

THE POINT

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The Association of Professional Piercers
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IN REVIEW—THE 2003 APP AMSTERDAM CONFERENCE

The APP returned to Amsterdam for its second full scale conference November 3–7, 2003. Piercers from throughout Europe, North America and South America were in attendance making this event one of the most diverse to date.

The venue, the Beurs Van Berlage, recently underwent a €15,000,000.00 renovation and provided a visage of opulence to the event. It was impossible to escape a sense of history when surrounded by the magnificent brickwork, mosaics and understated statuary. Although initially designed as the region's commodities exchange hall, the Socialist ideals of the architect are inescapable. Mosaics depicting the working class are prominent throughout the facility. It continues to be a source of great consideration that the venue be available to all peoples. This was reflected in the welcoming and helpful attitude of their executives and staff members.

In addition to classes and the Vendor Exposition, a meeting was held for the board members of European Piercing Associations. Attendance for this portion of the conference far exceeded our expectations. We found that all associations face similar obstacles: widespread skepticism and limited resources and participation. A database is being formed with contact information and particulars for all of these Associations. There will be an article devoted solely to these organizations in the next issue of this newsletter.

Having encountered the language barrier during the 2002 conference, translation groups were formed consisting of a single translator with those needing assistance. This system worked well and will likely be adopted for any future needs of this kind during Las Vegas events.



Beurs Van Berlage, the Conference venue

The APP will not be returning overseas for another full-scale conference in the foreseeable future. However, the organization, the board, and much of the general membership maintain a commitment to the European piercing community and its needs. In addition to providing education and networking possibilities for European piercers, the 2002 and 2003 European conferences have provided invaluable information and experience as regards the different needs of the international piercing community. The APP will be researching how to

include more universal education, i.e., millimeter-to-gauge conversions, EC updates, and differing aftercare and supply availability, etc. into its Las Vegas curriculum.

Several attendees expressed surprise that although many of the class names were the same, the course content had often been drastically updated and modified from the previous year. They were pleased that there was as much to learn taking the courses the second time as there was the first. In addition,

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Snapshots from the Amsterdam Conference



From the top:
French Association—www.aperf.com
Belgian Association—www.vlaamsepiercingbond.org
Italian Association—www.aptpi.org
Re-forming Swiss Association—www.piercerverband.ch
German Association—www.opp-ev.de
Dutch Association—www.vppn.nl



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Although the APP has undergone some public relations improvements over the last few years, there are still a lot of misconceptions regarding the function on the organization. Many assume that the APP is a regulatory entity. This is not the case. The following is an excerpt from a document currently in use by the APP that clarifies the function of the organization:



What is the APP?

The APP is a non profit corporation, class 501 (c) (6). This classification is available to non-charity, educational, trade associations. Corporate status is currently held within California, in the United States. Although a variety of membership categories are available, the primary function of the Associations is: the dissemination of health and safety information with regard to body piercing to piercers, health care providers, law makers and to the general public.

How did it start?

In 1994 representatives from several piercing studios organized as a political action group to address concerns with legislation, (proposition AB101) in California. Due largely to the early efforts of Michaela Grey of Gauntlet, Inc., the organization quickly grew to accommodate members and provide viable representation for the piercing profession. The APP is now an international, nonprofit, educational, health, and safety organization. The APP membership consists of piercers and piercing apprentices who meet both personal and environmental criteria, companies that provide crucial goods and services to the industry, and members of the general public and the medical community who support the efforts of the APP.

How does the APP benefit the piercing community?

- **Establishing Guidelines:**
As body piercing grows in popularity so does the need for guidelines. These guidelines have allowed piercers and studio owners to establish business practices based on 'industry standards.' This provides greater legal protection for practitioners and is instrumental in outreach efforts to legislators and the medical community. Information is constantly becoming available and the APP's guidelines evolve accordingly.
- **Education for piercers:**
The primary outlet for the education of piercers has been the APP's annual conference. The first meeting with classes was held in Orlando Florida, USA in the spring of 1997. There were just over 100 piercers in attendance. From 1998 to the present the event has been held in Las Vegas Nevada, USA. Over that time attendance has increased to approximately 1000 in 2003, and available courses have tripled. In an effort to keep this education affordable the price of admission has increased only once since 1997. During 2002 and 2003 additional conferences were held in Europe. The APP Procedure Manual provides thorough guidelines for studio improvement, infection control, and general health and safety issues which often arise in a studio setting.
- **Education for healthcare providers and lawmakers:**
Participation in the American Public Health Association conference has been instrumental in outreach to all branches of the health care community. Participation in national and regional health related conferences is strongly suggested. It is neutral ground on which to meet with health

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- International Liaison . . . Alicia Cardenas
- Medical Coordinator Elayne Angel

Board Member contact information is available online at:
www.safepiercing.org/contact.html

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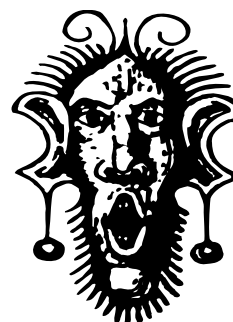
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THE NOSTRIL PHENOMENON

by Alicia Cardenas—Twisted Sol, Denver

Maybe it was Lenny Kravitz or Christina Aguilera who made it popular, but the nostril piercing has come to dominate the tongue and “bellybutton” nation and it is here to stay. Because nostril piercing may be the most popular piercing in our field today, I’d like to present the pros and

cons of each nostril jewelry option and discuss some trouble zones that seem to be common as regards the infamous nostril.

Since the great modern rise in popularity of this ancient adornment, there is an abundance of piercers who are untrained in the selection and insertion of nostril jewelry. I have gained much experience in troubleshooting this particular piercing due to the fact that many local practitioners are not educated in the steps necessary to custom-select a piece of jewelry for each of the many diverse individuals getting this body modification. Each and every client has a different story and often, very different anatomy. There isn’t only one particular piece of jewelry or technique that will work well for everyone; as a matter of fact I have seen a multitude of different ways of doing this piercing well and painlessly.

The information I will present here is how I break it all down and decide what is best for each individual. There are many factors in choosing the right piece of jewelry and performing a good procedure that doesn’t have any negative long-term effects. In addition, we as piercers have an obligation to help clients who have come to us for assistance with an existing piercing that is healing poorly or experiencing complications. So information here is not only about initial piercings, but for older and healed ones as well.

As I thoroughly scrub out the interior of my client’s nostril I try to remind them to breathe through their mouth because the smell of Techni-Care can be somewhat strong. They usually can’t help but acknowledge what an incredibly strange feeling it is to have someone else clean out their nostril. I lighten the scenario by reminding the client that my job is great because (in my best announcer voice) “I get to boldly go where no man has gone before.” We giggle and continue. While explaining the aftercare I am always sure to remind the client how important it is to keep the initial jewelry in for the entire healing period. If the jewelry needs to

be adjusted, anyone at the shop will be happy to do that for them. I also explain how facial cleansers, body and hair sprays, lotion and/or makeup can build up in the inside of the nose. I advise them that a good rule of thumb would be to make sure it is the last thing cleaned before leaving the house....

Nostril Screws

The design of the nostril screw is quite simple. It is a stud without a bacteria-harboring backing piece. Instead, there is only the small curl of the jewelry, custom-bent to line the natural curve of the nostril interior, keeping the jewelry in place. Usually nostril screws are 20g or 18g but sometimes thicker. There is a left-side bend and a right-side bend. It takes an experienced piercer to look up someone’s nose, calculate the thickness, give room for some swelling and match a curve to a nose without causing barbs on the piece of jewelry with the bending pliers. When I began piercing I was only taught to insert rings. I feared the lack of knowledge I had about nostril screw jewelry. It was not until we hired on Tess Preston at Twisted Sol did the nostril screw re-invent itself to me. Tess bends a superior screw.

She said one day as we were discussing the different bends, “Simply make the first bend while eyeing the nose for thickness; hold it up to the face like an L on the side that you will pierce and bend the stem away from you.” I’ll never forget her description; it’s my bending mantra.

Inserting the wrong side bend will result in the jewelry wandering into view, never comfortably tucking up into the nose. I cannot stress strongly enough the importance of a custom bend specifically for the left or right side of the face, and how vital it is that the length of the post portion be made for the client’s nose thickness. There are super-small nostril clients who will insist that the jewelry is too large, no matter how well bent. They very well may need a smaller size all-around, which can be ordered shorter from the manufacturer, or you may need to shorten the jewelry. There are many shops that do these adjustments in-house by cutting and filing the end of the screw. This usually requires that the client leave the jewelry to be sterilized, cut, filed, run through the ultrasonic, autoclaved and then re-inserted. The softer the jewelry, such as 20ga gold, the better the conformation to the interior of the nostril. There are also great variations on how tight the curl should be, depending on the individual nostril.

An overly tight nostril curl can be painful to extract.

