

THE POINT

ISSUE 60
FALL 2012

ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS



PIERCERS & THE WEB P. 6-9

INTERNET POSTING ETIQUETTE • SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PIERCERS • MAKING SAFE PIERCING VIRAL

APP CONFERENCE RETROSPECTIVE P. 16-30

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FROM THE EDITOR



ELAYNE ANGEL
APP President

The *Point* has gone through quite a number of changes since it was first launched as an undated newsletter in the mid 1990s. At that stage, it was little more than a half-dozen photocopied pages stapled together. I've personally been involved with this periodical for over a decade. I've authored numerous articles, served as editor from issues #17-32 (2001-2004), and co-editor with James Weber from issues #46-55 (2009-2011).

James did a truly commendable job during his years at the copy desk. Taking the helm in 2005, he brought issues #33-59 into print, and the most obvious and sweeping changes took place during his tenure. He transformed the publication from a black-and-white newsletter into a full-fledged, glossy journal with color covers, a full-color online version (starting with issue #46/47), and a full-color print version (starting with issue #55).

After devoting countless hours to overseeing twenty-six colorful and informative magazines, James has now retired from the position—and he is surely deserving of some rest. There's currently an ad out for a new editor, but as of this writing, the vacancy has yet to be filled. So here I am, jumping back in—briefly—to bring to fruition this issue, #60, the last in our quarterly print schedule.

Our grandest makeover in quite some time is forthcoming: *The Point* is becoming an online publication. We are putting the final touches on the technology that readers will use to access our digital content. Don't despair if you prefer traditional ink and paper; we do plan to produce an annual *Best of The Point* print edition.

It's been a great run, and I know that a tremendous amount of useful piercing-related information has been widely circulated as a result of the efforts of everyone who has contributed. There have been multitudes: a pack of proofreaders and assistants, scores of writers, an assortment of graphic designers, and the hardworking volunteers and staffers who have mailed out piles of publications. *The Point* has been a true collaboration, and it will continue to use a teamwork approach. In fact, **you** are invited to participate. Content submissions are open to members and nonmembers alike, and anyone else who has relevant material to share with the piercing community.

We have had our current and back issues posted and available online for free download in

PDF format for quite some time now (thanks to additional volunteer work). The figures show that digital viewing has *vastly* surpassed our print circulation. I am confident that going forward we will be able to do an even better job by making use of the latest technology, and employing the immediacy and enormous scope of the internet. More timely and extensive sharing and facilitated networking bring increased opportunities for exposure. We will also be able to have richer content with more photos, slideshows, and videos. Then there's clickable ads, which are undoubtedly more effective than print ads for our advertisers, and easier to use for our readers.

Let's not disregard the desirable detail that this is an eco-friendly move. Sadly, the piercing profession is not even a pale shade of "green" because we must use so many disposable and non-recyclable items. Therefore, I feel it is important that piercers be as conscientious as we can in other areas of our lives to protect the environment.

Since we're saving money by eliminating substantial quarterly printing and postage costs, the Board of Directors has decided that the online *Point* will be free to everyone who wishes to view it! After all, the core mission of the organization is to disseminate information.

If you have issues remaining on your *Point* subscription you have a few choices:

1. You can donate the balance to our non-profit educational organization, which is preferred by our treasurer and deeply appreciated by the association.
2. You can let it ride and apply your balance to the annual print issue. (The actual cost will be determined when the project is undertaken.)
3. You could use the balance as a credit toward other APP merchandise.
4. You can request a refund of your subscription balance if need be.

We all know that the Internet has become the hub from which most personal and commercial interactions across the globe now take place. The web has affected the way we do nearly *everything*,

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including live, work, and play. Technology is not just changing how we furnish *The Point*, it is actually affecting the topics we cover in the magazine.

Just two issues back, in *The Point* #58, my President's Corner article addressed the problem of online videos showing bad piercings, and I made an appeal for readers to inundate the web with videos of safe and skillfully done piercings. In that same issue there was an article penned by Bethra Szumski about the online photo sharing site, Pinterest, and the impact it had on the popularity of the triple forward helix piercing. Now, a host of articles in this current issue make it abundantly clear that the writing is on the wall, or rather, on the web:

Internet Posting Etiquette (page 6) cautions us to think before we post; Social Media for Piercers (page 7) discusses pros and cons of a number of the common websites we use in our online marketing, and Making Safe Piercing Viral (page 8) is a dialogue with several savvy piercers who provide suggestions for achieving good metrics in reach, share of voice, engagement, and more. To round it out, we have a piece about the APP's brochures, one on the legal risks of performing adult piercings on minors, and also a legislation update. And naturally, since this is the post-Conference issue, we have coverage of our absolutely astounding annual affair.

Feel the silky smooth pages, inhale the distinctive aroma of ink on paper, and revel in this historical moment, knowing that you are currently reading the final quarterly print issue of *The Point*. Look for us online at

www.safepiercing.org/thepoint. **P**

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BEST OF THE POINT

The Point is now becoming an online publication, but you can get the best of it in print! An annual *Best of The Point* hard copy edition will be available for each calendar year. Please check the website for more information and details.

WWW.SAFEPIERCING.ORG



PRESIDENT'S CORNER



ELAYNE ANGEL
APP President

Our yearly conference marks the culmination of a massive amount of preparation and effort by the organizers and also the attendees. Sometimes the aftermath of a highly anticipated experience can be a downer, but I feel elated and effusive about the whole thing. Since I didn't write the review of Conference or the other coverage about it that appears in this issue, I feel that our crowning achievement is deserving of additional consideration.

I've been to many piercing conferences over the years, but there was something special and different about this one. From my personal perspective, it felt magical to spend a week in huge rooms filled with others who share my calling and passion for piercing. It is a high contrast to the isolation of being the only piercer in any given crowd during the early part of my career. From a professional standpoint, I'm impressed with the apparent development and maturation of our industry.

This year's Conference had a palpable vibe of positivity that ran like an electrical current throughout the venue. Being in the presence of so much upbeat energy was moving and inspiring. During other conferences, I've felt that I was simply at a gathering where piercers from various places had assembled. This time, unspoken barriers came down and there was a notable atmosphere of genuine *community*. It was great to watch piercers form connections and excitedly communicate about vocational matters with their contemporaries. I also noted heightened tolerance and respect for differences in the piercing methods and styles of others.

The fact that over one hundred piercers traveled from other countries speaks highly of our organization and our reputation. (Come to think of it, I was one of them!) Living in Mexico is fabulous in numerous ways, though I don't pierce when I'm at home. Between guest-piercing visits I'll go for weeks or even months having no live



interaction with other piercers. I don't realize how much I miss the company of my own kind until I get back into a studio. But there's no place like Conference to get a colossal dose of fellowship with a throng of like-minded associates.

Piercers of varying skill and experience levels were present, as always, yet there was an overall tone of dedication as compared to previous years. It seemed that higher numbers of studious pros were taking their craft more seriously than before. These piercers are not just going through the motions of making holes in peoples' bodies; they are aware of the need for safe practices and honoring our clients' trust with integrity. They applied themselves by attending as many classes, round table discussions, and workshops as they could, and obtained a lot of valuable knowledge in the process.

Another thing I noticed is that we're starting to realize our potential and take our place in the world as legitimate professionals, and acting in ways that command the respect that we deserve. This progress was demonstrated

during our interactions with others—hotel staff and the guests who were not part of our cadre. I saw a lot of heavily modified body artists comfortably conversing with everyday folks from around the country. As individuals and as a group, we handled ourselves with decorum, and we were treated accordingly. I didn't witness a single incident involving any negative reactions as I have in the past.

In a society that does not always honor its elders, I also loved seeing the enthusiasm and reverence the attendees showed for my colleagues at the authors' table—a new feature at Conference. Industry pioneers Jim Ward and Fakir Musafar, along with veteran photographer Charles Gatewood, posed for countless photos and exchanged an abundance of hugs and handshakes with their admirers.

One other aspect of the convention I want to touch on is the vendor Expo. When I first began my career, we didn't even have curved barbells; styles were simple and extremely limited, so I never envisioned there could exist the vast variety of body jewelry that

is available now. It was a delight to see innovation in this field continuing to expand. Not only was the selection at the Expo truly incredible, but also the quality produced by many manufacturers was superb.

Yet another aspect of the event that deserves recognition is the excellence in overall organization, pre-conference planning, and preparation. This was handled phenomenally well. It may sound like I'm tooting my own horn, but that is not the case. Though I am President, I'm not a member of the Conference committee, and the accolades are theirs.

The amount of labor that goes into putting on such a multi-faceted happening is outrageous: from coordinating pre-registration to developing the curriculum and wrangling the instructors and their course materials to arranging for catering; dealing with room blocks; designing and ordering signage, programs, and APP merchandise; generating raffle rules; designing the expo floor layout; scheduling volunteers; and on and on and

on. The enormous number of tasks—and the details that must be dealt with—is beyond overwhelming, yet the Conference committee hashes it all out. What we see at Conference are the results of thousands of small decisions made and duties handled.

You know what they say about the “best laid plans,” so it also bears mentioning that the on-site execution was equally outstanding. A large crew of tireless volunteers contributed tremendously and reaped the gratifying rewards found in providing such service.

