its members. However, a fruitful discussion took place, and everyone present was able to make the best of it. Brazil has had other organizations fight the battle to educate society about body piercing culture, but despite several accomplishments, it was never a national and consistent effort.

After that, Tafel and Sampaio finished their lectures on technique, and the last session of the night began. Luciano Iritsu (São Paulo) talked about what is closest to his heart, the intersection of body suspension and art. It was a heavy subject



for the end of a long day, but it was received with great interest.

The second day was mostly dedicated to networking and practical lessons. It was surprising to see that there were people from all over the country, and even some from other South American countries. On the workshops, the growing interest on learning how to apply a surface anchor was noteworthy.

In the end, even with some bumps in the road, the congress was a success. It helped the organization to realize that the road ahead is going to be more difficult than imagined; but still viable. The most important thing to see was that there is an actual demand from the community for an event like this. If the organization efforts continue, a national professional piercers association of Brazil won't be just a dream.

MATIAS TAFEL

The first South American piercers meeting took place on December 10, 2011, in Camboriu, Brazil. It was organized by Ronaldo "Piercer Snoopy" Sampaio, and I was invited to give a few classes. There were over 60 attendees, from Brazil, Argentina, and other South American countries. The two-day event was held inside the BC Ink Tattoo Festival convention. The first day

consisted of a few classes where theory and a list of other topics were debated. On the second day, the theory discussed the day before was put into practice. This event was organized in order to bring together the most prestigious professionals in the South American body piercing and body modification world, along with the participation of an APP board member, Brian Skellie.

The schedule was kicked off by Andre Meyer, who developed a class focused on the anthropology of the native South American tribes' body ornaments and the history of the modern body piercing. Next, I started my first section of the day, next to Ronaldo Sampaio. We focused on bloodborne pathogens and skin physiology. Mauricio "Banana" Torres followed us with a videoconference about the preparation of the work table (setup preparation) and proper hand sanitation. Next, André Fernandes presented a videoconference on the history of body piercing in Brazil and its trajectory. Finally, after a short lunch recess, I started my final section, also with Ronaldo Sampaio, about surface piercing and surface anchors.

Once we were finished, Brian Skellie's classes were going to take place. He was going to work with a very interesting list of topics but, unfortunately, due to complications unforeseen

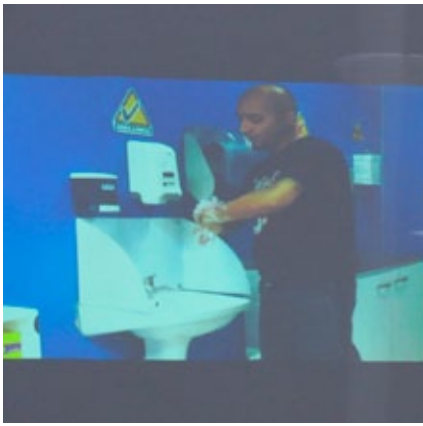
by the event planners, he was not able to attend. However, he participated in a videoconference talking about the APP, its work in the United States, and the support it gives to other piercer and tattoo artist organizations worldwide. That was one of the objectives of this meeting: to gain APP support to become a proper organization so we can regulate and legislate our profession.

The first day was finished by Luciano Iritsu discussing body suspension, from its history to its most renowned artists; he gave a very artistic point of view on this art form. After many hours of classes, the next day consisted of a series of demonstrations of the different techniques discussed in the classes. The point of these were for the attendants to better comprehend the theory by watching how it's done step by step.

To give a perfect ending to the two day event, the demonstrations were followed by a series of body suspensions to close the BC Ink Tattoo Festival.

MARCELA GUARDIOLA

First of all, I would like to thank the APP for all their attention and help at the beginning of this project. It's extremely important that events like this can happen in Brazil; we need innovation and people able to make a difference.



The seminar was a very important event for all attendees because we have never had so many professionals together in the same place willing to pass on their knowledge and exchange information, techniques, and experiences. We had the opportunity to learn about specific tools and techniques which, due to the difficulty of access, we had not previously known. Meeting so many people talking about the same subject, exchanging ideas and opinions, and discussing different points of view was very important, and all of us are grateful! Unfortunately, some speakers were not able to come, but even so, everything that happened at the event was still worthwhile.