Nostril Screw bent in an L-bend only

Using a standard, unbent nostril screw, bend it into an L shape in relatively equal dimensions for both sections. The benefit of this piece of jewelry is the amount of space allowed for larger anatomy and for swelling. The insertion is easy but must be guided carefully so as to not scrape the septum, and also the piece is fairly easily lost, so give a good warning against using cloth or loofah on the face, or even an aggressive rub. I personally use this bend for individuals with larger nostrils, including most men. The downfall is that unless the client has unusually wide nostrils, this jewelry will remain pointing up towards the sinuses, and can't spin down into sight like the nostril screw. Cleaning it must be done carefully with a cotton swab, making sure to cleanse the entire length, moving the post portion minimally back and forth. One benefit is that the inside portion can't creep out into view, because it is too far up the nasal cavity. Also, this style can easily be bent into a normal nostril screw if needed.

Titanium Mini-Barbell

For most of my career I had never used an 18ga barbell. The only ones available were externally threaded and I would only insert internally threaded jewelry into an initial piercing. The smallest internally threaded jewelry was 16ga, so that was the smallest barbell I used. But customers often insist on the thinnest nose jewelry available, so the 16g barbell never worked for nostrils. The answer: mini titanium press-fit barbells.

The 18g and 16g titanium miniature bars come in a variety of lengths. They are not threaded, but have a snap-fit closure design. Since they are titanium they can be anodized to fit your colorful-jewelry needs. This design allows the wearer to switch out one end easily so they have more options available. This jewelry can be inserted from the outside in, or the inside out. Press-fit mini bars may be the best option for anyone with multiple nostril piercings; it minimizes clutter inside the nose and allows room for breathing and nose blowing. If a client insists on a nose bone, this is a similar but superior option. Keep in mind that titanium jewelry will tend to lose its color in healed and fresh piercings.

Nose Bones

"An important aspect of this jewelry design is the size of the bottom or interior bead. If the next size gauge is a full 25% bigger than the shaft, then the bottom ball should be 12-15% bigger and no more" – Brian Skellie, Piercing Experience.

Shops across the country commonly carry and sell these pieces. The size is alluring but the consequences can be very uncomfortable. In my personal opinion, whoever the genius was who invented this piece of jewelry should have to wear one for half a year and then proceed to tear it back out. That alone should be punishment for this substandard jewelry design.

Although I have had negative experiences with the

nose bone, there is a small community of piercees who have relaxed, healed nostril piercings and they can comfortably wear this design if they are careful about taking it in and out. I suggest removing it only in a very hot shower.

Many of the nose bones on the market are made from sterling silver. This metal is never appropriate to wear in a fresh piercing for many reasons. One is that it tarnishes quickly in the body and another is that the nickel content can leech into the skin, causing a negative reaction. Did you know the tarnish from silver jewelry can permanently "tattoo" a piercing hole black? Well, I've seen it happen more than a few times in nostril, navel, ear lobe and ear cartilage piercings. The long-term effect of wearing silver jewelry in a piercing is a hole that is permanently darkened or completely discolored. Putting high quality jewelry in it for the rest of your life is about your only option for concealment, unless you want people asking about your "dot tattoo."

Between the design and the material you can believe that I have seen well over a hundred reactions this year alone from nose bone jewelry. Not only because of the unsuitable material but also because the design literally causes tearing of the inner lining of a fresh or healed piercing when the jewelry is inserted or removed. I have cut nose bones out of the nostril. Yes, cut them out. I would rather remove a collapsed piece of silver through the piercing than drag a ball, designed to hold the jewelry in place, through a constricted piercing. I use the nostril screw bending pliers that have a sharp interior cutting edge. Rather than a quick yank, it's a smooth little snap-and-remove. Clients hardly feel a thing and I can be sure that piece of jewelry will not be used again. AMEN.

What happens when nostril jewelry becomes imbedded in the tissue?

You have a few choices when a client comes in to see you due to an imbedded nostril screw. First, you must find out why it has become imbedded in the first place. Is the jewelry appropriate? Is it undersized? At what angle was the piercing placed? Is there a metal reaction? What part did the client play? When troubleshooting, you can never ask too many questions.

- If the jewelry is too short or there is hypertrophic scarring on the interior, you can suggest carefully removing the nostril screw and replacing it with a ring. That will allow room for the swelling and cleaning, and make it possible to keep the piercing. Many people do not care to ever wearing a ring so they are more likely to abandon the piercing, rather than switch it out for a ring, even temporarily.
- You can remove the nostril screw, and, assuming it is essentially appropriate jewelry, re-bend it with a longer post and carefully re-insert it. However, because gravity will cause a small jewelry head to fall back into the hole it was previously imbedded in, this doesn't usually work. We at Twisted Sol have found a way to

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James Green on

Selling Gold Jewelry

Selling gold jewelry can increase your profits and the image of your studio. Many shops carry only a limited selection of gold due to the high initial cost, and rely instead on catalogs to special order gold jewelry for their customers. In some cases this makes sense due to the wide variety of products available and limited funds to stock a store. There are some "bread and butter" items, however, that should be part of every store's inventory. Captive bead rings, nostril screws and barbells are sure sellers. Although these gold items may take a little longer to move, the increased profit will offset the investment needed to carry a basic assortment of high quality gold products.

The old saying "if you don't have it, you can't sell it" is especially true when it comes to higher-end gold jewelry. Most fine jewelry purchases are done on a whim and people don't want to order it and come back later. They see it, they want it, they buy it. When you consider what it costs to get a customer to come into your shop, be it simple Yellow Page advertising or word of mouth, you don't want them to leave empty handed. If they are coming in for an initial piercing your selection of gold jewelry can keep them coming back to upgrade. Make no mistake about it, you are not only selling piercing but you are in the jewelry business as well. If you carry only stainless steel, what keeps your hard-earned customers from buying at the mall or wherever they can get it cheaper? As a professional, your studio and the products you sell should reflect your commitment to excellence. Gold jewelry enhances a shop's image and sets it apart from other stores.

How do you go about carrying a selection of gold jewelry? Start by looking at what you sell the most of in stainless steel. What sizes and styles sell the best in steel? A well-stocked store will move 30% of those items in gold. Listen to what your customers are asking for and keep a wish list of items that people ask for that you don't currently carry. It's important to have a place to write it down and instruct your staff to do so as well. If you do your research you will have a very good idea where to start and what to order. You may want to start small and order only a small percentage of what you think will sell. That's okay, but you must maintain that inventory or you end up back where you started. A good plan is to not only maintain but also to expand your inventory as sales increase. Keep track of how long it takes to move each item so you can hone in on what to order next time.

Most fine jewelry purchases are done on a whim and people don't want to order it and come back later. They see it, they want it, they buy it.

I can't tell you how many stores have called me and ordered one nostril screw and want it shipped C.O.D. So you have shipping fees plus C.O.D. charges which can amount to more than the cost of the nostril screw. It's a shame I'm not making any money on shipping; in fact I lose on shipping. The shop ordering one nostril screw can't be making much after paying for shipping, so they must be doing it for customer service. The only one making money is Fed Ex or some other carrier. It doesn't have to be that way if you do a few things to keep your costs down.

Use a credit card for smaller orders. That will save you \$7.50 in C.O.D. charges in the case of Fed Ex. Ask your supplier what your shipping options are for pre-paid orders. For example, I offer priority mail for \$5.00 on small pre-paid orders and it gets most places in 2 to 3 days. This saves a few dollars. The best way is to take

advantage of free shipping on larger orders by planning ahead and ordering on a regular basis. Another option is to get together with other shops and form a co-op to take advantage of quantity discounts and free shipping.

Although gold jewelry costs considerably more than stainless steel, your profits are proportionately more. A typical mark-up is 2.25 times the cost for items under \$250.00. So a \$27.00 dia-

mond nostril screw would retail at \$67.50. That's a \$40 profit. Compare that to the profit from a stainless steel nostril screw and I think you can see my point.

The more diverse your inventory, the greater your chance of selling higher-end items. Wouldn't you like to sell a diamond navel bar and make \$200 on the sale? You may not carry such an item in stock, but if you had the same piece in stock set with a cubic zirconia (CZ) your customer can get a good idea of what it will look like. If you start with the basic items and slowly build up your inventory, your studio could be known as the place to go for gold.

Over the years I have seen that there are stores who can sell gold jewelry and do a very good job of it. One thing these shops have in common is that they educate themselves on what makes a quality product and order only the best and they pass this on to their customers. They also know their inventory and how to manage it.

James Green is the owner of Clayton Limited Editions a manufacturer of gold body piercing jewelry. James has been in the jewelry business for 28 years. He is the former gold manufacturing manager for Gauntlet and has been producing gold body jewelry for 8 years. You can reach James at www.claytonlimited.com

Oral Piercings & Yeast Infections

by Elayne Angel
Rings of Desire, New Orleans



I regularly receive calls and e-mail from piercees and occasionally from piercers concerned about the safety of drinking beer or eating certain foods during the healing of a tongue (or other oral) piercing.

Apparently there seems to be a lot of confusion on this point and I wanted to help set the record straight.

