

THE POINT

ISSUE 44
SUMMER 08

Association of Professional Piercers



PIERCING &
TATTOOING
AMONG
THE ALEUT

.....
THE APP
AT ADHA
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APP
CONFERENCE
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FROM THE EDITOR



James Weber
President
Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

This issue of *The Point* has (as they say) something for everyone. There is an article by globe-hopping anthropologist Lars Krutak about piercing and body ornamentation among the Aleut near what is now Alaska. There is the fifth—and last—in the series of articles by Elayne Angel on Genital Piercings, and a travel diary—mine—giving an on-the-fly account of the APP's involvement in the conferences for the American Dental Hygienists' Association (ADHA) and the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) conferences in Albuquerque, New Mexico and Tucson, Arizona. Also in this issue is the first of a series of articles outlining how the APP is run. There were many questions raised at the members meeting at Conference this year and this article—in addition to several more in future issues—is part of an attempt to educate on this topic.

And, of course, there is the review of the 2008 annual APP Conference.

The highlight of Conference this year—for me—was the inclusion of Raelyn Gallina as a speaker. Those not familiar with her and her story—and many are not—are ignorant of a large piece of the early history of our industry: the history of the early, pioneering women. In an industry where the majority of our clients are women, to overlook such a pivotal figure in our history is inexcusable. As in most cases, history tends to be seen as hinging on the actions of “great men.” This does the early pioneering women in our industry a great injustice, and it does the rest of us one as well. I hope to have something more on her talks in a future issue.

And after the 2008 Conference, the big question that everyone has is: Where and when will the 2009 Conference be held?

The Conference Committee had its first meeting in Las Vegas in June to review new hotel options for the 2009 Conference. Preparation has never been done on this level so far in advance before, with the prospects of early speaker notification, course scheduling, promotion and registration, we are looking forward to giving prospective attendees, vendors, and instructors even more time to prepare for next year. One of the results of that meeting was a new hotel and location for next year's event.

The 2009 APP Conference will be held May 3-8th and will be at a new location—the Tropicana Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas Nevada!

Look for updates on the APP 2009 Conference at the APP website at safepiercing.org, and in future issues of *The Point*. In the meantime, please enjoy issue #44 of *The Point: The Journal of the Association of Professional Piercers*. **P**

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THE POINT

The Quarterly Journal of the
Association of Professional Piercers

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Nan Mai Chiang at the APP Conference.
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Anthropologist Lars Krutak and Ao Naga Friend

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IN THE OFFICE



Caitlin McDiarmid
APP Administrator

I hope you made the 2008 APP Conference. Sometimes it is hard to make every Conference—I know—but it's important, because you never know what you're missing by staying home.

If you didn't attend, you passed up a lot of good fun and education—and you missed getting to meet and hear from Raelyn Gallina. I am not a piercer—as most of you know—so I am not always knowledgeable about the history of body modification, the history of this industry, or the history of individuals in it. I first heard about Raelyn when Paul King spoke to the Board about her struggle with cancer in early 2004, and heard more as I spent time listening to Paul, Elayne Angel, and Jim Ward talk over lunch (the perks of being the Administrator and fly-on-the-wall). When it was suggested that we have her out to Conference to speak, I was naturally excited; having anyone from “those days” participate in our Conference is an amazing thing. One's history gives a person the foundation to ground them in their present experience and gives them a platform to launch themselves into their future. Without knowing your history you are lost and unable to find footing in the present—much less fly upwards.

One's history gives a person the foundation to ground them in their present experience and gives them a platform to launch themselves into their future. Without knowing your history you are lost and unable to find footing in the present—much less fly upwards.

When asked to attend, Raelyn said yes and everyone was excited but nervous about what to expect. We didn't know what she would speak about exactly, we didn't really know how healthy she was or even whether she would be a good speaker—we didn't know *her*. But she arrived and she was a dynamo—running up to me yelling “Caitlin, Caitlin!” with her arms outstretched (not quite as loud as Betsy Reynolds does—but almost). She was so animated and full of life, energy, and excitement.