Unfortunately, in Brazil some things still happen too slowly. I believe that a reliable association of professionals will be the key to our evolution. Collaborating with the government and health institutions in order to have access to specific courses in our area, as well as passing legislation, would not only challenge us, but also help in regulating and guiding the growth of our profession in a conscious, responsible, and safe way.

All of us are waiting anxiously for the next edition of the seminar!

ANDRE MEYER

For the first time in South America, at the amazing beach of Balneário Camboriú in the south of Brazil, we organized a meeting for professional piercers and body modification experts. Held in the downtown Sibara Hotel, just one block from clear water and white sands and surrounded by surf shops and massive discos, the gathering's guests were a mix of freaks.

On this summer weekend we had a great crowd of body art enthusiasts to share experiences and knowledge in an open-minded and friendly atmosphere. Attendees included fans and professionals from different states of Brazil as well as professionals from neighboring countries like Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Peru, and Bolivia, plus a few people from overseas, countries like Spain and England.

The meeting was organized by Ronaldo Sampaio from Sao Paulo, president of the ATPB, who invited Brian Skellie from APP International to share his knowledge with the crowd. Piercers from Argentina (Matias "Rata" Tafel), Chile (Mauricio Torres) and Brazil (André Fernandes, Luciano Iritsu, and I) were also invited to give classes from a South American perspective, based in our desire to create a common set of ethics and a safe way to

work with our tools and equipment. Body arts legislation in different states and countries was also discussed.

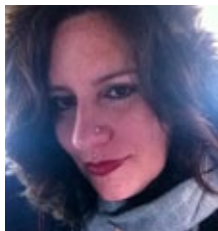
For 11 hours a day, over the course of two days, we shared information about anthropology, anatomy, biohazard safety, jewelry, bedside manner, techniques, and aftercare. Around 70 people watched the seminars with curiosity and attention.

The meeting was similar to the first APP event I attended in May of 1998 at the Hard Rock Casino, where only educational seminars were held. There I met a lot of professionals with the same intention: to learn about the safest way to work. At that time, just like in Camboriú, instead of a vendor expo, the crowd was selling jewelry and tools from piercer to piercer.

After the seminar we had some action in town like the free "suspension attack" party on the beach—we had the locals very surprised about our intentions—that was really an adventure in all forms. We hope to make it better next time, and we invite all APP members to join our event this year... just don't forget the Brazilian visa.

P.S. For more info, questions, or to view pictures, please visit: <http://www.piercer-snoopy.blogspot.com/2011/12/congresso-educativo-paraperfuradores.html>. **P**

PINTEREST AND THE TRIPLE FORWARD HELIX



BETHRA SZUMSKI

APP Secretary
Virtue and Vice
Atlanta, GA

Recently, an employee of CNN was explaining to me how social media has changed the way that information is exchanged worldwide, and how her organization is scrambling to make sense of it—and, more importantly, keep up with it. Because of the demographic of our customer base, many of us have a hard time maintaining our own online presence and that of our studio—even without paying attention to larger trends. But even those of us who aren't as “plugged-in” to the web have been witnessing a mini-phenomenon in our community: Over the last several weeks, all across the U.S., clients are walking into studios displaying, on their cell phones, the same black-and-white photo of an ear with three forward helix piercings.

The piercings in the picture were done by Christina Shull at High Priestess in Roseburg, Oregon, back in November 2008. She used three 18g ¼” Neometal threadless titanium press-fit posts with bezel-set CZs in graduated sizes. The client was a friend of one of the studio regulars. She had liked some of Christina's other ear projects, and the two came up with something neither had seen before.

But none of this is common knowledge—or even matters—to the people that have latched onto the image after seeing it online.

The photo was originally posted on Facebook, in color, and initially didn't receive any more attention than the rest of Christina's work. In the summer of 2011, Derek Lowe of Saint Sabrina's in Minneapolis performed a similar set of piercings based on the original and posted the image on Tumblr—and a buzz started to build. For a time, many studios reported both images occasionally being brought in by clients for duplication. The avalanche seems to have started after a version of the original image, cropped and in black-and-white, showed up on Pinterest and went



viral. As of this writing, the original post shows over 5100 “repins” (the Pinterest equivalent of sharing on Facebook or reblogging on Tumblr). Some studios are reporting up to a half-dozen requests per day, often accompanied by the same black-and-white photo pulled up on the client's mobile phone.