The talented magician who pulled the levers and knobs behind the curtain at Bally's was the remarkable Caitlin McDiarmid, APP Administrator. She is worth her weight in gold. Possessed of a peerless skill set, cast-iron commitment, and flair for multi-tasking, she kept it all rolling smoothly. I want to also express my appreciation and admiration for Bethra Szumski, APP Secretary and Conference Committee Chair. She negotiates our contracts with the hotel, which is a tough job. I don't

know whether she was naturally blessed with the talent or if she developed her expertise, but we are so lucky to have her. I have one final shout-out going to Sarah Wooten, the previously mentioned wrangler of instructors. Thanks for your patience and diligence.

Congratulations team, on a job remarkably well done! Attendees also deserve acknowledgment since the majority of people in our industry did not make it a priority to be there.

The 2012 APP Conference was thoroughly enjoyable, but more importantly it delivered a substantial amount of vital information for piercers to do a safer, superior job. Additionally, it provided a setting for us to interact and socialize, and a terrific expo, too. Having used every superlative I could think of, I'll finish by encouraging you join us at next year's event if you weren't already planning to attend. I hope to see you there!

For information, visit:
<http://www.safepiercing.org/conference/> **P**

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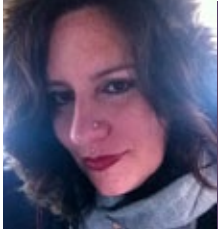
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INTERNET POSTING ETIQUETTE



BETHRA SZUMSKI
Secretary

Without question, the Internet—social networking in particular—is changing the way that people interact. It brings people closer by creating more convenient communication between friends, family members, and co-workers. In many ways it has reduced the “need” for more personal communication. This is creating a totally new mindset in our culture.

One of the major consequences of this transition is that people often have difficulty with the line between what is (and should remain) private information, and what is safe and suitable for public consumption. As Americans we have the right to freedom of speech—but that doesn’t mean what we say publicly can’t get us fired, arrested, or divorced. Most of us voluntarily post more information online than any intelligence agency in the world could possibly uncover. People in every field and profession from politics to education have lost opportunities and employment due to imprudent Internet activity.

In a field like ours, which on some level is built on freedom of expression, an individual is unlikely to risk being fired for posting profanity or political views. However, there are certainly online “dealbreakers” that have led to folks losing their studio positions. Based on these stories, I’ve come up with some general guidelines for body artists to consider when posting content to their social networks:

1. *Never* assume, no matter how carefully you choose your “friends,” that something you post about a business or individual won’t be relayed back to them.
2. Understand that nothing you post—even if you delete it—ever, ever, ever, ever, ever truly goes away. [I wrote that six times because that’s how many backup copies Facebook keeps of every photo you upload, every word you type, and every page you visit.]

3. If you have a problem with your studio, keep it in your studio. If you need to seek advice or vent about a situation, do it privately—preferably in person—with a handful of colleagues that you trust. Never post complaints about studio policy, co-workers, bosses, or clients on the web. Find a private place to vent instead.

4. As a point of studio policy, it’s important for workers to know what kinds of posts are likely to get them in hot water. As long as you declare your place of employment—or if any of the people in your network even know where you work—you are a representative of that business. The argument “if you don’t like my posts, don’t read them” holds little water when you represent a business or entity. People will show their disapproval by not frequenting your establishment or purchasing your product. Studio politics play a big role here as well. Posting negative remarks about competing studios or practitioners will put your entire business at odds with that establishment. And even if what you say is true, gossiping about it online is unprofessional.

5. Your personal social media accounts, especially on your cell phone, can catch you in a lie faster than anything else. If you call in sick, really be sick. Checking in at the bar or golf course that day is an offense that could get you fired, no matter what your position.

If any of these ring a bell it’s not surprising. Technology is moving too fast for most of us to keep up. The surprising thing to me is when people actually feel a sense of personal privacy and security on the Internet. Is this perhaps due to the intimacy we often feel with our electronic devices? After all, we talk to them, and they keep us company when we are alone, help us when we are lost, tell us everything we want to know about almost any topic, remind us of our appointments, provide us with sexual gratification—you name it. Most of the things we used to need from other people can now be found in a palm-sized device. It’s easy to believe that our special electronic friend could never do us wrong, but be cautious: this is a friend that could unknowingly betray you. **P**



SOCIAL MEDIA FOR PIERCERS



JEF SAUNDERS

As moderator for one of this year's Conference roundtable discussions, my focus was on a topic that fascinates me: social media. We've all seen examples of piercers advancing their careers and representing the industry very well by utilizing social media outlets effectively (see Bethra Szumski's article in *The Point* #58 "Pinterest and the Triple Forward Helix"); unfortunately, there have been equally viral social media gaffes, such as videos of piercers using biopsy punches and referring to surface anchors as "implants." With all of the possibilities for both meteoric success and horrifying blunders, a larger-than-expected group of piercers met to discuss this topic.

My approach as moderator was simple: I'd bring up the name of a social media website and allow the roundtable participants to take the dialogue where they wanted. A brief synopsis of our discussion is below.

YELP

It seems as though there was very little middle ground with Yelp and the attendees; they'd either had spectacular success, or Yelp and its reviewers have seemingly gone out of their way to make life more complicated for them. Of particular interest was the amount of genuine, positive reviews that seemed to disappear, while suspicious negative reviews stayed posted. Many of the attendees felt that Yelp was so inaccurate and biased toward negative reviews that they didn't like participating on that website at all. Others found Yelp to be one of the best weapons in their online arsenal. When good reviews were posted there, they had clients visit on a regular basis because of them.

FACEBOOK PERSONAL PAGES

This was a particularly interesting discussion for piercers and also for any other professionals who work with the public. I posed the question: "Do you add clients as

'friends' on your personal page?" For some piercers, Facebook became solely a marketing tool and any illusion of privacy quickly disappeared. Some went so far as to delete family members and friends to focus on Facebook only for professional networking.

On the other hand, legitimate safety concerns were raised. Could having such a public persona result in a piercer being harassed or stalked? Some attendees felt that was definitely a possibility, and kept a very private Facebook page for this exact reason. Still others tried to have the best of both worlds, having a "piercer" Facebook page and also a private, "friends and family" page.

FACEBOOK FAN PAGES

Interestingly enough, the way Facebook charges and promotes posts changed just before the 2012 APP Conference, so our discussion focused on two things: The first was how to moderate discussions and comments on a business (Fan) page; the second was the frustrating changes in policies that have just made maintaining a Fan page more expensive. The new "Promoted Post" feature, in particular, seems to have struck Fan page owners as gouging them for something they had been getting for free.

THE BODY MODIFICATION LEARNING FORUM (BMLF)

Rick Frueh's creation has undoubtedly served to introduce more piercers (and other body modifiers) to the importance of minimum standards in health and safety, jewelry quality, and proper techniques. It has also left a lot of forum members smarting from the online tongue lashings they have received. For both reasons, we may all be in Rick's debt. Essentially, this discussion was less about the BMLF in particular but rather how piercers interact with other professionals in online forums.

Rec.arts.bodyart, BME, and Tribalectic

forums were all brought up during this discussion. The dialogue diverged in many directions, but the upshot was, when posting or commenting in a forum with other professionals, have thick skin and an open mind. If you make a mistake, you will hear about it!

Of potential concern is the number of piercers, especially new piercers, who use online forums as a substitute for a hands-on apprenticeship. While the forum is a valuable tool and resource, the roundtable attendees voiced unanimous concern that using the BMLF in place of an apprenticeship is ill-advised and potentially dangerous.

YOUTUBE

Is it a good idea to post videos of piercings being performed? Is it a good idea to allow a client to videotape you while you work? These topics alone could have filled an hour or two. What was very clear is that, at this point, YouTube is brimming with bad piercing videos. In many cases, poor health and safety practices and techniques end up being on display on this huge social media powerhouse. One question that remained unanswered is whether or not it is important to stem the tide and be larger participants, showcasing our safe piercing for the world?

Unfortunately, the roundtable was only able to briefly discuss Tumblr, and was unable to cover other social networking tools like Pinterest, Instagram, and older sites like Myspace. The piercers that participated brought an amazing amount of insight, and I couldn't be more grateful. I left with changed attitudes and a better understanding of how to use social media and networking websites to my benefit. These are a permanent part of our industry, and those who utilize the internet well are giving themselves an excellent opportunity to be representatives for safe, healthy, beautiful body piercing. **P**

MAKING SAFE PIERCING VIRAL



**JULIE TAYLOR
APRIL BERARDI**

With support from the Outreach Committee

Most piercers spend at least a portion of their day monitoring and updating their social media accounts. In issue #58 of *The Point* Bethra Szumski mused on the power of social media, mentioning the case of the explosively popular triple forward helix piercing from exposure on Pinterest. Next thing we know, the “iDermal” video is blowing up our Facebook pages!

There are hundreds of qualified, talented, and safe piercers using Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, and other websites. We don't have to sit back and wait to see what the next piercing trend will be to take social media by storm. Instead, we can work together to use social media to steer people toward safe piercing practices, specifically those that define us as APP members.

To find out how piercers can use social media effectively, we interviewed several social media savvy piercers: April Berardi from Born This Way Body Arts, AJ Goldman from 12 Ounce Studios, Derek Lowe from Saint Sabrina's, Courtney Jane (CJ) from TRX, Christina Shull from High Priestess, and Crystal Sims from Evolution.

In this, our first article based on those interviews, we will look at what we can hope to accomplish by making safe piercing “viral.” Our goals are popularity, reach, share of voice, engagement, customer support, brand advocacy, brand trust, sales, product development, marketing insights, and brand loyalty.