Raelyn spoke three times over the Conference week: twice under the heading of *Anthropology*, and once as a part of the *Philosophies and Styles of Piercing* panel. While her first *Anthropology* class was of moderate size, her second filled the large classroom. I asked Patrick Kuhn—one of this year's volunteers and a piercer for 13 years—what he thought of her class. “Life-changing,” was what (Continued on p3)

GOODBYES



April Johnson
Outgoing Vice President
Virtue And Vice
Atlanta, GA

I remember the mix of honor and fear I felt upon first finding out that I had been elected Vice President of The APP. Sure, I met the standards for membership, but was I really qualified to stand in the shoes of the people who I have idolized for years? Looking back—now that it is all said and done—I learned something important: my value. I've learned that what this Association needs—not only to keep it afloat but growing—are people who care about the greater good of our industry more than they care about their own agendas. And although many of the Board's directors who came before me may still seem like rock stars in my eyes, it really just comes down to who is willing to do the work.

To the outgoing Board who made it to the end with me, I leave you with the familiar Nietzsche quote: “What doesn't kill us makes us stronger.”

To the New Board: Thank you! Thank you for being those people; the ones that this organization and our industry need.

To everyone: If you have the desire to give back to this industry what it has given to you, don't be afraid to get involved. All it takes is time and love. If you have these two things, you *are* qualified, and your value is immeasurable.



Luis Garcia
Outgoing International Liaison
No Ka Oi Tattoo and Piercing
Philadelphia, PA

I would like to thank everyone who supported us during our Board term. The past three years have been a wild ride, but I wouldn't trade the experience for anything in the world. I look forward to serving the organization and the industry for years to come, and I urge all of you reading this to do the same. Without the constant work of the APP board, members, and supporters, the industry would be in a very sad state. In the years to come, we will need even more help to grow and continue to fight for recognition.

I wish the new board members much luck. I know in my heart that the organization is in very good hands. Keep pushing forward, and know that you haven't seen the last of me!

Also at this year's annual Conference, **Alicia Cardenas** ended her three-year term as the APP's President.

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(Continued from p2) he said. To watch this experienced piercer—a family man from the Midwest, a new attendee and an amazing volunteer—be so moved by his experiences in Raelyn’s class truly made my Conference.

Later in the week—on the last day—I stopped a young, unfamiliar face and asked him how his Conference experience was. I like doing this; I can get usually get some very candid feedback this way. “Great!” he replaid. I asked him how long he had been piercing and he told me less than a year. I then asked him what was his favorite part of Conference. He took some time to consider this—really reflected on the question—and then said, “The Anthropology class, because I had no idea where this all came from. I learned so much.”

At Conference, after I lost my cell phone, my favorite hoodie, and a piece from my favorite Bootleg/Tawapa ring, Raelyn suddenly laid hands on me—or more specifically, laid her energy on me. She did a ceremony; something, she said, to calm my inner self, keep me from losing anything more, to help things return which had been lost. It was amazing to have this very personal experience, on the fly, in the middle of Conference.

By the time I left Las Vegas I had my hoodie, I had the piece back to my ring, and I had a new friend. Raelyn, thank you for sharing, for touching people through your experiences, your energy, and your life. Thank you for making 2008 something special.

I sure hope you all didn’t miss it. P

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ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER



James Weber
APP President
Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

This is the first in what will be a series of articles outlining how the APP legally operates: the duties and responsibilities of Officers and members of our Board of Directors; the rights of members; and the function and framework of our election process. There is sometimes confusion—with members and non-members alike—about how the APP is run and what exactly the function and focus of the organization is—or should be. This article is the first in a series that will address this issue.

It is important to remember the Association of Professional Piercers is more than just a group of piercers and related professionals dedicated to education about body piercing. It is a legally recognized California non-profit with 501(c)(6) status, and as such is beholden to certain rules.

The hierarchy of rules that govern this organization (and those like it) are:

- Federal and State law
- Corporate Charter
- The APP's bylaws
- Robert's Rules of Order
- Standing rules or protocol adopted by the organization
- Custom

Recently, there has been much talk of the APP's bylaws. The bylaws are the document that defines and governs aspects of the APP such as: the mission statement, or objective, of the organization; the establishment of the Board of Directors; the selection and duties of the Officers; the formation of committees; the rights of the members; guidelines for members' meetings; and the protocol for amending or changing the bylaws. These bylaws are a matter of public record, and will be mailed to any member when requested in writing from the APP office.

After the bylaws, the document that governs the conduct at meetings—both of the members and the Board of Directors—is Robert's Rules of Order. This is the accepted manual on parliamentary law in the United States.

"Parliamentary law is the basis for all constitutional governments. By protecting and practicing correct parliamentary procedure, we also protect our democratic institutions. Parliamentary procedure protects the rights of the people to join together to accomplish common goals and enables them to debate and take action in a fair manner with the least amount of controversy." (Doris P. Zimmerman, *Robert's Rules in Plain English*, 2nd ed..)