When I asked Derek about the phenomena, he wrote:

“...it is worth noting Chrissy's picture showing up on Pinterest specifically is important. It seems to me that if that picture hadn't shown up on Pinterest at the exact moment Pinterest began a meteoric rise in popularity, we wouldn't be seeing quite the same level of popularity we are now. Before Chrissy's hit Pinterest, a lot of piercers were saying they were seeing both mine and Chrissy's pictures come in to their studio. But, once hers hit Pinterest, that is the one that almost everyone is seeing, over and over.”

Over the last several weeks, all across the U.S., clients are walking into studios displaying, on their cell phones, the same black-and-white photo of an ear with three forward helix piercings.

What we do has always been affected by the popular media. From Alicia Silverstone in Aerosmith's music video for “Cryin” and Madonna's well-publicized navel piercing in the early nineties to Brittanaya's cheek piercings on MTV's “Rock of Love,” celebrity culture has always had an impact. But this is something entirely new. This client was no one famous; she was just an average person with a little imagination and faith in her piercer. We are now seeing a significant trend in piercing based entirely on the power of social networking. We're engaged in a completely new media, and it's going to be interesting to see where we go from here.

When asked about what happened to the client, Christina wrote: “I wish I knew if she still had it, but I haven't seen her in a couple of years now. I assume that she moved away.” I wonder if she knows?

[The post can still be seen on Pinterest, at [pinterest.com/pin/249457266829420525/](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/249457266829420525/).] P

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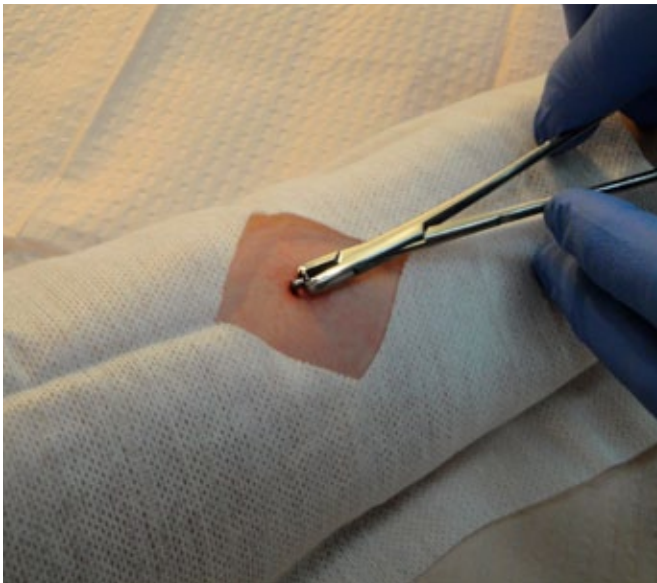
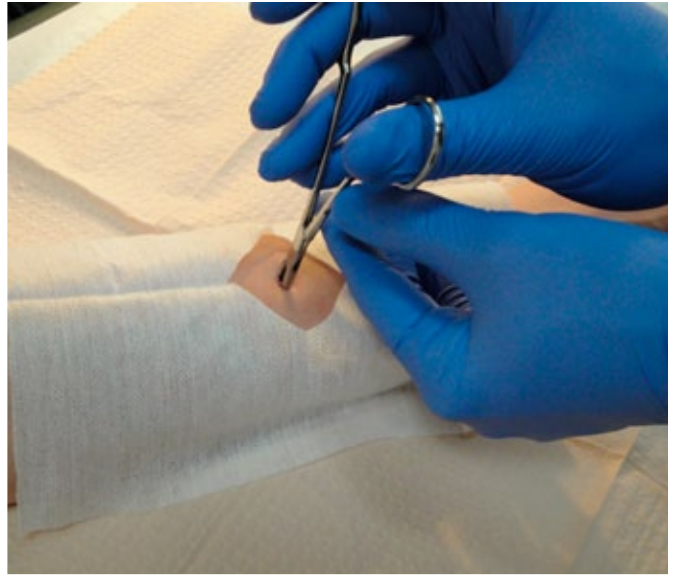
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SURFACE ANCHOR REMOVAL



JEF SAUNDERS
Rockstar Body Piercing
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Surface anchors, microdermals, dermal anchors or single-point piercings. Call them what you will, these newer piercings pose certain problems other piercings do not. My primary concern when I started performing this piercing was removal. After some tinkering, professional discussion and experience, I realized surface anchors are pretty easy to remove..