POPULARITY

We want safe piercing to be popular! We want comments and “likes,” and we want our content to be reblogged, retweeted, and shared. When people interact with our pages in these ways, their friends can see it, and that increases our **reach**. Each interaction on Facebook is even more important in light of changes that may have decreased the portion of your network (that is, members of your social media circle) that sees your posts.

- Without exception, the piercers we interviewed said photos were the most popular content they posted to their social media pages. Unique piercings and fancy jewelry generate a great deal of attention. Other popular posts are those asking people to talk about themselves and/or voice their opinions.

- *Suggestions: Post photos with captions that ask your audience to comment on which piercing or piece of jewelry is their favorite. Assemble a team of clients and friends that will work with you, expanding your reach by sharing your content with their own networks.*

SHARE OF VOICE

We want safe piercing posts to be sought out by the greatest share of social media users.

- Familiarity draws people into our networks. As CJ told us, “I intentionally post some things about my private life, because I know my clients like to feel like they ‘know’ me. It makes them more comfortable with me, and certainly more loyal.”

- Being seen as a source of information is crucial to this loyalty. Each of our interviewees answers questions via social media, and recommend that this is done promptly and in detail. Christina and CJ mention they specifically tell their clients to contact them on Facebook. April also keeps her “network abreast of local, national, and international trends, events, current legislation changes, and news that pertain to the piercing and tattoo community, as well as other trends in health and fashion, which are both closely related to our business.” April also posts “tips on caring for body art and a variety of other related topics.” Derek and Crystal mention that their websites have long been sources of piercing-related education.

- *Suggestions: Put links to your social media sites everywhere and tell your clients to contact you this way. Organize your day to spend time answering clients' questions via social media.*

Keep your network in the loop by posting news of interest. And don't be afraid to share the real you! Although, as April points out, you should “use discretion while promoting transparency.” (See the article, “Internet Posting Etiquette” on page 6 and look for “Dos and Don'ts of Posting” in a future issue.)

ENGAGEMENT

We don't want to spam our network with ads for piercings. We want the average person to be able to have a real conversation with a safe piercer. We don't just want to push; we also want to give.

- CJ advises “connecting with people in a casual, friendly, but direct way online makes them feel like they ‘have a friend who is a piercer.’ Once your clients feel that way about you, they will spread the word, and send so many people your way for piercings, or for information in general.”

- In addition to photos of piercings and jewelry, April says that “pictures of anything funny get feedback and build hype, and make people smile and like you.” AJ has engaged hundreds of piercees in his “Ask A Professional Piercer” Facebook forum, and also with his photo collages showing a good piercing beside a bad piercing.

- Derek warns, “you have to put out content regularly to keep people engaged and interested. Simply having the page isn't enough. It's also critical that you pay attention to the sites and answer the questions people post and address comments in a timely fashion. Even if it's not your intent to engage your clients that way, they are going to expect it. If you don't respond, you're blowing them off, which is not good, obviously.”

- *Suggestions: Don't be aloof! Talk to your network, and be a friend. Share the work of colleagues, such as AJ's photo collages, as well as contribute to “Ask a Professional Piercer” and other forums. Provide customer support by answering questions and checking up on healing.*

BRAND ADVOCATES

We also want to mobilize others to be ambassadors of safe piercing on our behalf.

- Find people who are already engaged with your business and who will use social media to advocate for you. You probably already know who they are! These advocates influence the opinions and purchases of those in their networks more than your average audience member.
- *Suggestions: When you identify a potential brand advocate, interact with them. Comment, like, or retweet their posts. Thank these advocates when you see them in action on your behalf. They become, in a sense, employees-at-large, creating their own media campaigns for your business.*

BRAND TRUST

We want people to see that safe piercers operate in a transparent manner.

- Being connected with other safe piercers builds trust. CJ uses Facebook to get to know her industry peers and says, “When my clients are looking for ideas for piercing projects, or want to see photos of what different styles of jewelry look like, I always go to Facebook. I start with my own photos, but I often show people photos from my friends’ portfolios. Remembering who has good pictures of very specific things has helped me many times, because I can look it up at the drop of a hat. I will often tell clients little anecdotes about the person whose portfolio we are looking at. My clients always really enjoy hearing about my industry friends, and they also like having insight into what is popular in different parts of the country.”
- We’re used to seeing the worst of the worst online. Sharing our own safe procedures is a way to build trust.
- *Suggestions: To the uninitiated, the piercing studio may seem mysterious. When you unshroud that mystery, perhaps with videos of your studio or photos of jewelry options, you build trust. Don’t be afraid to reach out to other piercers and industry experts online. As a group, we’re stronger and are seen as more trustworthy.*

SALES

Surprise; we all want to increase our sales! Social media is a great way to increase awareness of your products and services, which will result in increased sales.

- Building a great social media presence will go a long way. While some studios find posting discounts to be unhelpful, Derek finds unplanned, short-term specials are really well received. CJ has had good luck with “getting clients to get the piercings that I want to do. I have posted on Facebook plenty of times that I was ‘in the mood’ to do something specific, and had plenty of people show up at the shop to get that piercing. I think it’s just one of the many ways clients enjoy that ‘I have a friend who is a piercer’ dynamic.” AJ has had similar experiences, “A couple of months ago, Anatometal came out with their industrial barbells with the threads in the middle, I posted one photo of the jewelry online and the next day I put in three of them! A lot of times people don’t know about the cool stuff that is out there, so you need to show them.”
- AJ’s experience also shows how social media can help with product development. You can use your network to figure out which jewelry will be popular in your studio as well as poll people to find out how you can improve your services.
- *Suggestions: From spur-of-the-moment promotions, outright suggestions, and fancy photos, opportunities abound for increasing sales via social media. Poll your network to determine the next jewelry line you will introduce in your studio. For example, if you use Facebook to post photos of a wood jewelry line beside a glass jewelry line, simply ask your followers for their opinions. You could also do something similar when determining which stone colors to bring in for a new line of navel curves.*

MARKETING INSIGHTS

We want to know our core demographic: what their needs are, but most importantly, what they are into, what they are doing, and what they care about.

- April monitors her Google Analytics weekly. Anyone with a gmail account can sign up

for the free (yet priceless) infographics data that lets you learn about the traffic to your website. Specifics include how long people stay, what pages they visit the most, how they found your site, and where they are from. “I watch trends [in visitors] and adjust my behavior to that. When my reach is up (i.e. I’ve posted a bunch of useless posts to get peoples’ attention/likes/comments) I then post announcements. For example, I’ll mention sales we’re having, events, guests, upload new jewelry pics, etc. and that gets far more response than simply posting the things that are most relevant.... Consistency and planning are more important than people think. If I want to post about a guest to get more bookings, I might spend the few days prior asking ‘what piercings are you getting before summer?’ It gets people thinking, produces more recent interactions with our page, and puts us higher on the news feed... then once the stats have peaked and interest is highest, I announce the guest.”

- *Suggestions: Use Google Analytics as well as your Facebook Insights to truly get to know your network. Watch your numbers and learn what is working and what isn’t. Use your statistics to time your important announcements.*

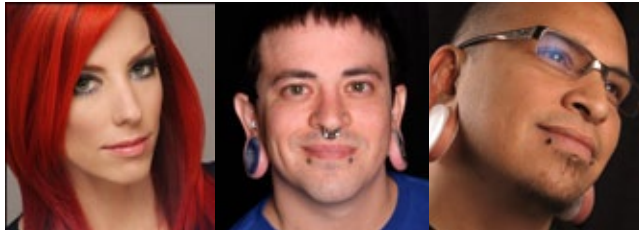
BRAND LOYALTY

We want our network members to be loyal to safe piercers.

- “Likes” are not loyalty. Our ability to engage with our network builds loyalty, as does using social media to provide customer support (see both above). Reward programs can also be built into your social media strategy.
- *Suggestion: Reward those in your networks with special updates, the first shot at appointments with guest artists, small discounts, or anything to make them feel special. Social media is a constantly changing beast none of us can tame, though hopefully we have outlined some strategies that you can use in your own studio to make safe piercing more viral. In the end, that will benefit our clients and the APR, as well as ourselves.*

Stay tuned for the next article in this series, when we make specific suggestions for how to best utilize each of the popular social media sites. **P**

THE APP BROCHURES OVERVIEW: WHAT THEY ARE AND HOW TO USE THEM



**APRIL BERARDI
AJ GOLDMAN
JOHNNY VELEZ**
With support from the
Outreach Committee



There is a hefty stack of informational brochures available through the Association of Professional Piercers that can be used in a variety of ways to educate the public about safe piercing. To help you better make use of these resources, we've summarized a few of these helpful pamphlets below and listed a number of ways studios have successfully utilized this vital information.

This is the first of three articles about the APP brochures. In this segment, we'll be discussing "What is the APP?," "Picking Your Piercer," and "Jewelry for Initial Piercings."

WHAT IS THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS?

"The Association of Professional Piercers (APP) is an international nonprofit educational organization dedicated to the dissemination of health and safety information about body piercing.

Governed by a voluntary elected Board of Directors, the APP is a united group of piercing professionals who freely share information to help fellow members, piercers, healthcare professionals, legislators, health inspectors, and the general public get the best and most up-to-date information about body piercing."