It is indeed unwise to drink much alcohol of any sort during initial healing, as that can result in additional swelling or bleeding in a fresh piercing, due to thinning of the blood. Also, intoxicated individuals are more likely to fail to clean and care for new piercings properly. Once initial swelling is down, moderate alcohol consumption is acceptable.

What is commonly called a yeast infection is a condition called Candidiasis. In the oral cavity, it is termed Thrush. This is a group of microscopic fungi or yeast. These fungi live on all surfaces of our bodies, but under certain conditions they can become so numerous as to overgrow, resulting in problems.

Symptoms of thrush may include:

- White curd-like patches on the palate, throat, tongue, or on the lips at the corner of the mouth. These may or may not be painful.
- Red, bleeding skin if white patches are scraped off.
- Low-grade fever.
- Presence of other illnesses.
- General sick feeling.
- Loss of appetite.

The mouth normally contains many microorganisms. One of these normal microorganisms is the fungus *Candida Albicans*, which is the same fungus associated with vaginal yeast infections and other *Candida* infections. The growth of *Candida* is normally kept under control by the presence of normal oral bacteria. When the nor-

mal bacteria are not present, the yeast overgrows.

Uncontrolled overgrowth of *Candida* in the mouth may be caused by factors that reduce the natural resistance, such as illness, stress, long-term use of medications that suppress the immune system, and immune disorders such as AIDS.

In the case of healing oral piercings, oral thrush is almost always caused by an overuse of Listerine or other strong, alcohol-containing mouth rinse. This kills off all of the healthy flora that is protective, allowing the yeast to overgrow.

So, it is a fallacy that drinking beer (or ingesting dairy products, eating bread, or any other ordinary food or beverage) will cause a yeast infection or other such complication in an oral piercing. Any food that is comfortable to eat is fine, just so long as the piercee cleanses according to the instructions. Just make sure they stay away from the Listerine if you want them to avoid an oral yeast infection!

See the APP web site for detailed care guidelines at:
<http://www.safepiercing.org/oralAftercare.html>

For more on thrush see the resources below:

- The National Institutes of Health U.S. National Library of Medicine Encyclopedia:
<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000966.htm>
- e-medicine Consumer health:
<http://www.emedicinehealth.com/articles/16031-1.asp>
- Discovery Health:
<http://health.discovery.com/diseasesandcond/encyclopedia/2294.html>



Answers from

AWARE

Aware is a modern folk-art emporium, specializing in body modifications such as piercing (large gauge & dermal punching), tattooing, and thermal arts (branding & cauterization). We also showcase an array of local artists' work throughout the shop, and take pride in having a visually stimulating and diverse aesthetic. We are most interested in the complete experience within our shop aside from the actual body work. This experience combines atypical musical selections, much of which is played on the shops turntables, intense visual stimuli, enveloping scents, and the friendliest staff this side of the Pecos! We all truly love and respect our professions, and use our wide base of knowledge and experience within the body art industry to create a unique and professional event for every single person we work on/ work with. It is our intention for every customer to enter a space unlike any other they have experienced.

We choose Aware as the shop name not to be cute or cheeky, but for its amazing definition that we believe captures our shop's ideology. Aware, pronounced ah-WAH-ray is a Japanese word that refers not to the external world but to the human quality of recognizing and feeling the various ephemeral and aesthetic aspects of the world. Aware alludes to "beauty in the eye of the beholder" qualities of our industry; some people see our art forms as attractive and enhancing, others do not. That's Aware. We also understood that the American translation of this word will be appropriate for our shop vision as well, thus Aware was adopted as the shop moniker. We are NOT simply pronouncing anew the English word to sound trendy or cool, as has been assumed by some within this industry.

Our diverse backgrounds as individuals and professionals allow for the staff to be highly self-motivated, intuitive and thorough in all our endeavors. Both Kitten and Jeff apprenticed at Gauntlet LA in the early 90's. They left the 'City of Angels' (or devils in most cases), in 1997, to pursue a less hectic and magnified lifestyle in the lovely town of Santa Fe, New Mexico. Prior to their body piercing jobs, both ladies—yes, Jeff is still a woman—pursued college educations.

Kitten, a graduate of San Francisco College of Mortuary Science, brings a unique spin on 'transitional situa-

tions,' like body piercing, allowing for a terrific experience for customers. Additionally, Kitten currently is pursuing further education in hospice care and grief counseling. We all benefit from Kitten's remarkable bedside manner, and amazing adeptness and skill as a piercer and 'thermal artist,' making her the most requested practitioner at the shop.

Jeff is a graduate from UCLA, where she split her time majoring in Sociology, and leading the Women's Track and Field Team to Pac 10 championships. A four time all-American shot-putter, Jeff learned the meaning of discipline and self motivation. It is this background that fuels her current self determination to finish her in-progress MBA program, and work toward writing appropriate and up-to-date legislation for the Body Art industry in New Mexico.

Weston, Jeff and Kitten's first apprentice, is an adept and intuitive piercer, who came to Aware after an amazing career as a professional chef. Cheffing around the globe, Weston couples his knowledge of cross contamination with the speed and agility gained only through intense kitchen demands. You may all recognize this guy either for his astounding head of hair, or his witty and off-beat humor. Being a Caddo Indian, Weston brings a unique respect and observance of ceremony, ritual, and cultural awareness to this industry.

Rounding out the small staff of 4, lovely Kirsten hails from Florida, via Munich Germany. Kirsten has been tattooing for 3 years and is creating a strong and diverse portfolio at Aware. She has a penchant for meat tattoos, floral designs, and custom work. A graduate of Bennington College, Kirsten's Fine Art background gives her a solid foundation to further all her visual arts... She's a rockin' painter to boot!

The current unification this industry has experienced has allowed the Aware crew to meet and work with the best practitioners and innovators in the industry. Both Jeffy and Kitten have visited down in New Orleans, LA to work with the fantastic staff at Rings of Desire, while Weston recently returned from a gig out in San Francisco at Cold Steel.

Having been inaugural members of the APP while at Gauntlet, Jeff and Kitten returned to the fold with a new respect for the direction and vision of this organization.

All three piercers are members in good standing, and enjoy the visits to APP events in Las Vegas and last year's Amsterdam event, which Jeff and Kitten attended.

The present industry fusion is very exciting to Aware, considering these ladies' early days in the profession were tainted with industrial infighting, name calling, and 'technique protection' rallies. It seems many individuals involved in the earlier days are now letting go of the many animosities and issues that plagued them and prevented them from really connecting with one-another. We all need to respect each other's training, background and methodologies, in order to move forward as an industry and collective. This connection as a community made up of wonderfully diverse techniques and individuals and shops is a great credit to our burgeoning industry. From implants, to suspensions, shaved heads or long dreads, this industry is bigger and more eclectic than ever, and Aware gives respect and admiration to everyone for following their vision.

Business name: Aware (ah-WAH-ray)

Year Established: 1999

Owners: Karin Swinney (Kitten) & Jennifer Middleton (Jeff)

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FAX: (505) 986-3886

Website: www.awarebodyart.com

Number of employees: enough to get the job done!





Left: Gorak Nath Painting at Khajuraho Temple Complex from the early 19th century.

Paul King on

THE CONCH PIERCING

—Part 2

Dear Readers,

As luck would have it, I came across some great additions to the Conch Piercing article from POINT 26 and I wanted to share them with you. First, the women of the Lashi and Maru practice conch piercing. These women belong to sub-groups of the Kachin tribe located in the N'Mai Hka valley in Burma, near the Chinese border.

It seems that for them, the conch piercing is mostly utilitarian rather than for ornamental or spiritual reasons. The women like to suspend heavy silver earrings from their lobes. Most peoples of the world who wear heavy earrings that need a little lift will support them with string wrapped behind their ears or to the other earring via a string behind the head. Some will even support heavy earrings by clipping additional connectors to the hair. However the Lashi and the Maru run cotton ropes through their conchae to help carry the load.

The second point of interest I would like to share is a very provocative painting from the temple complex at Khajuraho, in India. These Gorak Nath folks look like they know how to have a good time.

I'm heading to India tomorrow, if I don't come back don't bother searching for me!

For more information on the Conch Piercing or the Gorak Nath, please see the previous issue.

Just Say No!

It seems that with all of the negative press and constant scrutiny our industry is under, it is time for us as a community to stand up and take responsibility for the health and well being of our clients. Our clients routinely have no knowledge of metals, age requirements, types of jewelry, or sobriety policies. Their focus is on decorating their body with a cute piece of jewelry just like their friend's. I believe it is my responsibility as their piercer to make sure they receive what is healthiest for that individual. Sometimes that requires me to say, "No."

For me that is sometimes very difficult. I am generally a people-pleaser, which is the main reason I love my job. But after 6 years piercing I find it increasingly necessary to turn away clientele. The following are some of the instances it is important we evaluate each client and, when necessary, decline to pierce them.