It wasn't too long after I had an anchor removed on myself that I received phone calls from two different clients who were in the hospital. Both had injuries from car accidents and the doctors and nurses had no idea how to remove their jewelry. I went to the hospital and removed the anchors while I explained to the staff what I was doing.

I felt like this "problem" was more of an opportunity; an opportunity to serve the pierced population—and hopefully persuade many skeptics in the medical industry that these piercings were safe, and were just different from what they were used to seeing. I saw the smear job single-point piercings received on the television show *The Doctors* and was impressed with the APP's response. I felt like I could respond in more of a "grassroots" way, and that this was a chance to help out the modification community.

I typed up a removal guide, and started sending emails and making calls to my local hospitals. Industrial Strength, LLC supplied anchor removal tools so that I could provide them to the hospitals I visited. The doctors, nurses and hospital employees I worked with were receptive and excited to discuss surface anchors, as well as piercings in general. I even got some clients out of it!

The following is text to the anchor removal guide I wrote and provided to my local hospitals. This is an ongoing project. I published it with a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial license, so feel free to use it as you see fit.

SURFACE ANCHOR REMOVAL

Single-point piercings are performed several different ways, and with a few differing jewelry options. They are performed all over the body and go by a variety of different names (surface anchors, dermal anchors and microdermals being the two most common).



▲ Photo courtesy Anatometal, patent pending.

DETERMINE IF THE JEWELRY IS AN ANCHOR

To remove them, it's important to first make sure they are actually surface anchors. A traditional surface piercing is one barbell underneath the skin, and is far easier to remove. Simply unscrew one end, clean the exposed end of debris with sterile water or saline, lubricate the end, and pull the other end out through the exit hole.

SURFACE ANCHOR STYLES

There are several different anchor styles. Unfortunately, most have holes in them for tissue to grow through. This may help the piercing from rejecting (though in my opinion it doesn't), but it does make the anchor harder to remove.

- Some anchors have very large holes to allow lots of tissue to grow through them, further complicating anchor removal.
- The best anchors, in my opinion, have no holes for tissue to grow through. They are easier to remove by far.

PARTS OF A SURFACE ANCHOR

- *Heel*: The short, back part of an anchor.
- *Foot*: The long front part of an anchor.
- *Post*: The portion of the anchor that connects the foot and heel (also known as the base) to the disc, gem or ball outside the skin.



PREPARING FOR A MEDICAL PROCEDURE



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REMOVAL WITH A DISC OR GEM ATTACHED

1. Attempt to figure out which way the anchor is oriented. The heel is the easy portion to remove, so finding which direction the foot is facing will tell you where the heel is.
2. Attach your anchor removal tool to the disc portion of the anchor.
3. If the gem or disc is too big to clamp the anchor removal tool down, feel free to wrap the tool with rubber bands.
4. Apply gentle pressure to the anchor removal tool pushing TOWARD the foot and pulling up from the heel. While doing this, pull the skin behind the heel firmly. The anchor should pop out very easily.
5. If there is tissue growth through a hole in the anchor, use a sharp instrument to cut it away. As a piercer, I usually use a thick needle. You may choose to use a scalpel blade.

REMOVAL WITH NO GEM OR BALL

1. If the gem has fallen off the anchor, but it is still visible through the skin, grab a threaded anchor tool.
2. Screw the tool into the anchor as securely as possible.
3. Repeat the same steps as before, putting pressure toward the foot and pulling up the heel, while pulling the skin back firmly from the heel.

NOTE:

Occasionally skin will have completely healed over the anchor. Before cutting the

jewelry out, you may try cutting a very small hole with a needle and trying the threaded anchor tool first.

We have had a lot of success using a 16 gauge piercing needle to allow us to re-thread the jewelry.

NEED MORE TOOLS?