This newly updated brochure contains the organization's mission statement (above) and a brief section about the origins of the association. It provides a list of the many publications, products, and educational services you can get through the APP, and there's also a brief explanation of the different membership levels that are available. Additionally, there is a bulleted list that clarifies what the APP does and does not do within the scope of its efforts.

Studio personnel can give this pamphlet to clients, potential members, and healthcare professionals, and also use it for their own reference. Distributing these regularly reinforces credibility with potential clients and other professionals. These are also great to hand out at conventions and to leave for distribution

at other businesses such as retail stores and local health clinics.

PICKING YOUR PIERCER

This brochure contains a summary of suggested guidelines you should adhere to when considering a prospective piercer and studio. It includes topics such as piercer qualifications, licensing and permits, studio set up and hygiene, autoclaves, and more.

"Your safety is in your own hands, and you need to be an educated consumer. The information contained in this pamphlet can help. Members of the Association of Professional Piercers uphold the standards outlined in this brochure, and your piercer should too—even if he or she is not an APP member."

These brochures are perfect for anyone who is considering getting a piercing, whether it be a first-time customer or a seasoned collector. APP members are encouraged to bring these brochures to local mall stores, health clinics, conventions, and schools. Members have actually reported sales increases when working with high schools and colleges. If there is a local college in your area, consider partnering with a Resident Advisor (RA) on programs to educate the students about safe piercing. To discourage minors from making uninformed, hasty decisions about their body art, visit your local high schools and drop off these brochures to nurses' offices and counselors.

JEWELRY FOR INITIAL PIERCINGS

This brochure touches on the basics of what to look for in initial piercing jewelry. It details the importance of biocompatible materials and goes over the common options. It also discusses different jewelry sizes and styles and covers quality issues including surface finish, and what type of threading is the safest.

"Choosing jewelry for a new piercing is obviously quite different from shopping for a ring to wear on your finger. Because body

jewelry is worn inside a wound and is in contact with your internal tissues, only certain products are suitable. The size, style, material, and quality of the initial piece of jewelry all affect your ability to heal. Because the body jewelry industry is saturated with substandard products, piercers and clients alike may forget that cost alone should never be the key factor in your purchase."

Getting this valuable knowledge out to our client base is imperative for educating the general public. This brochure has been put together to help inform your clients about why they should choose your studio, and buy your jewelry. It is an ideal complement to the "Picking your Piercer" and "What is the APP?" brochures and they make a real impact when distributed together. These work really well for price shoppers, potential clients, and the general public.

Piercers often look for ways to get involved in their communities, support the APP's important mission, and to spread the information around. We hope that you find these summaries and suggestions useful. The resources provided by the APP are invaluable, and when used by the entire membership, they help us to have a much bigger impact on our communities than we could on our own.

To download these, and for more information about the APP brochures and other resources, visit the APP's website at www.safepiercing.org. You can place an order on the website or by contacting (888) 888-1APP. **P**

MEETING THE APP'S MISSION BETTER THAN EVER WITH THE RAPID AND WIDESPREAD DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION USING THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY.

FRIDAY 17 AUGUST 2012

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President's Corner: Elayne Angel

Yucatán, MEXICO - Recently someone asked me about what it was really like back in the "good ol' days," when I first started piercing professionally in the 1980s. Reflecting on the ensuing discussion, I am reminded of how truly new our

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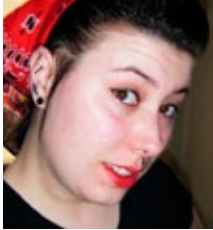
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TO PIERCE A MINOR



JEZEBEL VOULÉ

I live in a land with no legislation of the piercing field. A land where tattoo artists are regulated and need to be licensed, but piercers are free to do whatever they please. Like the Wild West at its peak, we run by our own rules and our own code of ethics (if any). And much like the West, we have our outlaws: people who are willing to do that which many refuse. These are people who believe that they are allowed to do whatever is asked of them to whoever desires it since there are no rules. (For example, there are piercers who will pierce private areas of minors.)

I have heard many tales of people under the age of 18 getting their nipples pierced throughout my state. It is because of this, and the knowledge that there are a number of states that lack age restrictions, that cause some piercers to believe it is permissible to pierce the erogenous zones of minors. Should you be in a state that has no restrictions on minimum ages for piercings, at least be sure to know the local laws.

In Iowa, doing a “private” piercing on a minor can lead to a charge of Indecent Contact with a Child, as an Iowa statute reads:

“A person eighteen years of age or older is upon conviction guilty of an aggravated misdemeanor if the person commits any of the following acts with a child, not the person’s spouse, with or without the child’s consent, for the purpose of arousing or satisfying the sexual desires of either of them: Fondle or touch the inner thigh, groin, buttock, anus, or breast of the child.”¹

Since piercing an erogenous zone can increase sensation in the area, this will often cause an arousing or sexually satisfying result, so the act of piercing can qualify as a crime.

And an aggravated misdemeanor is only the beginning; a lawyer could easily get a conviction for Lascivious Acts with a Child, which is a class “C” felony:

“It is unlawful for any person sixteen years of age or older to perform any of the following acts with a child with or without the child’s consent unless married to each other, for the purpose of arousing or satisfying the sexual desires of either of them: Fondle or touch the pubes or genitals of a child. [Or] inflict pain or discomfort upon a child.”

With a piercing there is no way to steer clear of discomfort. If no pain or discomfort is experienced during a piercing due to the application of some sort of anesthetic, it could be argued that the whole process of healing is a ramification of the piercing procedure.

It would not be impossible to obtain the conviction of Sexual Abuse in the Second Degree, a class “B” felony. For reasons already stated, the piercing of a minor in an erogenous zone could be classified as sexual abuse.

“A person commits sexual abuse in the second degree when the person commits sexual abuse under any of the following circumstances: During the commission of sexual abuse the person displays in a threatening manner a dangerous weapon, or uses or threatens to use force creating a substantial risk of death or serious injury to any person.”

A piercing needle is a dangerous weapon because it is designed to puncture skin, and doing a piercing can be perceived as a threatening manner because it does break the skin.

Only 34 states have age restrictions pertaining to piercings, leaving 16 states without any sort of regulation on the piercing of minors. The laws quoted in this article are specific to my state and serve as an example of possible crimes that any piercer could be charged with who performs an adult piercing (nipples or genitals) on a minor.

I urge people to look up their state’s laws to learn what they could be up against before performing nipple piercings on a 15-year-old boy or a hood piercing on a 17-year-old girl. Just because there may not be a law specifically restricting a piercing does not mean that it is appropriate to perform such a task—or that there are no potential legal ramifications. Think smart before a minor’s piercing starts.

.....
[Editor’s note: Regardless of any local legislation being more lenient, the following is the APP’s suggested minimum standards policy on piercing minors:

“For any piercing of a minor, a parent or legal guardian must be present to sign a consent form. Proof positive, state issued photo identification is required from the legal guardian, and a bona fide form of identification from the minor. In the event the parent has a different last name and/or address from the child, court documentation is needed to prove the relationship, i.e., divorce papers, or a remarriage certificate.

Under no circumstances is it acceptable or appropriate for a piercer to perform piercing on the nipples or genitals of an individual under 18 years of age.” <http://www.safepiercing.org/piercing/faq/#minors> P

1. <http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?category=billinfo&service=iowaCode&ga=83&input=709.12>

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



MIKE MARTIN
Legislation Liaison

After a great conference I have been having so many thoughts and I'm trying to sort things out. One realization that became quite clear is that legislation on body art is a hot topic all over the world. That seemed to be the subject most talked about at the international meeting, our annual Members' meeting, and just in general with people I spoke to during the week. Small talk always became legislation talk in some form.

Christina Shull gave us a glimpse of her legislative efforts in Oregon and the progress that was made in that state. She even had two Oregon Health Licensing Agency (OHLA) women join us at Conference: one who works on the state's testing requirements, and one who works on drafting and creating regulations. They attended the full conference and sat in on many classes, workshops, and roundtable discussions. They were impressed with the event and how much they learned while there.

We heard from Steve Joyner about the legislative efforts he has been involved with throughout the year and all over the USA. Since conference he has been working with Stephanie Segal, Rob Hill, and the Iowa State Health Department researching language used in other state regulations. I also spent time with him and APP Vice President, John Johnson at the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) conference the following week. We talked to many people from around the country and some were a little surprised to know that I was wearing two hats (Legislation Liaison for APP, and President of the Alliance of Professional Tattooists (A.P.T.)).

I learned a lot from John Johnson and saw Steve Joyner in action once again. It is amazing how one little word can completely

change the meaning of an answer or the asking of a question. Steve is very aware and aggressive when it comes to "little words" that may be spoken or written that could have a long-term impact on our businesses and bottom lines. I wish we could make 50 Steve clones and have one as a representative in each state. I believe it would save the APP money and really help piercers as regulations

are being promulgated or updated.

With that thought in mind I also believe that if we could have "State Reps" the APP would have an opportunity to encourage other piercers to get involved with the law-making process. APP State Reps would also have access to other piercers in their state and encourage them to join the organization. State reps could keep in touch with other piercers in their region and would be the "go-to guys/girls" for matters involving training, legislation, and establishing rapport with local and state legislators.

If you have any thoughts on this approach please share them with us.