Age:

The various state and local laws on this subject will dictate a lot for us. Obviously, that will be the minimum standard you should follow. But for me the state law is a little too lenient. Texas state law basically allows anyone under the age of 18 to be pierced as long as their parent presents proper identification and remains present with them.

Does that mean a nine-year-old girl who wants her navel pierced can legally get it done? YES. Does that mean I should have serious reservations about performing that piercing? Absolutely.

My view is that not every client will be the same. In our studio the minimum age for any piercing (including ears) is fourteen. That doesn't mean that every fourteen year old should be pierced, not even most. We evaluate each client on an individual basis. We speak to the parent and the client to see if they are committed to the aftercare of their piercing. If they aren't willing to sit down for a consultation first (including their parent) then obviously they aren't mature enough to handle a piercing.

Minimum age requirements are a debatable subject, and the A.P.P. has no official standards other than this:

Regardless of any local legislation being more lenient, the following is an appropriate 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.

But I did some research on our board members' shop policies and the majority do not pierce anyone under the age of sixteen (except earlobes). Again, you will be the ones to decide what is best for your shop and your clients. The important thing to remember is these are individuals, and in this case the individual is a minor. If you have any concern that the piercing would be a bad idea for that minor, then "No" is the right answer.

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by Jennifer Yopez

*Randy Adams Tattoo
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Emu Oil: Miracle Oil or Bird Juice?

Caution: This article may not be suitable for vegetarians. Read at your own risk.

Many of us have seen clients (or staff members) with the tell-tale signs of rapid or careless stretching—flaky, dry skin and the thinned, strained tissue which looks more ready to snap than to support future stretches. Suggestions for thickening the tissue have ranged from using or avoiding weights to carefully placed 20 ga rings or cuts, massage, cocoa butter and prayer. My litany to clients has been that, once the circulation is gone and the tissue is damaged, their only options are to remove the jewelry, increase massage, and remind all their friends not to stretch so quickly. However, a piercer* recently pointed out that there is another product on the market that is reputed to stimulate cell regeneration and thicken thin skin—emu oil.

As its name suggests, emu oil is indeed oil derived from the emu, whose name means “thunder chicken.” The emu is a large brown-black ratite, or “flightless bird” related to the ostrich and kiwi bird. They are indigenous to Australia, and have long been valued for their meat and fat, and their incredible breeding abilities. The average emu grows to 5–6 feet and approximately 110

pounds, and females can lay 400 to 1000 eggs in a 20-year breeding lifespan.

Unbeknownst to many of us, emu farming took hold in the US in 1990 and has quietly been growing ever since. The mainstay of the industry has been its low-fat meat, which is a new darling of the American Heart Association. However, the feathers, toenails, beaks and green eggs of the bird are also marketable, as is the rendered or refined oil, which commands a high price in the cosmetics industry. Due to a number of recent university and medical studies, the demand for emu oil for pharmaceutical and cosmetic use is on the rise.

Australian Aborigines traditionally used the melted fat of the emu as a topical treatment for burns, wounds and other injuries, and massaged it into painful joints and muscles. One method of treatment called for wrapping the injured person in the hide of a freshly killed emu and sitting the person in the sun. The sun’s heat would melt the emu fat, which would then soak into the patient’s skin.

In modern times, emu oil enthusiasts have recommended the product for a variety of uses, both externally and internally. The oil is said to lower cholesterol levels, ease pain when ingested, and soothe rheumatoid arthritis or sore muscles when massaged into the area. Various emu industry sources recommend it for everything from bruises to carpal tunnel syndrome and ADD. It is said to be antimicrobial, antiviral and anti-inflammatory. But more importantly for our purposes, emu oil is reported to speed wound healing, diminish scar tissue and thicken skin. Importantly, these claims have been backed by independent and government research. In this last application, emu oil may provide an

answer to the problem of careless or skill-less stretching.

The evidence:

According to the American Emu Association (AEA), emu oil has been proven as a natural non-comedogenic emollient, capable of transdermal penetration and thickening skin by up to 14% when applied twice daily at 100%. AEA-commissioned studies at the University of Massachusetts (2002) demonstrated that the oil does have anti-inflammatory and transdermal properties, and can be useful for carrying medications such as anesthetics into the skin. According to Alexander Zemstov, MD, MS, a double-blind study at the Indiana University School of Medicine concluded that the oil is “non-irritating, highly moisturizing and nurturing to the skin.”

A three-year study initiated in 1995 by Dr. John Griswold of the Timothy J. Harnar Burn Center in Texas (and funded by the AEA) analyzed the use of emu oil for healing re-epithelialized burn wounds. The results indicated a statistically significant reduction of scarring and inflammation of wounds treated with emu oil rather than traditional agents.

Australian doctors, some of whom have been using the oil for a decade or longer, report significant improvement in recently formed keloid or hypertrophic tissue when treated with emu oil. Twice daily application of the oil is also noted to inhibit the formation of new scar tissue.

In a study that was published in several medical journals, Dr. Michael Holick, MD, PhD, Professor of Medicine, Physiology, and Dermatology at Boston University School of Medicine, used emu oil in a double-blind study of skin and hair regrowth on mice. He remarked, “We found that there was about a 20% increase

in DNA synthesis, which means that there was a 20% increase in the proliferative activity, or the growth activity of the skin in the animals that received (a processed emu oil), compared to the animals that received corn oil." Other private studies demonstrated that the addition of emu oil could significantly increase the rate of proliferation of a cultured fibroblast cell line by up to 34%.

The Journal of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons reported that an emu oil lotion (comprised of emu oil, vitamin E oil and an unnamed "botanical oil") had a varying effect on wound tissue. When the lotion was applied immediately post op, the test group showed an initial delay in healing. However, an application at 24 or 48 hours post op doubled the rate of epithelialization, wound contraction and organized granuloma tissue infiltration (i.e. positive healing). They recommended therefore that the oil only be used on wounds after initial epithelialization (tissue growth) had occurred.

As to the antimicrobial/antiviral properties of the oil, these may be emu suppliers' fables. The Rural Industries Research and Development Council, a highly regarded subsidiary of the Australian government, commissioned emu oil studies at several major universities and medical research labs. The results showed that, though the oil is conclusively anti-inflammatory, it shows no consistent antimicrobial or anti-fungal action. (The virus refrigerator malfunctioned, so those results were discarded.) Furthermore, while no wound contracting action was found on the deep excisional wounds tested, the studies' authors admitted that evidence encouraged the oil's use for healing surface wounds, burns and scars. Unfortunately, since no known animal model exists for the examination of emu oil's affect on either these wounds or on scarring, they concluded that, "there is insufficient reason to justify the expense of a quantitative epithelialization study."

Although the RIRDC (the authority on all things Australian and pharmaceutical) could not verify it, the clinical evidence seems to support the emu oil industry's claims that the oil can increase the rate at which surface wounds heal, decrease existing scarring and swelling, thicken and rejuvenate skin, and keep new scar tissue from forming. However, results suggest that the oil should not be applied to fresh wounds, but only to those that are at least 24 hours old. Since our industry's primary use for this oil would be the care of thinned or scarred tissue, this should not be an issue. In vivo trials predict visible results within three days, although longer application is generally necessary.

Why it works:

According to Dr. Leigh Hopkins, a consulting pharmacist of the emu industry, the oil works on the epidermis to plump and hydrate existing cells. More importantly,

it is effective at a dermal level, where cells are capable of dividing and differentiating. He believes its healing properties for a wide range of differing pathologies derive from its ability to bring body processes back into normal balance. Where skin cells are not reproducing, it stimulates growth. In cases of inflammation or hypertrophic scarring where overproduction is the problem, it may actually hinder uncontrolled cell behavior. Hopkins explains that "[E]mu oil helps to normalize basic cellular function, and enable the body to progress with what should be normal healing." Hopkins also believes emu oil's beneficial effects cannot be attributed to any one oil constituent, but rather to its specific combination of fatty acids (linoleic, oleic, palmitic, stearic, palmitoleic) and compounds. He states that its usefulness for a broad range of disease conditions indicates that the oil's chief healing mechanism is nutritional in nature.

Nutritionally, emu oil is rich in Essential Fatty Acids, which aid oxygen transfer, hemoglobin production and cell membrane health. These acids include Omega-3 (oleic) acid, which is known to be useful as a local anti-inflammatory and for lowering cholesterol, and Omega-6 (linoleic) acid, which contributes to the health of cell membranes, and is used in the cells' metabolic and nutrient distributing processes.

When linoleic acid is combined with gammolenic acid (also found in emu oil), it forms prostaglandins, which are found most notably in human breastmilk. Prostaglandins are thought to be essential for the growth and development of cell tissue and have been shown to increase epithelializa-

tion when applied topically to skin wounds. They are also involved in immune function, both encouraging the body to fight infection and keeping the natural inflammatory response under control.

The skin-penetrating quality of the oil may be attributable to its lack of phospholipids, or phosphorus compounds, which our skin is programmed to block out. Because the oil's composition so closely mimics our skin's natural chemistry, it is readily absorbed and its nutrients are easily put into circulation.