Parliamentary procedure was brought to the US from England. Thomas Jefferson compiled the first US *Manual of Parliamentary Procedure* in 1801, which was quickly adopted for both the US House and Senate. But at the same time, people over the US were forming

different kinds of democratic organizations and found Jefferson's manual too complex for use outside of government. Henry Martyn Robert responded to this need by publishing the first edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* in 1876. It was an instant success, and has been used as the basis for Parliamentary law in the US—with consistent updates—since that time. There is a lot to cover in *Robert's Rules of Order* (the revised text is now 704 pages), but the basic principles are essential to understanding how the APP functions.

Basic Rules of Parliamentary Procedure:

The rights of the organization supersede the rights of the members.

All voting members are equal, and their rights are equal.

Those rights are:

- To attend meetings
- To make motions and speak in debate
- To nominate
- To vote
- To hold office

The majority rules.

This is basic to the democratic process. The minority has the right to be heard, but once the majority has reached a decision the minority must respect and abide by this decision.

Silence is consent.

Members who do not vote give consent to the decision of the majority by their silence.

A quorum must be present to do business.

At the APP meetings at Conference there is not usually a quorum present. A quorum is defined as *the number of members required to be present at a meeting for business to be conducted*, as specified in the bylaws. The quorum for an APP Members' meeting is over one-third of the voting members—at the time of this writing, the number needed for a quorum is sixty-two members. The prohibition against conducting business without a quorum ensures that a small number of the members are not making decisions for the entire organization.

When no quorum is present at a meeting, only a limited number of actions can take place. *Any substantive action taken in the absence of a quorum is invalid.* (RONR 10th ed., p. 334-40)

This is the reason that voting for the positions on the Board of Director is done by ballot through the mail. In order to ensure

The prohibition against conducting business without a quorum ensures that a small number of the members are not making decisions for the entire organization.

that the organization continues to be run by the membership, all members must be given the opportunity to be involved in discussion and debate—not just those lucky enough to attend the meetings at Conference.

This is also why business at the annual Conference is usually limited to presentation, discussion and debate, and why no “motions” are put forth, recognized, or debated. (A motion is a formal proposal, by a member, in a meeting, that the group take certain action. RONR 10th ed., p. 26, 1. 19-24)

Business simply cannot be conducted in a meeting without a quorum of members present.

Two-thirds vote rule.

At a meeting where a quorum is present, a majority vote of members voting is enough to carry (pass) a motion. However, a two-thirds vote is required whenever rights of members are limited or being taken away, or when something is changed that has been previously decided. This includes limiting debate on a topic and also includes approving changes to the bylaws.

One question at a time, one speaker at a time.

During discussion at duly held meetings, no motion is in order that does not directly relate to the question under consideration. Additionally, once a member has been given “the floor” at a meeting, another member may not interrupt him.

At all meetings, the chair is in charge of presiding over the meeting. (As outlined in the APP bylaws, this is the President unless he or she temporarily defers the position, or is unavailable.) The chair will recognize those that wish to speak, and they will be given “the floor.” Members may not be interrupted by other members while speaking, and are allowed to speak until they are finished, or the time allotted to them runs out. The next speaker must be recognized by the chair before he or she is allowed to speak on the topic being discussed. Actions by members that limit the right of other members to speak will be ruled out of order, and will not be allowed.

Debatable motions must receive full debate.

At a meeting, where a quorum is present and business is being conducted, a motion is not voted on until all members that still wish to speak on it have done so. (Debate on a motion under consideration can only be suspended or limited by a two-thirds vote.)

One a question is decided, it is out of order to bring up the same motion again.

At a meeting, where a quorum is present and business is being conducted, members must abide by the decision of the majority.

(There are exceptions, but this involves more complex parliamentary procedure than is discussed here.)

Personal remarks are *always* out of order.

Enough said.