Legislation in the United States is a huge undertaking, there are 50 states to be covered and in each state there are multiple counties. For example, in California there are 62 counties. In each county there are multiple cities, towns, and villages--and sometimes they have their own body art regulations to work with. As you can see, the need to have proactive professional piercers leading the way is important. That way no one gets

tripped up on that "one little word" that could ruin or change everything. We can talk to legislators and explain to them what we do for a living and help them know the difference between an implant and a surface anchor, a suspension and an energy pull, or a piercing needle and a piercing gun.

Almost all of the states have regulations in some form; many need updating and

This is a prime time to get involved in "the process" and give back to the industry that puts food on our tables and shoes on our kids.

have begun that process. A couple of states are regulated through the Cosmetology Commission or Board of Cosmetology. The Kansas Board of Cosmetology regulates Kansas, and the Cosmetology Commission regulates South Dakota. Body art in New Mexico is regulated by the Board of Barbers and Cosmetologists. "Thirty-two states have laws that prohibit both body piercing and tattooing on minors without parental permission."¹ Iowa, New Jersey, New Mexico, New Hampshire, and Oregon have no age limits in place. This is a prime time to get involved in "the process" and give back to the industry that puts food on our tables and shoes on our kids.

At this time, the following are the members of our Legislation Committee: Steve Joyner, Christina Shull, Ashley Misako, and myself. If you would like to join our committee or assist us in any way please contact me at: legislation@safepiercing.org or fleshskingrafix@gmail.com, or call my cellphone: 619-719-2291. **P**

1. [www.ncsl.org/issues-research/health/tattooing andbodypiercing.aspx](http://www.ncsl.org/issues-research/health/tattooing%20andbodypiercing.aspx)

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THE 17TH ANNUAL APP CONFERENCE IN LAS VEGAS, NEVADA – JUNE 17-22, 2012



RUSS FOXX

Of the three APP conferences I have attended thus far, this year's was definitely my most memorable and exciting. The sense of camaraderie in conjunction with the positive energy of all the attendees from so many countries and walks of life made me feel more at home than I ever have before.

I really feel that I should stress the importance of Conference; it is a must for any progressive piercer who wants to give their all to this industry. The number of members seems to keep growing just as the bar keeps being raised, and I don't think that it is a coincidence. This event not only puts into perspective the necessity of safety in all aspects of the industry but also constantly amends and revises to keep up with our incredibly discerning standards. *[Editor's note: The criteria for membership has not substantially changed for quite some time.]*

Just like so many years before, Bally's was a fabulous venue for our event, and the staff took great care of us. Even though we were in a casino 24/7, that didn't come close to overshadowing what we were really there for. It seemed to me that having our large group stationed in a busy casino actually served as a bonus opportunity for visibly modified individuals to really represent ourselves to the general public in a positive fashion. Scene points to Bally's for that!

This year boasted record numbers of volunteers who donated their time to assist in keeping the conference running without a hitch. Between the volunteers and the APP Board members, it was a really tight ship overall. They definitely deserve recognition for the amount of hard work they put in, not to mention the fact that everyone did it smiling!

The speakers and techs did a fantastic job on the talks this year. The amount of time and effort these individuals put into each class was staggering! During conference, teaching has clearly turned into a full-time job for many of these instructors. Their efforts paint a landscape



of just how far we've come over the years and the importance of working together toward a common goal. Not only do I find this humbling, but it should inspire more of us to do the same and chip in. I'm noticing now more than ever a steady and relevant growth in the number of piercers with legitimate bloodborne pathogens certifications. This really makes me feel that we're on the right track.

The vendors at the exposition this year stood out as nothing short of cutting edge, actively setting the stage for newest slick styles and trends keeping our body jewelry customized and fashionable. It didn't take much time browsing the expo floor to clearly see how much effort and expertise these companies had put into getting their wares ready for the big conference. My advice to any new faces that haven't been to APP before is to bring as much cash as you can to spend at the expo. This is a great opportunity to pick up lots of gorgeous new jewelry from top-tier manufacturers at modest and wholesale prices. Don't just shop for yourself, but be sure to sharpen up your jewelry displays with special items that will sweep your clients off of their feet.

This year's post-apocalyptic themed banquet party was a total blast, complete with a well-dressed crowd and the perfect mix of intensity and humor. What dinner party is not complete without a gorilla and a giant banana duking it out after delving into a bucket of bath salts? The collaborations between CoRE and so many other talented sideshow performers was a perfect fit for the evening. Great dinner, great show, great awards, great company. The after party was, as always, well worth the ticket price (even though I didn't win the grand prize at the raffle I had my hopes set on).

I had the opportunity to spend time hanging out with, and learning from, so many piercers that even after a decade of poking holes my inspiration continues to increase. This keeps my passion and love for what we do in perspective and repeatedly reinforces that I'm doing what I'm truly meant to be doing. This year's conference marks my new journey into finally opening my own studio that carries APP standards and membership under its wings. I can't wait to dive into finally becoming an APP member, and so should you. **P**



VOLUNTEER THANK YOU



CAITLIN MCDIARMID
Administrator

I had a great time at this year's Conference. It was my tenth conference, and for the very first time I went fully looking forward to the adventure of it all—with no fear, little anxiety, and great confidence. For me, the biggest difference is the team that the APP has on the ground during the event. The volunteer squad that exceeds my expectations every year, improves upon the previous year, grows, and flourishes—and truly makes the conference hum for all of us.

This year a number of the crew and I tackled the on-site registration component of Conference. Registration has had its ups and downs over the years, and by the end of Conference last year I was determined to give this area the attention it desperately needed and deserved.

All of the super (senior) volunteers went through extra training this year. As we moved our most seasoned and customer-service oriented volunteers into registration, others needed to be trained well enough to supervise the newer team members and work independently, as my attentions and

that of others would be dedicated to the registration desk.

All of the super volunteers devoted extra time well in advance of the event by participating in Skype meetings and email discussions, planning for mini-training sessions on-site at Conference, double checking conference materials, and reviewing policies and procedures.

I have never been more proud of a group of volunteers, and I have never been as excited to work with a team. I have never been able to walk away and feel so confident in the work performance of each one of them. I am forever grateful, ever amazed—and just so very happy to work with these folks and to call them family and friends.

SUPER VOLUNTEERS

Kendra Berndt
Gus Diamond
Madicken Engström
Aaron Foster
Mandolynne Hopkins
Casey Hosch
David Kelso

Alexander Kumaritakis
Tiana McGuire
Zane Nichols
Theo Sheffler
William Spencer
Marah Stein-Kelso
Jezebel Milla Voulé
Sarah Wooten
Anna York
Kristin Young
Tye

We had eight terrific Al D. Scholars this year. They were thrown into a new environment with a very heavy workload. The scholars always try to do their very best. We impress upon them how this experience can bring about great things for them in their careers, future conferences, and personal growth. You cannot be a scholar and not be changed by the experience, one way or another. One of my very favorite parts of my job is getting to know these piercers, doing my best to make this a positive experience for them, and watching them change from the gift that service can bring.

Breanne Grant
Edward (Ned) McCarthy
Nicole Page
Kaitlin Raison
Andrew Rogge
Monica Sabin
Ken Seyler
Dani Solary

We were so very lucky that the following people jumped in to help out with AV this year after we had an unexpected cancellation. Gus and I are excited about this new team and the development in this area.

Allen Falkner
Badur Ramji
Brian Moeller

We had new “love” volunteers—some in our industry, some on the fringe of it, and some knowing that if they were interested in joining the field, it was a perfect way to show they’re serious by giving back even before they start getting.

Marina Pecorina
Raquel Martin
Thomas Van Homan
Brianna Belladonna
Nolan Chinn
Zak Bullard (pulled from the crowd for that one task – but still appreciated)

Three of the Al D. Scholars from last year came back to help out as “love” volunteers. They proved that service work is its own reward, and they really got me and others to notice them.

Jovi Croes
Luna Duran
Charles Stiles

Some of our “love” volunteers just keep coming back, year after year. “Once a volunteer, always a volunteer,” is my motto, and theirs too.

Kenny Hughes
Chadwick Jackson
Mark Montgomery
Chrissy Shull
Jared Silverman

Autumn Spinks
Seven Wolfe
FaraTa’ Wild
Casey Kutilek

Our Mentors were once again a crucial component in the success of Conference and the welcoming of our new attendees – thanks to Ryan Ouellette, Courtney Maxwell, and all those who participated.

Some individuals need a special thanks:

- Theo and Brian for sticking to the challenge at hand and getting it done.
- Sarah for being a better me in a lot of situations.
- Marah and David for the gift of love and celebration.
- Ned for making me really think about unconditional love, parenting, and what it means to be a role model.
- Monica for making me realize I need to do things differently.
- Madicken for the Swedish dance.
- Zane for the inspiration.

And always to Paul and Thad, the team that lives in my head and in my heart, that gets me through every minute of every day; that reminds me of what is really important. “Everything must spring from a place of love.”

The APP is made up of volunteers, Board Members, Committee Members, and all the folks at Conference. Service work provides rewards that are hard to explain to those who have not volunteered. Working behind the scenes of conference one finds a new appreciation for the industry, your co-volunteers, the leaders of the conference and the Association. Service work provides the reward of a new appreciation for your own strengths and weaknesses. It gives you personal challenges to overcome, and celebrations when you do. For me—though I am an employee—being part of this service group has given me friends for a lifetime, and extended my family. They provide me support when it is desperately needed and every year they make Conference bigger, better, brighter—and maybe even a little “faster and sexier.” **P**

JOSH A. PRENTICE VOLUNTEER AWARD

This year, it was my honor to recognize Gus Diamond’s dedication to volunteering by giving him the Josh A. Prentice Volunteer Award.