In the shop:

Jeremiah Toller, (formerly of Ground Zero, Muncie, Indiana; more recently of Halo, Phoenix, Arizona), was introduced to emu oil by family members who used it for arthritis pain and suggested he try it in his massage practice. Instead, he began using it on himself and his piercing clients for thinned skin, hypertrophic scarring and blowouts. He reports having excellent results and an encouraging response from his clients, who like that it is odorless and non-greasy.

Toller suggests massaging a tiny amount of the full strength oil into scarred or thinned tissue for five minutes, twice a day. Improvement may be apparent in as

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The oil is said to lower cholesterol levels, ease pain when ingested, and soothe rheumatoid arthritis or sore muscles when massaged into the area.

INTERVIEWING & HIRING EMPLOYEES

**by Crystal Sims-Taylor
Evolution Body Piercing**

Welcome to the first article in a series covering basic aspects of employee management. In this issue, we will discuss how to use a job application and an interview to find the right employee for the position you need to fill. Whether it is a counter person, piercer, manager or something else you are seeking, the research you will need to do and the questions you will ask are similar. This article is intended to help you define your own priorities, so you will know when you have found someone who meets them.

Jim Ward, the founder and owner of Gauntlet, also offers this bit of hiring advice: "If you really value your friends, think long and hard before you hire them as employees. In my past experience, friends tended to expect special treatment because they were my friends. If I tried to make them toe the line, they resented it. If I let the situation slide, they frequently took advantage of me and the relationship deteriorated to the point I had to let them go and they ceased to be a friend. This happened to me way too many times. It wasn't worth it. Bottom line: think it over very carefully before you hire a friend."

One should always have a potential employee fill out a job application. Do this even if they have a résumé. It is not only good recordkeeping practice; an application is very useful when conducting the interview. Many of the questions you will want to ask when interviewing employees come directly from the application. If you can't find a standardized application that asks the questions you want, you can also make your own*. I personally use an application that requests very specific job history (dates, positions held, starting and final salary, supervisor's name and phone number, reason for leaving), phone numbers for personal references, availability (broken down by hours each day of the week). When reviewing an application like this you can use the following information from it to determine whether you will call someone back for an interview:

- Where else have they worked? If it is someone new to the industry, do they have any skills that would apply to the position for which they are being hired?
- How long do they generally hold a job?
- What kinds of raises and promotions have they received?
- Are there any gaps in employment? (If there are, this will be a question for the interview.)

- Why do they leave jobs? Have they ever been fired from a job? More than once?
- What is their availability like? Will it meet your needs?
- Can you read their handwriting (just kidding) (well, kind of)?

Once you have determined you will call someone back, I suggest creating a list of questions you want to ask**. Give some thought to your priorities when creating this list. You can start with the application, asking questions such as what they liked the most and the least about each job (using the information to determine if they are right for the position for which you want them). Clear up any questions about gaps in employment and why they left each job. Inquire if they have had jobs that aren't on the application, and if they were ever fired from a job and why. Take your time with this. This is your chance to find out if you have found someone who loves the public or tolerates the public. Is a clean work environment a high priority for this person or is cleaning a dreaded task they will do only when they must? If flexibility in scheduling is important to you, will that be a problem for them? What kind of salary or benefits do they expect? Other good questions include:

- How many days were you absent from work last year?
- What skills do you have that you will use in this position?
- What do you consider to be your greatest personal or professional accomplishment?
- What do you hope to accomplish at your next job?
- What skill or work habit have you struggled to improve?
- How do you manage stress on the job?

If you want to keep this employee for any length of time, there are some other very important things you will need to find out about. What are they looking for in a job? Why do they want to work for you? What kind of goals does this person have and what is their highest priority in life? Where do they want to be in a year? Three years? Five years? If you hire someone whose goals and values are not in line with where your company is going, neither one of you will be happy for very long.

This is also a good time to find out things such as, if money were no obstacle, how would they spend their time? What do they do when they aren't at work? Information like this could be useful if you want to reward

your employees at any time in the future.

Before ending the interview, it's going to be your turn to talk. If you have a company mission statement, now is the time to share it. Make sure you tell this person what you are looking for in an employee and express your priorities. It is also important for them to know what kind of goals you have for the business, and where they will fit into that vision.

I also strongly suggest checking references before hiring any employee. Former employers are supposed to limit the kinds of information they give out for legal reasons, but I usually ask what I want to know anyway (the worst that can happen is they don't tell you). In my experience, basic information (such as dates of employment) is easy to get. Other questions that you may or may not get a response to include:

- What was their reason for leaving?
- Are they eligible for re-hire?
- Were there many absences or sick days?
- Were there any documented disciplinary actions?
- How was their overall performance?

After a successful interview and reference check you're ready to hire a new employee! In the next issue of "The Point" we will explore new-hire paperwork and training documentation that will cover you legally and help you and your new employee get off to a good start!

*As with all business forms, check with an attorney familiar with the laws in your area before using any document that you have created.

**Check with an attorney if you have questions regarding what you can or cannot legally ask.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Super big thanks to Michael Siderio and Michael Kite from Rebel Image Tattooing in New Jersey who made a \$100.00 donation to the APP. Thanks so much for your support. It is highly appreciated!

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Also, extra special thanks to Jack Cook for his \$10.00 donation to the Al D. Scholarship fund.

We appreciate your support!

TRANSITIONS



Congratulations to APP Secretary Crystal Sims, and Shawn Taylor, co-owners of Evolution Body Piercing in Albuquerque, New Mexico. They were married on August 31, 2003, in a small ceremony near their home. The happy couple is pictured here with their "son," Eugene.

We wish them all the best, and a life of much love, happiness, and many piercings.



Another Piercing & Birthing Story

My day started off like any other day, feeling fine. I had 2 weeks left in my pregnancy and was showing no signs of premature labor. As I left for work I was kind of dreading my 6:00 appointment with Miss Claudia, a professional dominatrix, and her post operative (male to female) submissive Patricia. I had prior dealings with Miss Claudia and Patricia and had pierced both of them several times before; genitals and nipples. Miss Claudia always tried to get me to perform more piercings in one sitting than I thought was appropriate for healing, and to use jewelry that I felt was inappropriately sized. Miss Claudia is a lady that is used to getting her way and she was always very demanding and persistent in her requests. But she was in my shop, getting pierced by me and I always had the final word, even if it was under my breath. It was a song and dance we performed each time we saw each other.

I pierced Patricia first. We finished her outer labia ladder with two final piercings, one on either side. Against Miss Claudia's wishes, I insisted that we do Patricia's new piercings in several different sittings over several months, to make sure her newly constructed genitalia could heal them. Testing the waters so to speak. The previous four piercings Patricia had received looked good so I was confident I had made the right decision. Miss Claudia thought otherwise. It's hard to reason with some people, as you all know.

Now it was Miss Claudia's turn. We were going to do four outer labia piercings on her. The marking took forever as it normally did with her. The actual piercings went fairly smoothly, which was nice. During the last piercing we were debating on whether or not she would receive an anus piercing once we were done with the labia. I said,

"No," because she already had to heal those four piercings and there was a chance of getting septicemia. She said, "Yes," because she didn't get any infection when she pierced her nipples eight years ago.

I was squatting down between her legs; I put the clamp on her when...GUSH. It felt like a tidal wave had just exploded from my vagina. Warm liquid completely soaked me and formed a puddle the floor. I was thinking to myself, "Damn, my water just broke I wonder if anyone noticed." Patricia was looking at me then at the floor, and back at me as the puddle grew larger. I had to confess. I told Miss Claudia that regardless of how her nipples healed we were not going to be able to pierce her anus because my water had just broken. Patricia turned white and reached for my hand. I told them both that I was fine but to not touch me because I still was gloved up to perform a piercing. Miss Claudia started talking about her own child-bearing experience while I had her breathe so I could finish the piercing. The puddle kept growing. IT WAS SO GROSS! No one said anything about the fluid that was continuing to flow. Damn! How much fluid was in there?

Miss Claudia got off the table and slipped in the liquid. Patricia gasped and helped her regain her balance. I giggled to myself, handed her a paper towel and cleaned up after the piercing. Both ladies wished me good luck and went to the front counter to pay for the piercings. I stayed behind to mop up the mess.

Miss Claudia told Rick, at the front counter, that he should have my husband check up on me because my water had just broken. Rick laughed at her and said, "Yeah right." She assured him that she wasn't kidding. Patricia nodded. So Rick went over to Joe, who was just getting ready to start a tattoo, and told him he

should go check up on his wife.

I was still mopping up when he entered the room. I told him I was fine and he could finish the tattoo. I told him that a similar thing happened to a friend (except she wasn't staring at a vagina arguing about asshole piercings when her water broke) and she didn't go into labor for 12 hours. Feeling better, he returned to his tattoo. He said he got light headed only once while doing the tattoo.

I called the doctor who was impressed with how level headed I was being. I felt like I had a handle on the situation because I had done so much reading on the subject. He told us to go home and call him at 11 pm or when my contractions were 5 minutes apart.