[*As previously stated, this is a basic introduction to Robert's Rules of Order and how it affects the business, voting, and organization of the APP, its membership, and its Board of Directors. For a complete overview of Robert's Rules, there is no substitute for Robert's Rules of Order, newly revised, 10th ed. (Da Capo Press)—but it can be a bit daunting. For a more accessible guide, there is Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised In Brief (Da Capo Press, 2004) or Doris P. Zimmerman's Robert's Rules in Plain English (Collins, 2005). Both of these will help answer any questions about the procedures adhered to at the members' meeting at the annual APP Conference, and many of the rules that govern the organization as well.] P*

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AN APPROACH TO GENITAL PIERCINGS (PART 5)

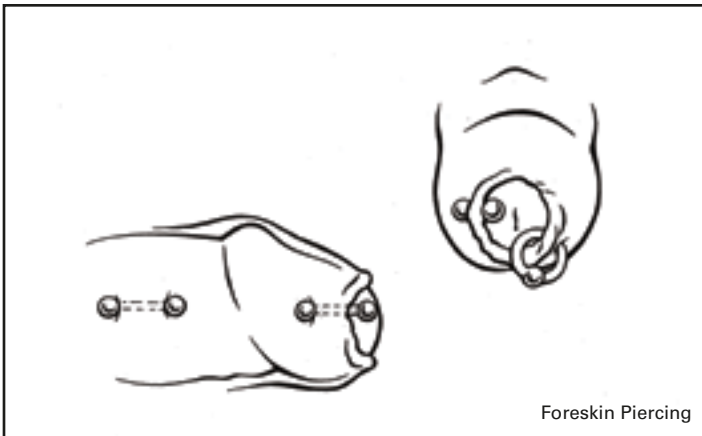


Elayne Angel
Medical Liaison
Yucatan, Mexico

Illustrations by Tex. Courtesy of Cold Steel.

*This is the fifth in a series of articles written by Elayne Angel on the topic of genital piercings. This article—in addition to parts one through four in previous issues—is taken from her classes taught at the 2007 APP Conference in Las Vegas. Much of it will be included in her upcoming book *The Piercing Bible*, to be published by Ten Speed Press.*

This series is only a brief introduction to genital piercings, and clearly does not include everything there is to know about these piercings. It should also be noted that this is one piercers approach to these piercings, and does not necessarily reflect the views of all piercers.



Foreskin Piercing— Framing the Edge of the Foreskin

In the United States, this piercing is not especially popular because most men *have* been deprived of the opportunity to even have a foreskin. Though, men who engage in successful foreskin restoration may be able to rebuild enough tissue to pierce. In turn, the piercing can assist in the restoration process by allowing for an easier grasp on the area during the use of stretching cones.

The foreskin is one of the genital piercings with significant historical background, mostly for *infibulation* (chastity). This thin tissue would probably have a faster healing time it not for the frequent friction and trauma that keep the average healing time at two to three months.

FORESKIN PLACEMENT

Draw a reference line to demarcate the edge of the foreskin as it hangs down naturally; the jewelry will frame this rim. When I'm in front of a client, I look at this edge as a clock face, and the piercings can be positioned at any "hour." Multiples and pairs are common at twelve and six o'clock, three and nine o'clock, or ten and two o'clock. Before marking, ask the client if he might stretch up later or use the piercings for infibulation. If so, cheat the marks a little further back from the

edge line to better accommodate the extra weight and pressure.

It is best to retract the tissue and mark the placement with it pulled back. When the foreskin is in this position, the piercing rests much like a vertical frenum, generally near the mid-shaft of the penis. When you put the tissue back in its flaccid position, your marks appear as though you will pierce only a small amount of skin right near the edge of the foreskin. But, if you try to determine the placement with the foreskin down and mark a suitable distance from both sides of the edge line, when you retract the tissue, this often S-P-R-E-A-D-S to encompass over an inch! Striking a balance in this dynamic area is challenging. You need to insert jewelry of a wearable size, and yet it must have enough room for the expanded tissue when it is retracted without pinching excessively.

FORESKIN PIERCING

I pierce when the foreskin is folded down over the head to work with the natural lay of the tissue—the way the jewelry will rest most of the time. It is easy to illuminate and adjust to avoid any visible veins that are in the way. To protect the head of the penis, it is safest for your client if you pierce from the inside, out—or use a cork (or receiving tube) when piercing from the outside toward the inside.

FORESKIN JEWELRY

A 5/8-inch diameter ring is common—it is not overly large but allows for some tissue expansion. The client can ultimately wear jewelry in a smaller diameter, but the dramatic change in shape and dimensions of the tissue when the foreskin is retracted make this impractical for healing. Ring- and bar-style jewelry can both work in this area. To withstand rougher friction and for durability, 12-gauge jewelry is a suitable minimum; I use a 10 gauge maximum.

Piercings Through the Glans of the Penis

Piercings through the head, or the glans, are the genital piercings with the best- documented historical evidence. In the *Kama Sutra*—the ancient Sanskrit text on the art of love that dates back to the first half of the first century CE—they are described in detail as a means of enhancing sexual enjoyment for a man and his partner. This is the oldest known written reference to penis piercing. In the West, we have come to call the vertical placement an *apadravya*, although it is uncertain if this term was used the same way in ancient times.