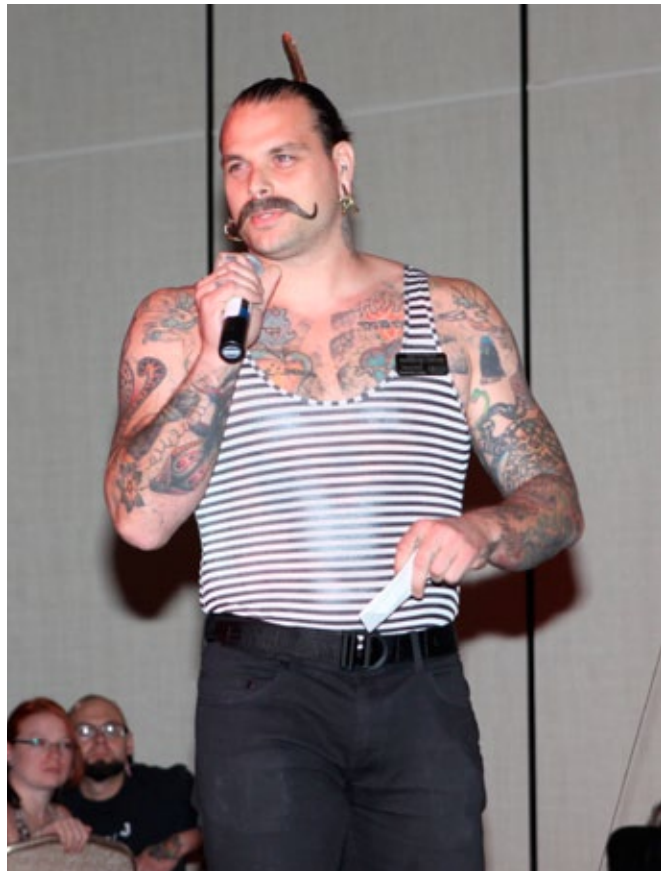
Though I struggled a little bit with exactly what to say about Gus in my speech, I never doubted in the slightest that he was a perfect recipient for this award. He has been more committed to volunteering than perhaps any other volunteer. Gus continues to have insight about Conference that I (and others) will never have. Remaining calm in the face of pretty much everything, he has often provided the most simple and easy-to-implement solutions to difficult or overwhelming problems. I have relied on Gus to provide the volunteer group a foundation of humor and wisdom in almost every situation.

When I haven’t known how to inspire a volunteer to do better, he has always made sure they understand the importance of the work and the privilege of being a scholar or a volunteer.

I have yelled at Gus for many mistakes that he never made (and ultimately turned out to be mine). I have approached him in a panic, and he has always reassured me that everything was fine—because it was. It took me a while to trust in him, but once I did I was able to let go a bit and relax. It sounds funny, but with all the details of conference, it is a vast improvement even letting one section go and knowing that I don’t have to worry about it.

Gus has served this organization for years, has mentored many piercers, and is a long-standing—and honored—member of the association. He is a friend to many, and has had my back at Conference for ten years. He is the man we all trust: “In GUS we trust,” and he was the perfect person to receive this award.

—Caitlin McDiarmid





AWARD WINNER FOR CREATIVE INNOVATION: JIMMY BUDDHA-DIABLO ORGANICS



INTERVIEW BY JASON PFOHL

JASON: What makes your jewelry innovative?

JIMMY: I like to take risks with my designs.... I like people to be able to look at my stuff and say "That is a Jimmy Buddha piece." So I guess by default I come up with some stuff that is innovative!

JASON: Do you do preliminary sketches, drawings, or models before making the final jewelry?

JIMMY: All of my pieces are fairly well developed concepts before the process starts. Most of the materials I use are too expensive to just shoot from the hip. I do, however, believe in changing things up or even scrapping projects and starting all over if things just aren't coming together. I've learned that translating an idea or drawing into a 3D reality can be very challenging.

JASON: Do you design the jewelry with a particular individual in mind?

JIMMY: Not usually, but in this case most certainly. Pineapple needed something epic to complement his amazing tattoos and mods, so it was my goal to create something special for him.

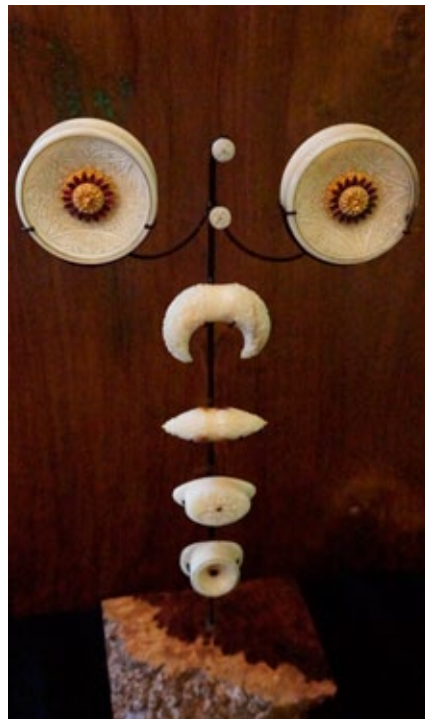
JASON: Do you generally imagine jewelry to be worn in matching sets (plugs, septum, and labret)?

JIMMY: Now I do. I feel it's only been in the last few years that there is a demand for such things when it comes to jewelry for large holes. Seeing this change is one of the things that makes me feel good about the direction of body piercing and the ability of the jewelry to play a role in that.

JASON: How would you describe the aesthetic of your jewelry?

JIMMY: I am all over the place when it

comes to jewelry design...having pierced for fifteen years I know there are all types of people wanting all types of jewelry. But with the Jimmy Buddha Design line, I am trying to go for a higher-end more refined look that complements the individual's piercings and reflects the value of them to the world.



JASON: Is there any symbolism or significance in these pieces?

JIMMY: I very rarely attach symbolic meaning to things. These pieces have an impact on people, and that is a personal experience.

JASON: Are you a hippie Buddhist or what?

JIMMY: Nah...I think we are all fucked.

JASON: What is your philosophy working with traditional carvers to make contemporary piercing jewelry?

JIMMY: I feel that making jewelry for large gauge piercings was a lost art/skill, just as some of the skills of the traditional carvers I work with once were at risk of becoming. I have a passion for both of these and have dedicated myself to keeping them alive and viable in the twenty-first century.

JASON: How long have you been collaborating with Balinese carvers?

JIMMY: I started working with the family I am still with today ten years ago. It has been an amazing experience, helping me grow as an individual and a designer. Without them helping me along for the last ten years, I wouldn't be where I am today.

JASON: What is your interaction with the carvers like? Is communication an issue?

JIMMY: Communication is an issue, of course; it is not usually strictly a language barrier, but a conceptual one. As a designer I find words inadequate for expressing my ideas. I rely heavily on detailed drawings and making three-dimensional prototypes personally. Then, of course, my crew of carvers has been doing this for a while now and they pick up on things quickly and make my job so much easier.

JASON: How many hours of carving were involved in making this jewelry?

JIMMY: This set was trial by fire. It was not so much the actual carving that took so long, but figuring out the order of the steps involved. This set took five craftsmen to complete, each with their own special expertise. So making sure that things were done in the right order was my main concern. Now that we have gone through the learning curve it will be much easier in the future.

JASON: Do you use child labor because only their small hands can carve such detailed pieces?

JIMMY: Many people have the same misinformation about the child labor. It's not because of their small hands but because they can't break the chains.

JASON: How much did you pay your carvers for these?

JIMMY: Watery gruel and a chunk of hard brown bread.

JASON: What appeals to you about fossilized ivory as a material?

JIMMY: Since I was a little kid I was always digging around in the dirt finding stuff... marbles, fossils, whatever. I guess I have never really grown up, it's just the stuff I find is bigger and more expensive! When it

comes to jewelry, ivory has a warmth and soft glow to it that other materials do not have, and the human body loves it. When it comes to workability it is unmatched as a medium...these pieces attest to the detail that can be attained.

JASON: Do you feel guilty for helping cause the extinction of the mastodon?

JIMMY: My only regret is that I was never able to shoot one myself and mount it on my wall.

JASON: Do you have any personal anecdotes about your experience designing this magnificent set?

JIMMY: There were a couple of redesigns midway through these. The most frustrating was me forgetting to erase some pencil lines that very quickly became carved lines,

but in the end it actually made for a nicer pattern!

JASON: What is the most challenging aspect of designing custom jewelry?

JIMMY: It is very time consuming, and the details are the key to custom jewelry. When I make something custom for someone, I want it to be perfect. It needs to not only fit right but they need to love the piece for me to be happy with it.

JASON: Do you always resort to taking bath salts when you are getting your ass kicked by a gorilla?

JIMMY: The only thing that matters is the end result: the banana whipped some monkey ass! *[Editor's note: These are references to entertainment provided by Jason and Jimmy during the Conference banquet.]* **P**



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AWARD WINNER FOR TECHNICAL INNOVATION: JASON PFOHL-GORILLA GLASS



INTERVIEW BY JIMMY BUDDHA

JIMMY: How did you ever come up with an original idea like o-ring grooves on the back of a single flare plug?

JASON: Most of my best ideas come from my customers. Piercers have been asking for this particular design for quite some time; I just had to get off my ass and start making them!