Joe and I got home around 8 pm. The labor pains sucked and I was thinking, "if this was just the beginning there was no way in hell I could deal with this for 12 hours." Epidural please!

Joe called the doctor just before 11 pm, although they weren't consistent, my contractions were 3-5 minutes apart. He told us to head for the hospital and he would meet us there. The drive took about 20 minutes. We arrived at the hospital and our daughter was born less than a half an hour later. Before the doctor had arrived. I didn't even have time to change my clothes, check into a room or ask for painkillers. The whole experience was very chaotic but makes for a decent story.

Joe and I are now the proud parents of Gretchen Elizabeth Elliott. Born July 28th at 11:52 pm. At birth, she weighed 5.5 lbs and was 18" long.

Editor's note:

Thanks to Chuck for submitting this story and a big, "Congratulations" to the proud parents.

PIERCING IN THE NEWS

Smokers Prone to Earring Allergy

An article published on-line recently reported that Danish researchers found smokers may have an increased risk of metal (nickel) allergies. This is including earrings and the buttons found on blue jeans.

Over 1000 participants, both men and women from ages 15-69 were in the study. It was found that allergies to metal, and to a wide variety of other materials, were more common in those who smoke or previously smoked. The report appeared in the May, 2003 issue of the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*.

This type of allergy is termed a contact allergy or contact dermatitis and it causes symptoms such as red, itchy skin. It happens in response to a particular substance coming into direct contact with the skin.

At the Glostrup University Hospital in Copenhagen, Dr. Allan Linneberg noted that contact allergies to nickel (which is often found in earrings and is in the buttons on blue jeans) were more common among smokers. Sometimes allergies to nickel develop in those who wear (nickel-containing) earrings. There was a greater risk of nickel allergy among smokers, whether they wore earrings or not.

A doctor from the Atlanta Allergy and Asthma Clinic who was not involved in the study, Dr. Kathleen A. Sheerin, said that the study shows yet one more reason people should not start smoking, and an extra reason to quit if they do smoke. She also noted that more research will be needed to understand the link between the two, but that this appeared to be the first study of its kind to connect smoking and contact allergies.

It is not yet known precisely how the apparent elevated allergy risk is caused by smoking.

Should future research bear out the findings of this first study, smokers may find that some cases of allergies could be prevented by quitting smoking.

A New Tale About Rembrandt's Ear

A new theory about an old story has come out: it is a medical explanation for Rembrandt's deformed left ear lobe. It was reported in the *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*.

With the headline "Rembrandt Victim of Botched Ear Piercing" a retired British surgeon, Ben Cohen, puts forth the concept that an ear piercing gone awry caused the famous problem. Ben Cohen is a retired Ear, Nose and Throat surgeon from London. He studied a number of the artist's self portraits and believes that the visible tissue damage and swelling was caused by a failed attempt at ear piercing which was either self-inflicted or done by an aide.

Rembrandt painted numerous self-portraits (approximately 40 or more) between 1628-1669 (the year of his death). In many of these paintings, the enlarged, deformed left ear lobe is clearly visible. And in a goodly number of them, an earring can also be noted through the ear in question.

Dr. Cohen was struck by the appearance of the artist



and his ear during a visit in the London National Gallery to view an exhibit entitled "Rembrandt by Himself."

"In the portrait painted circa 1628, at the age of 22, the left lobule was occupied by a round swelling with a small bunch of what were apparently granulations at the upper edge.

"This swelling was also present in some later portraits but by about 1642 it had become a thickening," wrote Dr. Cohen.

In another portrait dated 1629, there is an earring attached to the lobe, directly below the swelling. This same earring was visible in many of the portraits to follow.

So, Dr. Cohen's theory was that in spite of apparent problems with an initial attempt at piercing the ear lobe, in the interests of fashion, Rembrandt persisted. "Probably the lobule was so indurated that it could not be pierced again except below the infected area.

"He must have been a very determined man to risk further damage to the ear."

The article also reports that infections caused by ear-piercing are common today.

Dr. Cohen believes the damage to Rembrandt's ear was caused by a "dermoid cyst" that had become enlarged by infection and then discharged itself.

"The curious feature of all this is that, in almost 300 years, mine is the first attempt at explaining such an obvious deformity," Cohen notes.

Editor's note: Interesting theory. Yet after a relatively extended web search, viewing of many enlarged self-portraits, I was unable to determine any visible deformity of Rembrandt's left lobe. Though there were definitely gold hoop earrings present in both ears, no portraits displayed both ears simultaneously.

MTV: A Social History of Body Piercing

A half-hour television special entitled, "A Social History of Body Piercing" aired on MTV this past season. This was the second of a two-part special, the first being "A Social History of Tattooing." The show covered some of the recent history of body piercing, including tongue and genital piercings.

Jim Ward, Paul King and Elayne Angel (all have had APP involvement—the latter two are current Board Members) were the primary contributors who were interviewed on the TV show. The episode was aired repeatedly and was widely seen and well received.

Though clearly geared for a very young audience, and done in a short-attention-span editing style, it presented more factual information than some other shows of its ilk. Unfortunately, it also gave equal time to youths expressing regrets and telling horror stories of badly done piercings. Still, overall, the show put a positive spin on the phenomenon of body piercing.

World Famous Tattoo Recognized by Government

Last year, our very own Elayne Angel again made history. On November 5, 2002, the US Patent and Trademark Office issued Registration #2,645,270 for Elayne's angel wings tattoo. Her backpiece is the first—and so far only—piece of body art to be so recognized. The registration sets a legal precedent both for the US and the world. In fact, no feature or aspect of a human body had ever been granted a Registration.

Photos of Elayne's tattoo, which was done in 1987 by Bob Roberts in Los Angeles, have appeared numerous times without the owner's consent on postcards, posters and in books. However, it was the use of her image and logo by other piercers that prompted Elayne to take protective legal action. By displaying the photo or design in their shops and publications, some piercers may mistakenly be implying that Elayne has been involved either with their training or their business. Elayne is concerned that this may confuse or mislead customers.

In accordance with the advice of her attorney, Elayne has had the encircled "R" (the indicia of registration) added to her tattoo. The addition of this mark will ensure greater legal protection for the image, and entitle Elayne to more comprehensive benefits in the event of a successful legal action resulting from infringement on the mark. While her lawyer commented that he has never before advised a client to get a tattoo, in this case he feels it is justified.

The angel wings tattoo can still be enjoyed via photograph on Elayne's website at www.ringsofdesire.com, provided the image is not used in any unauthorized way. Use in relation to piercing services is particularly prohibited. The reproduction of the tattoo on another body is not expressly illegal, except in the case of a piercer who uses the image in connection with his/her work. But of course, such an action remains unscrupulous and inappropriate.

Beyond the hope that this legal action will protect the interests of both Elayne and the public, the trademark of the angel wings tattoo is an important mile-

stone for everyone in the body art industry. By agreeing to register a tattoo, the US Patent and Trademark Office has indicated that the products of our studios are indeed commercial artwork and worthy of legal protection. A tattoo can now be afforded the same consideration granted a piece of poetry, music or art used in the business world. Having this legal precedent on our side serves to further establish body art as a profession in the eyes of the law.

New Dolls Have Piercings and Tattoos

They wear miniskirts, bra tops and "bling-bling" jewelry over tattooed bodies - but the bad news for parents is that they are to become role models for thousands of six-year-olds.

In September, 2003, the toy manufacturer Mattel, the company that brought us Barbie, launched its latest range of dolls. The "Flavas" have hair extensions, make-up and piercings and would be more at home in the ghetto than the playroom. They're hip-hop toys for little girls.

The Flavas are Mattel's attempt to tap into the increasing popularity of hip-hop and R'n'B culture.

With the Christmas season about to begin, Mattel is confident Flavas will do well against the more traditional toys.

Julia Jensen, from Mattel, said: "Our research told us that a lot of young girls are now aspiring to the world of rap and hip-hop music."

The six dolls, known as "the crew," will be targeted at six- to 10-year-olds. Each comes with accessories including ghetto blasters, mobile phones, record bags and stick-on tattoos. One character, "Tré," is a black doll in the "P. Diddy" mold with goatee beard, string vest and diamond earrings.

The success of the dolls will be watched closely by the British Association of Toy Retailers. Val Stedham, the association's chairman, said the launch of Flavas spoke volumes about the current generation of children.

"Kids are getting older younger," she said. "Mattel can't afford to stand still, and if Barbie isn't fitting in with the desire of an eight-year-old girl, they have to do something about it. I'd like to be more moralistic about some of these things, but this is what the kids want."

John Baulch, publisher of industry magazine Toys and Playthings, said the risqué nature of these dolls would guarantee their success.

"Kids today are becoming a lot more conscious of fashion at a younger age," he said. "Everything has to have 'attitude.' Parents might not like the dolls, but that will make them appeal to children even more."