The name *ampallang* is said to derive from the Dayaks in Borneo. When boys reach manhood, their rite of passage is celebrated with the placement of the *palang* ("cross bar") horizontally through the head of the penis. Ampallangs are now more popular in our modern culture than among indigenous peoples, though men in Borneo still occasionally get them.

Piercings through the head, or the glans, are the genital piercings with the best-documented historical evidence.

These both have a significantly longer healing time than most other male genital piercings: six to nine months or more; a one-year healing period is not uncommon. These piercings are not apt to bring enjoyment to penetrative sex for couples that have a “snug fit” already. However, if they have more ease between them, the added jewelry could be just the thing to make them more size-compatible, and bring greater satisfaction to both.

Scar tissue will be tougher, of course, but regardless of size, you can only guess how tough the skin will be. The piercing itself can be a difficult—you may use an all-your-might push or the needle might *fly* right through, so it is important to be prepared for either scenario.

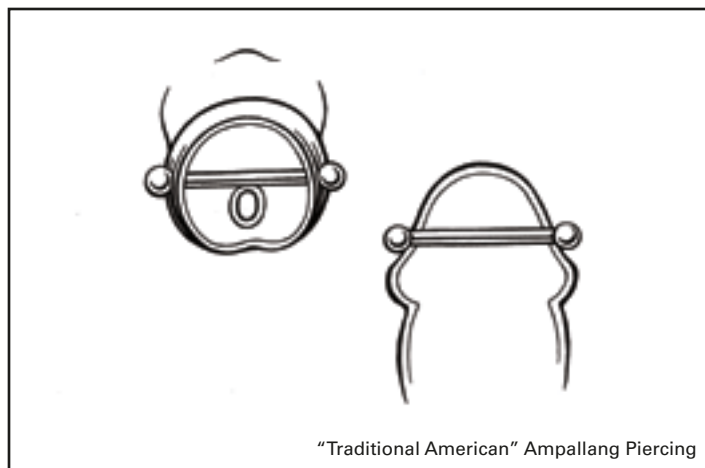
AMPALLANG PLACEMENT

What I refer to as a “traditional American” ampallang goes horizontally through the head of the penis *above* the urethra, generally set back toward the corona. The “traditional European” placement is considerably lower and more forward on the penis head and passes *through* the urethra. The “European” version is likely to heal much faster because it is placed where the penis is narrower (so it passes through less tissue). Also, it traverses the urethra, and the urine appears to promote healing. Whether the “American” or “European” version is best is a matter of personal preference.

The “traditional American” version is often level with the top of the urethral opening (but well away from it), in the first natural fold in front of the corona. By request it can go elsewhere—just so long as it is on the head and through enough tissue. If it is too high and “surfacey,” the ampallang tends to migrate and reject. When you’re marking, it is good to evaluate the views from the top, front, and—if the dots are visible—from the underside too. I check with tissue flaccid and taut (by squeezing behind the head). Depending on asymmetry, the piercing may look best placed perpendicular to the shaft, rather than equidistant from corona or urethra.

AMPALLANG PLACEMENT

A 14-gauge bar in an ampallang can bend with “heavy use,” so 12 gauge is a better minimum; larger gauges are acceptable but can be difficult to push through the dense tissue.



Sometimes clients try to pre-measure for the jewelry length, but they may not check the size at the spot where you end up marking the piercing; so, it is best to try to get your own accurate measurement. More information on this topic is discussed in *The Point*, issue 42 on page 4, under the heading, “A Subject to Bring Up: Erections”).

AMPALLANG JEWELRY

Because the piercing channel is long, make extra sure to slide that jewelry *all* the way through in one push! I tell clients to return right away for a different bar length if they find their jewelry does not fit properly. (This is a good reason to use only jewelry that can be swapped out without exposing the fresh piercing channel to external threads.)

If he is a “grower” who has a large size differential between his flaccid and erect states, he may find the required excess length causes healing problems, even when he wears the correct size barbell. A telescoping bar that widens and shrinks with changing anatomy would be optimal, but has yet to be produced. “Growers” may find that wrapping the area with sterile gauze during early healing helps to support the protruding jewelry and prevent excess movement.