The surface anchor removal tools you received today were donated by Rockstar Body Piercing and Industrial Strength Needles, LLC.

Industrial Strength has a lot of body jewelry tools and even has kits they have for hospitals. They can be reached at: Industrial Strength, LLC, www.isneedles.com / 1-877-667-4277 **P**

The Association of Professional Piercers finds it extremely important to avoid the use of terms such as "microdermal implant," "dermal implant," and even "dermal anchor" when discussing surface anchors.

Legislation prohibiting this form of body art has been enacted in some states because the procedure and jewelry have been described with these words, and also due to the use of instruments other than piercing needles to perform them.

By being consistent in steering clear of the terms "microdermal" and "implant" we will help to separate this simple and safe procedure from being confused with surgical procedures, transdermal implants, and other more extreme forms of body art.

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PEOPLE PIERCED AT UNAPPROVED NORTHEAST PARLOUR URGED TO GET TESTED

CALGARY HERALD

MATT MCCLURE

Alberta, Canada

[This article is reprinted from the February 2, 2012 Calgary Herald.]

CALGARY - Alberta's health authority was forced to issue a public warning for the fourth time in the past year, after discovering an unapproved piercing business or tattoo parlour operating under unsanitary conditions.

Public health officials appealed to the media for help Wednesday in informing clients of Avon Apna Jewellers that they may have been infected with blood-borne viruses such as hepatitis or HIV during an ear or body piercing performed at the business in northeast Calgary.

The timing of the advisory by Alberta Health Services — issued three months after public health officials discovered an infected individual with hepatitis had received a piercing at the jeweller and ordered owners Rashmi and Naresh Bhalla to close their business — is prompting questions about the health authority's abilities and vigilance.

Dr. David Swann, the Liberal health critic and a former medical officer of health, said the province needs to beef up its regulation of the piercing and tattoo industry to prevent life-threatening infections and avoid the expense of testing hundreds of customers.

"Prevention is worth a pound of cure," Swann said, "and these repeated incidents show the government is abdicating its responsibility to protect the health of Albertans."

Officials with AHS are now asking people who got a piercing at the business, at 5120 47th St. N.E. in the Westwinds Commercial Development, to call HealthLink and arrange for simple, confidential testing.

Similar appeals were issued last February to customers of an unapproved mobile tattoo operation in Lethbridge. In August there was a warning to people pierced at a Crownsnest Pass facility. In September advisories were issued to

patrons of tattoo operators in Wetaskiwin and Leduc.

In the latest incident, AHS officials said they learned in late October about the infected individual and the unapproved piercing facility.

A closure order issued Nov. 7, noted the jeweller's piercing gun was not being properly cleaned and disinfected between clients, a sink for operators to wash their hands was cluttered with dishes and no records of client names and addresses was being kept on site.

Lynne Navratil, a public health supervisor in the Calgary zone, told reporters the three-month delay in notifying the public was due to difficulties in learning if the business had or would supply details that would have allowed AHS to contact clients directly.

"The formal demands for information take some time and we have to give the operator some time to produce those records," Navratil said.

An AHS spokesman confirmed Wednesday that 23 charges under the Public Health Act have been laid against the owners.

Health and Wellness Minister Fred Horne was unavailable for comment, but a department spokesman said the public notification might have been done sooner.

"It did take three months, but the information is now out there," spokesman Andy Weiler said.

"It may be small solace, but the people who may have been involved with this location can now go and take the appropriate precautions."

AHS doesn't directly regulate piercing businesses or tattoo parlours, but under the conditions of their municipal licences they are required to be inspected by the health authority.

Navratil said AHS inspects the facilities it knows about three to four times a year because of the potential health risks they pose.

She urged customers to ask to see a business's

latest health inspection, but said it would be helpful if there was a legal requirement that those reports be posted prominently.

"The more that can be done to make the public aware of the fact that a facility is approved and inspected, the better it is," Navratil said.

An individual who answered the phone Wednesday at Avon Apna Jewellers asked the reporter to call back in five minutes.

Subsequent calls reached an answering service.