A 9-year-old girl from South-West London, said: "I like the way they have realistic clothes. Barbies wear fancy, fluffy dresses, not T-shirts and jeans like real people. They look how I'd like to look when I grow up."

Botched Ear Piercing Scars Boy for life

An internet web site reported that a 13-year-old boy has won £22,000 compensation after an ear piercing left him scarred for life.

Nathan Dade, from Wiltshire, England got the top of

his ear pierced as a 10th birthday present. He got an infection and his ear swelled to the size of a golf ball. He required surgery to rebuild his ear. His left ear is now 1 cm shorter than his right ear.

Nathan's family sued the shop where he had the piercing done. They plan to spend the settlement money on additional operations to improve the appearance of Nathan's scarred ear.

"I just want people to be aware of what can go wrong," Nathan's mother reported to England's Daily Mail newspaper.

The hair salon where Nathan had his piercing has now closed.

President's Corner

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inspectors and medical personnel who may be involved with legislation in your area. In addition, special courses specifically related to studio inspection are being offered at the APP Annual Conference.

- **Education for the general public:**

The APP currently prints and circulates a total of seven brochures. Five of them are primarily printed for the purpose of better informing the general public about body piercing. The website is also designed for easy public access. People can locate members near them and review APP positions on a range of piercing related topics.

— Bethra Szumski



GOOD RESOURCE!

Care Tek Resources

<http://www.caretek.com/osha.html>

If you are seeking an internet resource for OSHA compliance materials this is a good web site. They offer products that are useful in the studio, such as biohazard warning labels, and red plastic biohazard waste bags. They also have products relating to Safety Awareness, Accident Prevention, Infection Control, and Personal Safety. In addition they have CPR training products and OSHA compliance training programs.

Emu Oil

—continued from page 13

little as 24 hours but full effect may take several weeks. He has also found that clients who use the oil daily during stretching have healthier skin overall, with less dark, pink or damaged tissue inside the hole.

A word on emu oil processing:

As mentioned earlier, this oil is derived from the ground and melted fat of the posterior side of the emu. While all parts of the "harvested" emu are used (meat, nails, feathers, skin and oil), it is not cruelty-free. If you choose to use it, please encourage the responsible development of this fledgling industry by purchasing oil from free-range farms which do not use hormones, steroids, antibiotics or animal-based feed.

After emu fat is removed from the carcass, melted and filtered, it is often refined with caustic chemicals such as lye, then bleached and deodorized ("RBD" processing). These processes may not only destroy some of the oil's beneficial qualities, but also add dangerous chemicals to your tissue and the environment. A safer process combines natural clay adsorbent filtration and centrifuge with high temperature vacuum distillation. This ensures a sterile and odor-free product without organic or chemical residue. Again, look for a reputable source and ask questions. For your own safety, use only oil certified as "fully refined," and preferably "pharmaceutical grade."

Caution:

Remember, even if emu oil does prove to be effective at thickening damaged skin and diminishing granuloma (hypertrophic scar tissue) and your clients agree to use it, this is not an excuse to stretch too quickly. A normal stretch of one size will take the body at least six weeks to heal, provided there is adequate circulation, nutrition and hygiene. Regardless of any "miracle" solution, you should always allow at least 6 weeks between stretches and only stretch one size at a time. Leaving three to four months—or longer—between stretches will allow the skin's collagen layer to not only heal, but also rejuvenate, and in the long run will produce healthier, happier tissue.

For perhaps thousands of years, the time and patience required have made stretching a mark of commitment and maturity. Emu oil may help maintain and restore healthy tissue functions along the way, but it should not undermine the meaning of the stretching process. It will never be a substitute for time.

*Special thanks to Jeremiah Toller for inspiring this research.

For further reading or to buy emu oil:

www.emuoilsource.com

www.rirdc.gov.au

www.homepages.ihug.com.au/~aussipol/medical.html

www.aea-emu.org

www.emu-oil.com

way to allow the nostril piercing to heal while leaving the nostril screw in place. It's Micropore tape. Micropore tape is a strong, breathable paper tape used in the medical industry for burn victims and for other wound care. It is one of the main ingredients in Scar Therapy (an over-the-counter scar removal system). We use it to help reduce scarring and to create a barrier between the jewelry and previously imbedded tissue. The tape acts as a barrier (like a washer on a nut) for the small jewelry end. To apply it, while pushing the nostril screw out and away from the skin, place a small square of tape around the hole between the jewelry end and the tissue. Simply stick it to the skin. The tissue must be as dry as possible to make sure the tape holds. Tell the client to leave it on until it falls off, usually overnight (longer depending on the amount of degeneration of tissue around the hole). This allows the tissue under the tape to close down to its original size and keep the jewelry end from pulling in again. After years of using this method we have been able to save many otherwise doomed nostril piercings.

- You can always suggest that the client take the jewelry out completely and allow the body to heal before re-piercing. If the angle does not work with the anatomy and/or jewelry, or you question the quality of the jewelry, this is always a smart choice.

Why is there a big lump on the interior/exterior of the nostril piercing?

There are a few factors involved in the scarring of the nostril piercing: the angle in which it is pierced, the length of the jewelry, and the technique used to pierce it.

- As we have already discussed, the length is very important. Giving a client enough room on the shaft of the jewelry to allow for swelling, cleaning, and movement is vital. If the jewelry is too short it will put pressure on the lining of the piercing causing friction, resulting in hypertrophic scarring. Sometimes this scarring will grow around the nostril screw's bend if the jewelry isn't changed out immediately.
- As many piercers have claimed for years, the side of the nose does, in fact, have cartilage in it. Although it is different in composition from the ear cartilage, it has the same characteristics. Immediately after the piercing is done the tissue needs to be re-aligned (massaged) back into its natural position. It's a simple matter of (gloved) finger or cotton-swab compression. Press on the tissue, (as though to stop bleeding, even if there is no blood flow). Compacting the tissue together will help to reattach tissue, minimizing opportunity for a bump or growth to form. If you don't do this already you really should begin to utilize this effective technique.
- Scarring can also occur after jewelry has been taken in and out repeatedly, especially if it was done before the healing period (particularly nose bones). Teaching a client how to remove and insert the jewelry is essential

after the first change out. They are going to try it anyway, so you might as well help them do it properly. The way I explain it is, "You must guide the jewelry in using both (clean!) hands. Put the stem into the piercing and place your pinkie finger in the nostril until you feel the end poke through and touch your pinkie finger, then together guide the jewelry into place."

Why hasn't anyone made a decent nostril retainer?

Am I insane, or is this the last type of jewelry that cannot be switched out to an undetectable form of concealment jewelry? I have a nostril screw selection that includes the smallest imaginable screws, but I have yet to offer an unnoticeable plug for an 18g or 20g hole that is a quality product. With the growing population of piercees, there is a tremendous need for a quality retainer. If you are currently using a product that you love please write a product review for "The Point." (*Editor's note: The best option I've found for concealment of a healed piercing is a flat, small disk that can be "painted" with nail polish that matches the color of one's skin. Cover just the "head" of the jewelry with the polish. Once it has started to dry, but is still tacky, tap it with your fingertip, or apply some face powder to take the shine off of the nail polish. Wait until it is thoroughly dry to insert.*)

Tools

It is always important to use the appropriate tools for the job. Having quality tools is the least you can do for yourself to make sure that the jewelry is handled carefully before insertion. Ideally all tools used to bend jewelry should be brass-lined to prevent marring the jewelry. It's really a balance of just the right amount of pressure to get the job done and not mar or scratch the jewelry (especially gold). The rounded benders from Lotus Body Jewelry (formerly Dakota Steel) are what I learned on, and continue to use religiously. Other piercers use brass-lined pliers but regardless of what you use, you must take great care in bending the jewelry, since a scratched piece of jewelry will continue to irritate a piercing and can cause serious complications. I have heard a rumor that some all-brass benders are the next new product coming from Erik Dakota.

Does it matter which side is pierced?

More often than not, clients are worried about what social statement is being made by their facial piercing, and they can't help but ask if there is a "right" side for it to be worn. The traditional women of India predominantly wear it on the left side, but since we are not in India the correct answer would be that it is "right" wherever you imagine it. I usually give my clients a hand mirror, tell them to close their eyes, and open them again reminding them that their instinct will guide them to choose the most esthetically pleasing spot, and they always do.

Despite the placement, technique or choice of jewelry used for a nostril piercing, it is a growing phenomenon that has taken over our culture, forcing even the most conservative onlookers to accept and sometimes

appreciate it. Because of this, we need to provide the education that is necessary to help piercers understand the science behind nostril piercings. In addition, it is good to offer your clients a variety of choices so they can get the jewelry that best fits their anatomy and their preferences.

I would like to thank all the piercers with whom I consulted to write this article, and encourage someone to write a follow up article to continue the educational sharing. Thanks to Glenn of Halo, Brian of Piercing Experience, and Dave of Bodyworks Productions, plus all my staff at Twisted Sol.

Conference

—continued from page 1

tion to the repeat classes, courses in Legislation, Basic Piercing Techniques, and Stretching were added.