Apadravya

The apadravya piercing is placed vertically through the penis head. Interestingly, it encompasses multiple piercings: It is comprised of a Prince Albert on the lower portion, plus a reverse Prince Albert on the upper part. Later, separate jewelry can be worn in various combinations (i.e., a ring in the PA, plus a barbell through the entire head; or, separate jewelry in the PA and reverse PA segments).

The apadravya can be performed in any sequence to work with previous piercings; extending an existing PA upward is most common. Though, advantages to having the entire piercing performed in one session include a single healing period, and the assurance that the upper and lower segments of the piercing line up well. And, each client gets a PA free with purchase of apadravya!

Because the apadravya passes through the urethra, it may heal faster than a traditional “American” ampallang, which does not.

APADRAVYA PLACEMENT

The apadravya rests in the midline of the glans on the top, often set just to the front of the coronal ridge, or a little further forward. If a client has an existing PA set well off to one side of the midline, it may be possible to make an apadravya on the *other* side, and keep the Prince Albert as a separate piercing, if desired. However, the jewelry will pinch the sensitive tissue underneath if there is not enough space in between.

From the front view, ideally, an apadravya should be vertical (rather than leaning to one side) but the web underneath often requires bottom to be placed off to the side, so an angle may be unavoidable. Don't shift the whole piercing to one side (to keep it vertical) if the bottom can't be pierced in the center.

In what I call “social” or “hangin’ around” mode (flaccid), only the top of the penis shows, anyway—so this is an important view. In profile, the top may lean back towards the shaft, which could make penetration easier than a piercing that is perfectly vertical. In essence, I mark this as two separate piercings: a PA on the bottom, and a Reverse PA on the top; then I check the alignment and look at the relative position of the urethra. The location of the urethra will weigh more heavily among the placement considerations if it is pronounced, and/or the client wants to wear separate Reverse PA jewelry later. Clearly explain to the client any deviation in placement required by his anatomy so there are no surprises once jewelry is in place!

APADRAVYA PIERCING

If a client already has the upper or lower portion of the apadravya, the most common method is to place the piercing needle into the existing hole, and come through the opposite side. A short guide tube (like a mini NRT) is very helpful to avoid damaging the tissue inside. If a piercing is not stretched enough to accommodate a guidance tube, you must *very carefully* insert the needle.

APADRAVYA JEWELRY

This piercing has the same starting jewelry gauges as an ampallang, but seldom as much extra length is needed for the bar. It seems there is usually less growth in the “height” direction, as compared to “width.”

Men who expand an existing Prince Albert may elect to heal for a few days or longer before reinserting PA jewelry, though a piercee with an enlarged PA might have room to put jewelry back right away. To avoid too much pressure on the fresh piercing, it is best to wait several weeks before attempting reinsertion of heavy jewelry.

Reverse Prince Albert: The Upper Part of an Apadravya

This is a midline vertical piercing that extends from the upper side of the urethra to the top of the glans of the penis.

REVERSE PA PLACEMENT

For safety, the Reverse PA should span a minimum of 1/2-inch of tissue from the top edge of the urethral opening when the penis is flaccid. The reverse PA tissue is *much* thicker than the membranous skin of the Prince Albert; it is *more* akin to the ampallang. This one also has a much lengthier healing time than its namesake: four to six months or longer.

REVERSE PA JEWELRY

The technique and jewelry selection are dependent upon whether or not the client already has a Prince Albert, (which is fairly common). If the client does not already have a Prince Albert, I suggest for healing he wear a curved bar that passes from the piercing on the top of the glans, through the urethra and out the urinary meatus. Later, a ring

can be worn, but I feel it is too intrusive and subject to trauma during healing. If he already has a regular PA, extending it through the top and inserting a barbell in the apadravya position is superior for optimal placement and ease of healing, even if he has plans to wear separate jewelry in the reverse Prince Albert later.

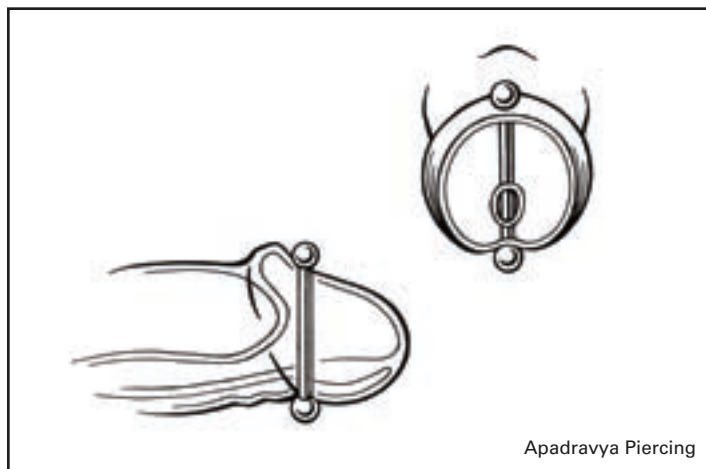
REVERSE PA PIERCING

When the piercing is started with a curved bar, the urethra is the avenue for piercing. A needle may be introduced gently