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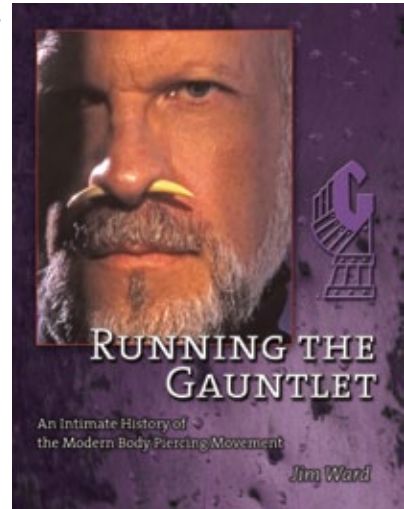
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR - ELAYNE ANGEL has been a professional piercer for more than 20 years and has performed over 40,000 piercings. She was awarded the President's Lifetime Achievement Award by the Association of Professional Piercers in 2006 and is a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

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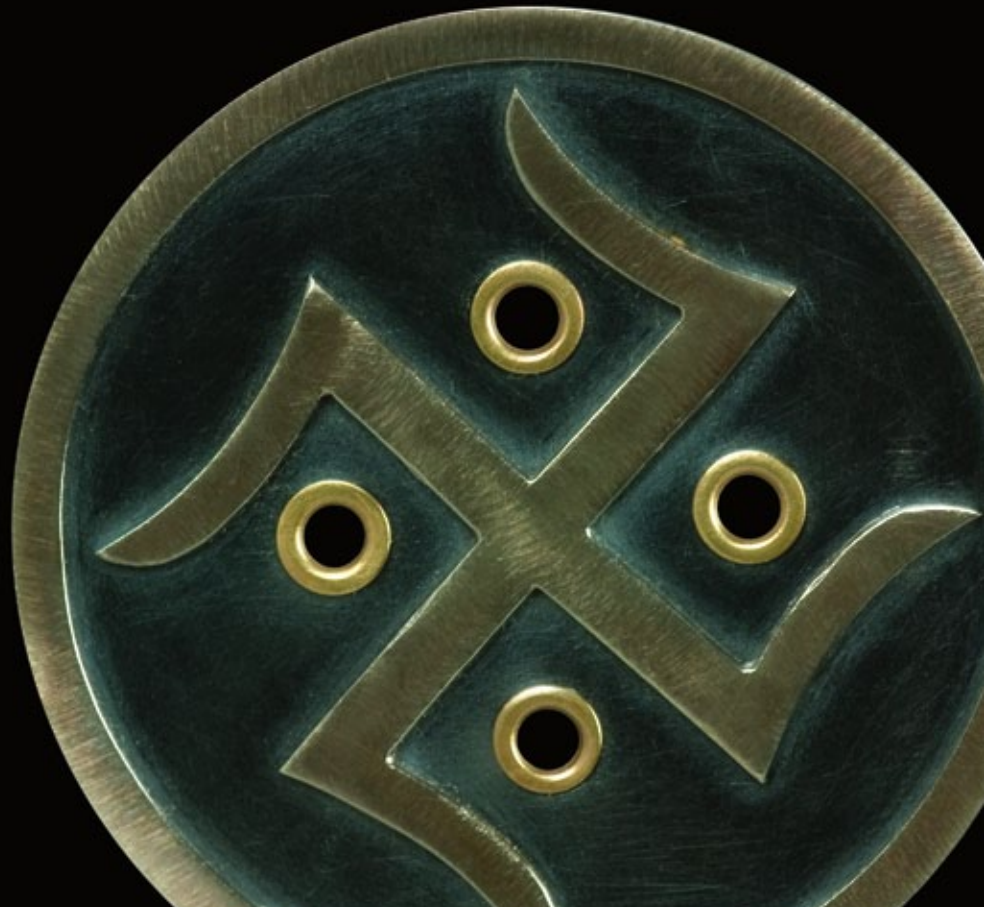
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THE CENTRAL TEXAS PIERCERS GROUP



E. G. JOHNSON

In The Skin Tattoo & Piercing
Victoria, TX

It was the question of the decade; the focal point of the whole World Wide Web. All around the globe people weighed the same problem. A choice was offered, the outcome of which would affect every social interaction from then on. How I would be perceived in the future would be a direct consequence of this decision: Do I stick with Facebook or jump over to Google+?