JIMMY: When you change designs from a functional or technical standpoint, is this usually based on feedback you get from piercers and customers?

JASON: Dude, I already answered that question. Pay attention.

JIMMY: How does your personal experience in body modification influence your work?

JASON: I had my flats punched by Zak Zito at 10mm and healed them with glass in under a month. That helped me to better understand the healing process and also in designing jewelry for conches, flats, and septums. Lobes are so much more flexible than cartilage, and the flares and wearing lengths are completely different.

JIMMY: Do you think there is much more room for "technical innovation" when it comes to jewelry, or are things tapped out?

Where do we go from here?

JASON: I think there will always be room for technical innovation. Major breakthroughs such as internally threaded jewelry and surface anchors are landmark events in the modern piercing industry, but there are more subtle technical innovations in jewelry design happening all the time. Check out Morton Manley's hoop variations, or Quetzalli's soulful experiments. The jewelry companies and designers are more sophisticated now than at any time in our history.

JIMMY: Now that you are over 40, really

old in other words, maybe you could take a minute to reflect...do you feel you have gained some wisdom and insight into why we are all in this industry?

JASON: I can't speak for you, but I love making jewelry and working with glass... plus there are some great perks like getting to travel all over the world and hang out with my awesome friends.

JIMMY: Since you are in Oaxaca, Mexico full time, do you find it difficult to stay up to date and in touch with how the piercing scene changes and progresses? What do you do to stay current and relevant?

JASON: Luckily for the rest of the planet, Texas has never been the center of the universe. Plus the Internet has really transformed the piercing scene and created an amazing international on-line community that continues to grow. You should check it out!

When I design jewelry I don't follow existing trends, but make technical experiments with glass production techniques.

JIMMY: What other challenges do being set up in Mexico pose for you when it comes to manufacturing your jewelry?

JASON: My main challenges are importing raw materials and exporting finished goods.

JIMMY: I was lucky enough to have visited your new glass facility in Oaxaca recently and was very impressed. Will this allow Gorilla Glass to expand?

JASON: Gorilla Glass has been growing steadily every year since we started in 2002. We won't slow down as long as there is more and more demand for our jewelry. Owning my own land and production studio is incredible. Thanks to all my customers for helping make that dream real! My newest project is a downtown art gallery to promote glass art in Mexico.

JIMMY: Should we expect to see a lot of new and exciting things from you?

JASON: Stop asking dumb questions.

JIMMY: You have put together an amazing team of workers in Mexico in your office and manufacturing. What are some of the

challenges you face managing such a diverse group of individuals?

JASON: The diversity of people working with me has never presented a problem. Generally I try to find what an individual is good at and enjoys doing, and then give them responsibilities that match their strengths and background.

JIMMY: How did you get into glass?

JASON: In 1992 I was living in my van in California and made friends with a group of stoner surfer kids who introduced me to my first glass bong. That inspired me to enroll in a glass-blowing class at Santa Barbara City College. I was attracted to the heat and physicality of working with the material. Later on I met Dale Chihuly and he invited me to study at his famous glass school, Pilchuck. I ended up getting a job there and that's when things got interesting.

JIMMY: Did you ever imagine that you would be making body jewelry in Mexico?

JASON: Gorilla Glass was born in Mexico City. I don't think I imagined it. I focus on doing things.

JIMMY: As Gorilla Glass faces more competition from "cheap foreign-made glass," specifically Indian and Chinese, what is your game plan to stay competitive?

JASON: There has been "cheap foreign-made glass" on the market for at least five years and I have never seen them as competition. My customer base is the best-of-the-best piercing shops that are proud to carry brand name jewelry. Plus we are constantly innovating with new designs and custom work, so we always have something fresh and different for our customers.

JIMMY: How does your company and its products differ from the "cheap foreign-made" glass?

JASON: We are a quality company that has been around for ten years; we are passionate about what we do and we take care of our customers.

JIMMY: Knowing that I blazed the glass body jewelry trail in the mid 90s for you with

Jimmy Buddha's Glassware, do you think you would have been as successful as you have been with your jewelry had I not been there to open the door up for you, so to speak?

JASON: I never heard of Jimmy Buddha's Glassware before...it must not have been very successful. That's understandable; glass is a difficult material to work with and takes a lot of patience and skill. I'm glad you had better luck with organics, Jimmy! **P**

THANK YOU, VENDORS!

The vendor expo at our annual conference is one of the main draws for many attendees, and understandably so. There isn't another place a professional can go to see such a massive variety of body piercing jewelry, products, and services. Judging from the feedback I received, this year was also one of the best and smoothest for our vendors in quite some time. The vendors worked hard to provide our conference attendees with beautiful jewelry, amazing new innovations, and wonderful booth designs. It is obvious that a tremendous amount of energy, effort, and planning went into every booth space on the show floor.

On behalf of the organization, the Board, and myself, I would like to thank all of the merchants who took part in the vendor expo at Conference this year. Without your hard work, the expo would not have been possible.

I would like to especially thank all of the many generous vendors who donated merchandise and gift certificates to the raffle, and those who sponsored the events and special offerings throughout the week. It is these contributions and sponsorships that help make Conference such a special and fun event for our attendees, and help keep the conference growing and evolving. I look forward to working with everyone again next year, and hopefully with many new vendors, too!

—Luis Garcia, Vendor Liaison

AL D. SCHOLARS

KEN SEYLER

I have been a professional body piercer for almost 20 years, and have been attempting to attend the APP Conference for approximately the last 10 years. Due to one thing or another, I have never been able to attend. I had heard of the Al D. Scholarship, but I never believed that I might be able to receive it. This year, due to some prodding from friends in the industry, and a stern “you must!” from someone I dearly love and respect. I threw my hat in the ring.

The application process was fairly simple and straightforward; the most nerve wracking part was the telephone interview process. I’m confident in my speaking skills and my ability to express myself clearly. Knowing that I was being interviewed by some of the people that I look up to could be a little disconcerting. However, I managed to make my way through it relatively unscathed, and so the waiting began.

As I waited to hear whether I had been chosen or not, I found myself believing that I wouldn’t be selected. I thought I would be passed over for someone more deserving, or who was younger or newer in the industry. I fully expected not to be chosen. When I did get the phone call saying that I had been accepted, I was in a state of shock. My boss said that my face went white and my jaw dropped open. I was completely astounded that I had gotten it, and I could have wept because I was so thankful and grateful. Truth be told, I still feel that way.

I had been accepted and there began my nerves. I had to deal with all of the new, important information about what was expected of me as an Al D. Scholar. I was also going to be doing my very first guest spot in a studio two provinces away while my home was in the process of being sold, while looking for a new place to live. Needless to say I was pretty stressed, but I was also super excited to be going to Vegas.

Time flew by and the next thing I knew I was on my way: nervous, exhilarated, tired, and a little bit frightened. After I got myself settled I was off to find Caitlin and the other volunteers; I expected to be put straight to work. Before I knew it my day of work was finished, my fears eased, and the nervousness began to melt away. Finally came the chance to meet and talk with people I had only ever met over the internet. I was taken aback by how friendly and personable everyone was, a sign of a great week to come.

The following day was a blur of meetings and introductions as we prepared for the of Conference. Although I was kept very busy I just could not shake the surreal feeling I had, this was a dream come true. In fact, I found it difficult to fully absorb the fact that I was finally involved in something that I had wanted to do for years. The absolute clincher was when I was introduced to Jim and Drew Ward. I truly had a surreal moment when I shook Jim’s hand. I can remember thinking, “Oh my God, I’m shaking hands with Jim Ward...JIM WARD!!!” That moment will live with me forever.

The rest of the week was just one fabulous experience after another. From getting to meet and talk with piercers that I have looked up to for ages to taking the courses offered, absorbing so much new knowledge, or in a few cases, and also having the confirmation that I had been doing things correctly all along. The sense of camaraderie among the volunteers, the laughs—oh the laughs—the tears, being exhausted, everything was so much more than I had ever imagined.

I could ramble on and on and on about everything that I experienced during my first APP Conference. Instead, I will sum it up by saying applying for the Al D. Scholarship was the best thing I have ever done. It kicked my passion for body piercing into overdrive, allowed me to make some fantastic new friends, and it made me a part of a family bigger than I could have imagined. I cannot thank the committee that chose me enough. I am still humbled and grateful for the opportunity that I was given. I would certainly love to come back next year not only as a volunteer but as an APP member.

MONICA SABIN

Never has a single week impacted me as much as attending the APP Conference as an Al D. Scholarship recipient. It was an almost unreal experience that was over before I knew it. This was my second year attending conference, and it was substantially better than my previous year, in which I was not a volunteer.

I believe Caitlin (who you will get to know very well while volunteering, if you don’t know her already) put it best when she said that I was now part of a family. It is very much that way. It was a lot of work, at times having to choose sleep over partying, learning to think on my feet, and

adapt to the circumstances at hand. However, If you can handle that, then you will reap the many benefits. One such benefit is the amount of love and support that people put out during the week in Las Vegas. My volunteer position this year allowed me to meet so many more people and form even deeper connections than I anticipated. These connections showed me that Conference will be what you make of it. By paying attention and asking the right questions at the right times, you’ll learn great tips, tricks, and what quality shops may be hiring. In this process you will make friends around the world, building a great network for your future career.