into the urinary meatus (sometimes with the help of a short guidance tube) and the piercing is made up through the glans. It is vital to get sufficient depth inside the urethra because the piercing should be as vertical as possible for the jewelry to rest correctly. Another option is to use a receiving tube inside the urethra, (I favor one with an angled tip), and pierce down from the top, into the tube. Locating the receiving tube inside the urethra is far more challenging than it is when you perform a Prince Albert because it is not very visible or “graspable” from the exterior. Therefore, using the largest tube that comfortably fits inside the urethra will help to assure accuracy.

Dydoe—Through the Rim of the Glans

The dydoe was ostensibly invented to replace the sensitivity diminished by foreskin removal in circumcision. The term was coined by piercing pioneer Doug Malloy as a free-association for the word *doodad* (an added decoration). Doug claimed that post WWI, a group of men formed “The Cyprian Society,” which was



against the indiscriminate circumcision of babies. No evidence beyond Doug's claims has been found to confirm this tale.

The initial healing time is two to three months. Many men are poor candidates; they simply do not have the well-defined, "mushroom-shaped" head needed for secure placement of a dydoe piercing. If you don't seat the jewelry in enough tissue, there is a strong tendency towards migration and rejection.

Because the dydoe has a short piercing channel, many men mistakenly believe that this is not a sensitive area. I've found that a number of men ask for dydoes because they like the look of barbell balls near the sides of the head, but think the just-a-pinch-of-tissue dydoes would be easier than the long channel of the ampallang they really desire. Once I tell them that the dydoes are not "easier," because the sensory nerve endings are located closer to the surface, they sometimes opt for the ampallang instead—especially if they aren't built for dydoes.

DYDOE PLACEMENT

Placement possibilities vary with anatomical shape. Dydoes are usually done in pairs, off to the sides near three- and nine o'clock, or two and ten. Some men wear a single piercing at the center. A corona framed with multiple studs may be possible on the rare client who is suitably configured with a pronounced enough flare.

An uncircumcised man might be able to heal dydoes, but he must have a relatively loose-fitting foreskin. If the head is sheathed too tightly, excess pressure on the jewelry causes trauma and healing difficulties.

DYDOE JEWELRY

A curved bar is my preferred jewelry style for healing; the starting thickness 14 gauge, as I feel few men are built generously enough to begin with 12 gauge. A minimum jewelry diameter of 3/8 inch might accommodate enough tissue for a safe and enduring piercing. Jewelry may be 7/16 inch or longer, depending on build. Some room must be left on the post for growth during erection. Importantly, the ball needs to fit well in the space behind the corona at the juncture of the head and shaft. A ball that is too big will cause irritation and migration; if it is too small, it can become embedded.

Conclusion

There are many genital piercings from which to choose, and countless individual needs, proclivities, and anatomical configurations. Always do your best to have a frank discussion before every genital piercing so that you can properly consider all of the factors and be confident that you will provide the best possible piercing for each client's specific requirements.

<http://www.cirp.org/pages/restore.html>

The Penis Inserts of Southeast Asia: an Annotated Bibliography with an Overview and Comparative Perspectives. Donald E. Brown, James W. Edwards and Ruth P. Moore. 1988. **P**



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Didier Suarez at the NEHA conference in Tucson, Arizona

ADHA AND NEHA: A TRAVEL DIARY



James Weber
APP President
Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

THURSDAY, JUNE 19TH.

6 am: Philadelphia: My alarm goes off. My lover/ride-to-the-airport doesn't even move. I have to get up now to make my 8:20 flight. I wonder why I agree to do these conferences.

8 am: Philadelphia International Airport (PHL): My flight is delayed one hour. Shit.

11:15 am: Tucson International Airport (TUS): Since my first flight was delayed, my one-hour layover is now a fifteen-minute layover. I grab a disgusting chicken sandwich from the only food counter without a line, grab a bottle of water and run to my flight. I'm so hungry I'm angry, and I'm *really* wondering why I do these conferences.