The Thursday evening reception, once again, did not disappoint. The atmosphere was casual and comfortable. This event was the time for the raffle/lottery drawing. A very special thanks to the many kind and generous vendors who donated their goods in order to make the event a success! The following was donated:

- Body Piercing Clinic—
A package of jewelry
- Cold Steel/New School Tattoo—
One \$2,000 jewelry package
One \$500 jewelry package
One \$200 jewelry package
Two \$100 jewelry packages
Two \$50 jewelry packages
- Diablo Rojo/Spectrum Craft—
A jewelry package
- Industrial Strength
A bundle of 10 sample packages
- Olincoat—
€240 worth of jewelry
- Organic—
€50 worth of jewelry
- Quetzalli—
€50 worth of jewelry
- Robinson Dixon—
€120 worth of jewelry

- Sin-A-Matic—
One \$1000 jewelry pack
One \$500 jewelry pack
- Tattooed Kingpin—
\$300 worth of jewelry
Two paintings
Five belt buckles
- Tawapa—
Two pair of ear weights
- Urban Tribe—
A package of jewelry
- Wildcat Collection UK—
A €250 jewelry package
- Wildcat Deutschland GMBH—
Three €360 press packs with pliers.

(The Euro (€) currently equals approximately \$1.18)

Thanks to our Al D Scholars! In addition to receiving education they worked as translators, at registration and where needed for all of the duties so crucial to organizing and putting on the conference. They did so with humility and dedication. They all worked very hard and are to be commended: Katya Nurminin of Valhalla, Finland; Johannes Nota, Skin Deep Love, Holland; Marryann Zollinger, Onemore Piercing, Switzerland.

Special thanks to APP members Randy Smyre for managing registration and April Johnson for overseeing volunteers!

In addition an extra special "Thank you" goes out to our non-board instructors Al Prescott for *Risk Assessment, CPR & First Aid* (his site: www.tattoo-2001.com); Julian Ball for *Sterilization* (his site: www.prestigemedical.co.uk); and Betsy Reynolds for *Anatomy*. Without the assistance of these dedicated individuals much of the education the APP provided would not be possible.

My personal thanks and appreciation goes to those who in recognition of the APP's limited budget served with minimal or no compensation. You know who you are!

—Bethra Szumski

This years members of the press were Shannon and Rachel Larratt of www.bmezine.com. You can read a review of the event written Shannon Larratt at <http://www.bmezine.com/news/pubring/20031125.html>

ATTENTION APP MEMBERS

It is never too soon to start: MEMBERS Take some video of yourself piercing for the NEXT APP conference for the advanced techniques class.

Participants should remember to be professional and use appropriate bedside manner, even if they are working on close friends.

Mini DV is preferred but 8 mm is acceptable.

Send your tapes to:

ElayneAngel
1128 Decatur Street
New Orleans, LA 70116

Now Hear This!

The APP now has a Job Board on our web site! See it at: www.safepiercing.org

You can find the following categories there in which to post or answer an ad.

- Apprentices seeking Apprenticeships
- Experienced Piercers seeking Employment
- Studios seeing Experienced Piercers
- Studios seeking Apprentice Piercers

Sobriety:

I would think this one is a no-brainer. Obviously, for legal and ethical reasons, you do not want to pierce someone who is under the influence of any substance including legal or illegal drugs and/or alcohol. The problem lies in deciding who is “under the influence.” I have heard of a new practice in which many studios are performing a Breathalyzer test on any client they believe to be intoxicated. Maybe this is the direction our industry is headed. Gone are the days when a group of drunken military guys, or frat boys, or whatever it is in your town, can get their nipples pierced. We have to work together as a community to educate our clients that information cannot be absorbed when drugs and alcohol are involved.

Health:

The Association of Professional Piercers revolves around the education, safety, and health of our clients. In the past I believed that to mean that I would do anything within my power to ensure they have they have a healthy piercing. I thought this meant I was to make sure not to cross-contaminate, to always use single-use needles, to always insert a fabulous quality of jewelry,

and to make sure they get thorough care instructions.






I have learned I also need to consider the individual’s health status. Are they diabetic? Do they have a rash? Are they now or have the recently been pregnant or breast-feeding? How is their hygiene? We are artists but we need to consider the canvas with which we are starting. You can be the best piercer in the world and do everything the way you are supposed to, but if your client doesn’t care for it, or their bodies can’t heal that piercing then they will be back with problems every time.

You are at fault if you fail to ask for that sort of information prior to piercing them. Crystal Sims, current secretary of the A.P.P., told me about a client she turned away for a labret piercing because of bad oral hygiene. It is hard and disappointing to deny someone, especially if it has to do with a health problem that is (usually) out of their control, but the alternative can be a lot worse.

Anatomy:

So you have made sure your client is of age, sober, and healthy enough to heal their piercing. You get in the piercing room and start to prep the skin when you realize, because of their anatomy, there is probably no way they can heal this piercing properly, or it would be dangerous for them to get it done.

My biggest pet peeve right now is to see all the

<p>ATTENTION Manufacturers & Businesses</p> <p><i>The POINT</i> is a quarterly newsletter. It is the only newsletter dedicated to the piercing industry. Our direct mailing list consists mainly of piercers, piercing shops, tattoo studios, and health departments. The newsletters are also distributed to potential members or anyone who is interested. With the new 3-hole-punch format, it will continue to be a viable resource and should be part of your advertising budget. <i>The POINT</i> can also be viewed as PDF files on our website, increasing the visibility of your company. Nowhere else can you hit the specialized piercing market.</p>	ADVERTISING SPECIFICATIONS				
	Size		Dimensions	One Insertion	Four Insertions
	Inside Front Cover		7.25"w X 9.75"H	\$400	\$350
	Inside Back Cover			\$400	\$350
	Full Page			\$350	\$325
	Half Page—vertical		3.25"w X 9.75"H	\$200	\$180
	Half Page—horizontal		7.25" X 4.75"H	\$200	\$180
	Quarter Page		3.25"w X 4.75"H	\$90	\$80
Sixth Page—vertical		2.25"w X 4.75"H	\$50	\$45	
<p>Call 1-888-888-1APP to place your advertisement in The Point. The Point is created on a Mac using Adobe InDesign, and Photoshop. Acceptable formats for ads are black and white or grayscale jpeg, gif, eps, tiff, pict, pds or PDF files. If you are sending a digital file please include or embed the fonts. Email info@safepiercing.org for details on sending digital files. Camera ready art at 600 dpi or better is acceptable if you don't have a digital file.</p> <p>Mail payment and artwork on CD or Zip to: 5456 Peachtree Industrial Blvd. Box 286, Chamblee, GA 30341</p>					

people who come into the studio with piercings that should never have been done in the first place. The saying used to be, "If you can pinch it you can pierce it." Gone are those days.

You owe it to your client to explain their options to them and turn them away better educated so they won't go to the hack down the road. If you just tell someone "I'm sorry you can't get that industrial done that you had your heart set on," they will find someone who will put that jewelry in their ill-suited ear.

If you take the time to explain why that piercing won't work, then even if they do go ahead and have it done somewhere else, they will come back to see you when they have a problem. Maybe there is an alternate piercing you can offer them. Do whatever you can to make them happy, but the bottom line is you can't change their bodies; you have to work with what you are presented. It is a disservice to yourself, your clients and the profession to do whatever piercing they ask for if they aren't anatomically suited to it.

Some of this may sound preachy and not everyone will agree with everything I have said. In the end, though, I believe it is important to the future of our industry for us to be the ones to stand up and take responsibility for our actions. We can gain their respect and admiration, but to do that sometimes we have to say, "NO!"

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR SALE! A fully enclosed portable piercing room that is great for use at conventions or to create a new room in an existing business. It consists of 8 four feet wide by eight feet high sections and bolts together to create an 8x8 room. The inside surfaces are white non-porous panels and the outside is painted charcoal black. When separated, the panels easily fit into the bed of a truck. One panel has a doorway in which a vinyl curtain (included with purchase) is hung for entrance and exit. All that is required for use is a sheet of 4 mil plastic on the floor before assembly. Additional lighting can easily be attached to the walls after assembly. The unit cost \$300 in materials to build and has only been used 3 times. I am willing to sell it for \$200. If you are interested in purchasing this unit, please call Suzanne at Angelic Piercings at (570) 882-1159 or send an email to webmaster@jonescustom.com The buyer is responsible for pick up (in Athens, PA).

Suzanne Beam
Angelic Piercings
508 South Elmira St.
Athens, PA 18810
webmaster@jonescustom.com

Editor's note: it takes a lot more than an enclosure to make a piercing room. This ad should not be construed to be for a "complete" piercing room.

We Need You!

The APP needs your help to support our mission of disseminating of vital health, safety and education information to piercers, piercees, medical professionals and the general public.

Your donation is tax deductible to the extent allowed by law because we are a Non-profit corporation.

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Thank you for your support! We appreciate all contributions.

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It was good to see you in Vegas!

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