Being at Conference was such a high of amazing nonstop feelings, that coming home doesn’t compare. Yes, I missed my bed and I missed my friends, but arriving home was such a haze for me. I missed everyone at Conference and the energy of it all. Now it is time to take that intensity and energy and apply it to my piercing career. I cannot be thankful enough for those who helped me get to where I am in my career, and those who put faith in me by awarding me the Al D. Scholarship. One thing is for certain, I will be back next year, and I hope that I can join my piercing family again in volunteering and contributing to helping others have an amazing conference experience.

ANDRU ROGGE

Conference is a lot like summer camp. You’re nervous and afraid to go, but once you get there you never want it to end. This was my third year attending Conference. I have been lucky enough to have the opportunity to see Conference through three different lenses. I have been as a fresh-faced and new apprentice, as a piercer, and this year as a volunteer and scholar.

It was an honor to be chosen as an Al D. scholar, and I had an utterly amazing experience, which pushed me out of my “turtle shell” as Caitlin put it. I came home with a fire in my belly to make positive changes, big and small, as well as a desire to share the things I had learned with my shop family.

It was a great comfort knowing that there are still so many people out there like myself who have total love and passion for our industry and what we do. I also felt a deep sadness knowing that APP always comes to an end and we all have to head back to our respective corners of the

“Essential reading...”*

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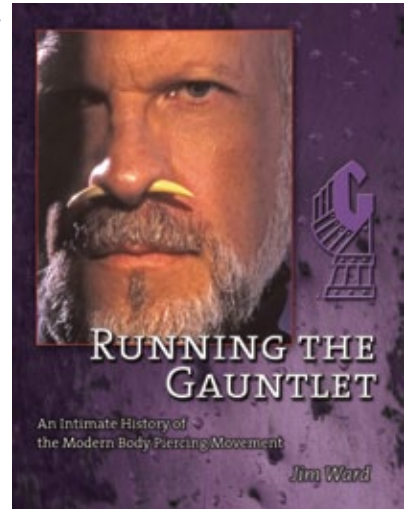
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR - ELAYNE ANGEL has been a professional piercer for more than 20 years and has performed over 40,000 piercings. She was awarded the President's Lifetime Achievement Award by the Association of Professional Piercers in 2006 and is a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

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world. There was so much laughter and enough memories to last a lifetime. It was a whirlwind of fun, work, and sleep deprivation all adding up to pure raw exhaustion. However, it was worth it every minute; I feel like I grew in many ways and for that I am truly thankful.

I now have a better understanding of all the hard work, sweat, tears, and endless amounts of time that Caitlin, the Board members, and volunteers put into making every year the best it can be. I just want to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for letting me be a part of this experience. I can't wait for next year.

BREE GRANT

From the moment I set foot into the hotel at the APP 2012 Conference, there was an electricity in the air. I must admit, since this was my first APP Conference, that it was a bit overwhelming (not to mention somewhat intimidating being in the same place as so many talented, like-minded, and beautiful people).

Receiving the Al D. scholarship definitely changed my life for the better, it was a dream come true. I had the chance to meet so many people whom I respect and could not wait to learn from. Just being able to talk shop with the other attendees was an eye-opening experience. Before I became an Al D. scholar, I never knew that working so hard could be so much fun.

If I had to give advice to anyone coming to Conference for the first time, it would be to come out of your shell and take advantage of all the knowledge people have to share. It may be intimidating seeing people who you may have admired from afar, but I urge you, take a deep breath, and go introduce yourself. You never know who you may meet or what you may learn.

There are so many reasons why Conference is worth the time and money to attend. The classes and workshops are exceptional, and full of useful knowledge. Even for those who are seasoned veterans in the industry, there is always something to be learned. The exposition speaks for itself, which is good as it may leave you speechless. There is more gorgeous jewelry than you could shake a stick at. At APP you will find the people are amazing, the learning is world class, and the fun, well it never stops. Volunteering for Conference was definitely an exceptional experience and I would do it all again in a second.



PRESIDENT'S AWARD WINNER: STEVE JOYNER

One of the things I looked forward to most when I first took my leadership position with the organization was that I would have the pleasure of presenting the President's Award. As a prior recipient (in 2006), I knew what a great honor it was to receive this recognition. I began to consider a deserving candidate. One name stuck with me: Steve Joyner, my esteemed colleague and friend.

Mr. Joyner is a long-time, major contributor to the APP mission of disseminating safe piercing information. He has served admirably as an advocate and representative of our industry for many years and in numerous situations. He's been a body piercer for a quarter century, and a member of the APP for sixteen of those years. Steve has been a mentor to many and often has worked behind the scenes. His presence and expertise has proved instrumental in many situations.

As an instructor, he's taught classes about suspension and body piercing at APP Conferences, BMXnet (in Germany), and other conferences throughout the world. He's also founder, director, and executive producer of the suspension performance troupe, Constructs of Ritual Evolution (CoRE).

I had the pleasure of serving with him for a three-year term on the Board of Directors when he was vice president of the organization. He founded the Legislation Committee during that term. He has continued to serve on that committee, and on both the Membership Committee and the Executive Committee.

In working with legislation, he has helped with body art regulations for at least twenty-five states and five different countries. More recently, he's been involved in assisting the legislators and Health Departments in California on the regulations for that state.

Congratulations to the 2012 recipient of the President's Award, Mr. Steve Joyner, and thank you for your dedicated service! **P**

—Elayne Angel, APP President

EDWARD "NED" MCCARTHY

If I had to describe my first Conference experience, I would have to say it was quite possibly the most influential week of my life. It was a rollercoaster of a week full of ups, downs, and surprises. I had the incredible opportunity to meet and bond with some of the most amazing friends that I will be able to grow and learn with for a lifetime. It was not necessary to stand with groups of people or be involved in conversation, I felt love even just standing in the middle of the conference hall. Being able to watch every person in attendance smiling, loving life, made this whole opportunity worthwhile to me.

I also had the opportunity to learn some amazing techniques from some of the most talented practitioners in our industry and to learn directly from my role models. I came away from this weeklong conference not only with thoughts of applying the techniques but how I work within this industry, as well as how to be a better person. I feel more level headed, confident and an all around happier since I have returned home. I will be back again every single year that it is physically possible for me to attend. It is an experience that I will look forward to every single year. I would not trade that week for anything in the world. **P**

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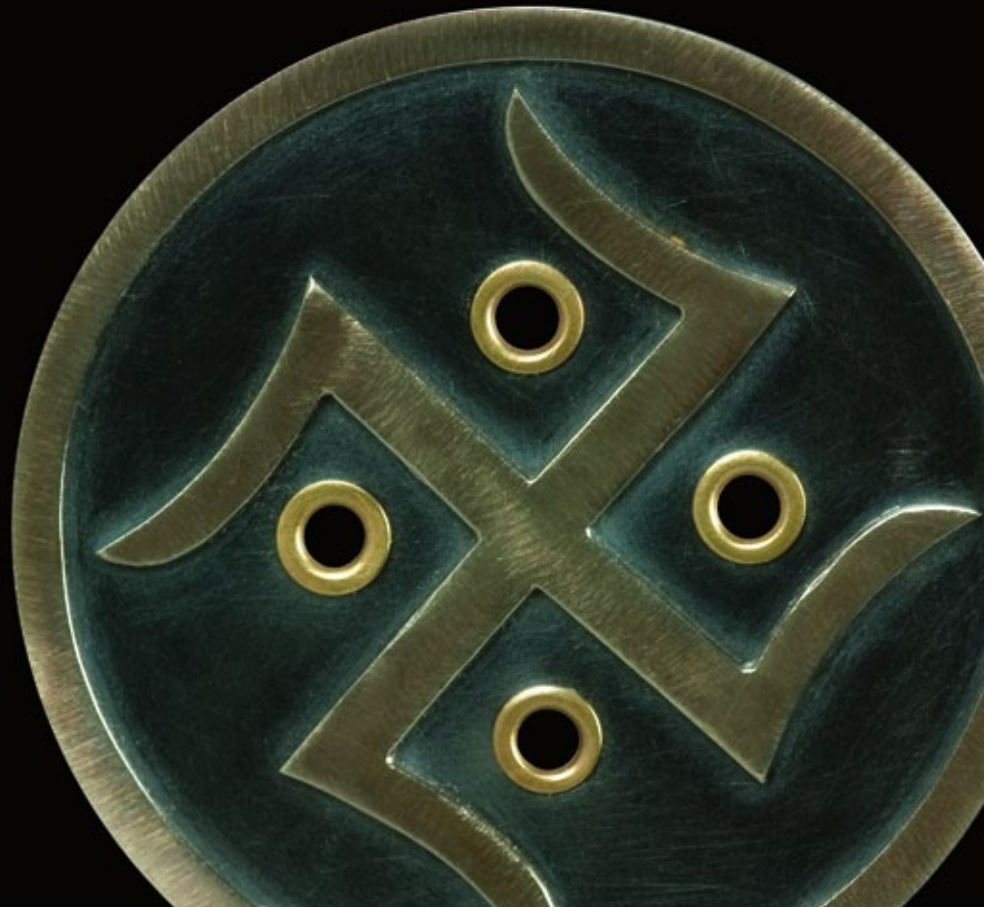
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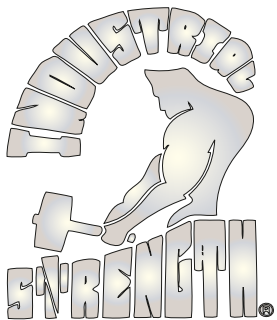
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