As I sat bathed in the ionizing glow of my computer monitor and puzzled this grand mystery, I noticed I had an invitation to a body modification learning forum on Facebook. I had participated in a couple of these, and usually they ended up with a moderator or member pummeling the group members with their “one true way” to do a particular procedure or technique—which then, of course, springboarded them into an “I am a modification god!” attitude, with their cliquish echo chamber singing hosannas in the background. After I buckled down my helmet and prepared to dive into a flame war, I clicked through and checked it out.

The first thing I noticed was that the member roster had a number of names I really respected in the industry. The threads were pertinent, and the conversation was very lively. The generalized griping and bellyaching was kept to minimum. No barrage of “hack shop down the street” photos assaulted me. I was very impressed with the level of professionalism, from both the members and the admins. I scrolled all the way down through the history and found the forum was started by Rick Frueh, the APP’s current Medical Liaison.

“I just started it because I got tired of censorship,” Rick told me many months later. “I would write a post on some of these other forums and then quickly find my comment deleted. So, I started my own and just didn’t censor anyone. I will add my opinion, but won’t just delete other people’s. Seems to be working so far.”

So I stuck with Facebook just to hang out in Rick’s Body Modification Learning Forum.

I was clam-level happy to converse with other professionals in a roundtable-style class that never seemed to end. I feared an intervention was brewing as it got to the point where I was checking the forum hourly any time I could get online. I just knew I’d be carted away to the social networking rehab center.

Right before the holidays arrived last year, Rick posted a simple message asking if there was any interest in a local piercer group meeting. A real life face-to-face with my peers without having to travel to Vegas? Sign me up! A round of enthusiastic affirmatives later, and the



Central Texas Piercers Group was underway.

Other local piercer groups have been organized in other cities, and these can provide a valuable resource for their members as they organize and make changes in our industry. We need new experiences in order to grow, both as people and as a community. I was excited to see who would be attending this group and what it would be all about.

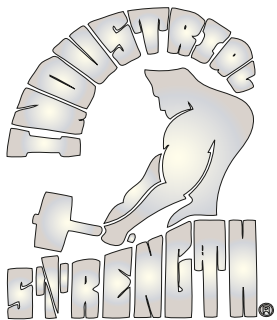
We agreed to meet at Rick’s shop early in the new year. A peaceful Sunday evening on 6th Street in Austin (meaning only a handful of screaming drunks capered about) found us gathered in the lobby of Industrial Primitives/Black Cat Tattoo. We were a motley band with experience levels ranging from apprentice to

over a decade behind a needle. I am happy to say that most of the faces were ones I remembered from one APP Conference or another.

The topic of conversation lingered for a long time on legislation and how to change it. With California’s Body Art Act and Oregon’s new standards, this was a concern for many of the piercers present. If they could do that in Oregon, we thought, we can get together to do that here—even though we are in the reddest of red states. Eventually, the dialog moved on to jewelry manufacturers, piercing techniques, and various industry esoterica. Once we got going we started laughing and sharing. The passion of the group broke through the awkward beginning stages, and we all saw something grand being born. The Central Texas Piercers Group was now a reality.

As the meeting wound down everyone made the rounds. Handshakes, hugs, and business cards were all passed around. We evacuated the lobby into the languid night air. As we each drifted back to our respective corners of the Lone Star State, we brought with us a commodity rarer than titanium at an ear piercing kiosk and more valuable than bleach in the midst of a MRSA outbreak: We had optimism. A strong group of people can come together and do things unthinkable for an individual. We got a taste of success that night. We have a hunger for more.

Thanks to all those who attended that first meeting: Rick Frueh, Ruth Wustenberg, and Lauren Hammock from Industrial Primitives (Austin); Daniel Howland from Amillion Tattoo (Austin); Dustin Allor from Diablo Organics (Austin); Zachary Bullard and Chadwick Jackson from Just The Tip (Denton); Benje Upton, Miro Hernandez, and Julie Moody from Dandyland (San Antonio); Summer Aker and Zeph Mullins from Art Ambush (Waco); Eric Grippe from The Crypt Tattoo Company (Arlington); Tonya Hansel from the Black Cap (San Marcos); James Guzman from Addiction (Killeen); and finally Sarah Hlavaty from In The Skin (Victoria). **P**



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