2 pm: Albuquerque International Sunport (ABQ): I finally land. The chicken sandwich sits like a weight in my stomach; I managed to sleep very little on either of my flights; it feels wonderful to get off the plane. Crystal's employee, Angela, picks me up at the airport, curbside. In her silver Honda Civic she has the huge box with the booth and a second large second box with the art for the booth filling the back seat, pushing our seats forward. The trunk is full with nine boxes with brochures, posters, magazines, pens, stickers, and everything else needed to set up the APP booth. We have three hours to get to the convention center and set up everything for the exposition at the American Dental Hygienist's Association (ADHA) conference, which starts tomorrow.

It's hot as hell. It was light jacket weather when I left Philadelphia. It's in the mid-nineties here, now. Angela and I drive around and finally find where to unload. The boxes, while not too unwieldy in moderate weather are unbearably heavy in the heat. I wait on the sidewalk in the hot sun with the boxes while Angela parks the car.

The booth set-up is easy; I've done it often enough, and air conditioning makes anything easier. We escape by about 4 pm. We head to Evolution where Crystal warmly greets me in the parking lot in back; I feel a lot better. We head to her house—it is very red—and then go out to eat. She goes out, and I stay at her apartment to check my email; I'm soon asleep on her sofa.

FRIDAY, JUNE 20TH.

6 am: I'm awake. My body still thinks it's in Philadelphia—actually, I don't think my body knows where the hell it is.

9 am: Crystal and I arrive—a little late—to the convention center. The expo is already overflowing with people as we make our way to the booth and hastily set up the APP material: brochures, including four new Spanish-language ones; posters; procedure manuals, both hard copy and disc; pens and stickers; and about ten different issues of *The Point*. (The back issues of *The Point* are always eye-catching, and make me very proud.) As we set up, we were swamped with people, asking questions, wanting

information, thanking us for being there. I remembered: this is why I love these conferences.

10 am: The most interesting point in the day was in the early morning, around 10 am. As a representative from the ADHA introduced herself—thanking us for once again being there—there was a small gaggle of people slowly walking towards us, deferentially surrounding an old woman as she made her way down the aisle. As she came nearer, I was told—with a tone of reverence—that the woman making her way to us was the “Queen of the dental hygienists.” Before she could say more, the woman reached us and was ushered behind our table and into our booth space. Evidently the juxtaposition of a septuagenarian dental hygienist posing with the two tattooed and pierced exhibitors was a photo opportunity not to be missed.

She posed—flanked by Crystal and I—while our picture was taken. After the first set of photos, she looked behind her at the booth behind her to see where she was—not out of mental frailty, but as someone important enough that they were used to being shuttled from one photo opportunity to the next without having to concern herself with more than being diplomatic. We were motioned together for a second set of photos, and as my hand brushed against hers she grabbed it and held it tightly with the kind of clasp that can only come from someone older, someone who has no time for worrying about misunderstanding, who holds your hand as though there could be no other reason for that grip than pure warmth and understanding. I immediately knew why everyone held her in such regard, why she commanded such respect. After the pictures were taken, she turned to me and said, simply but earnestly, “I don’t like tongue piercings.” She said it in such a way that I didn’t hold it against her, as I knew she didn’t hold it against me.

She then slowly walked away, followed by her entourage, her court. This was my experience meeting Dr. Esther Wilkins.

SATURDAY, JUNE 21ST.

10 am: Crystal and I arrived just as the exposition hall opened on the second day.

From the several ADHA representatives that stopped by the booth we got information on attendance this year: There were approximately 1300 attendees this year—the highest figure they’ve ever had—with 300 of those being students—up from about 100 last year.

The response we received was amazing. It may have been the increase in attendance, the spike in the number of students, or the fact this was our second time exhibiting, but people were *very* enthusiastic about our presence there.

(It’s also worth noting that, with the huge booths from Colgate, Johnson and Johnson [makers of Listerine], Tom’s of Maine, etc and *dozens* of other manufacturers selling everything from medical instruments to office lighting, we were the only booth not selling anything—not anything besides information.)

The encouraging part of the day wasn’t talking to new people—to people that hadn’t heard of us—but to people who already *had*. Repeatedly people would come up and talk about how they had done a presentation on the topic of piercing for their school, for other students, at a local health conference, for the local health board; how they had been involved in education on some level and how invaluable our material was to them.

4 pm: Angela helped me break down the booth and pack up for the next leg of the trip—Tucson.



Crystal Sims at the ADHA conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico

SUNDAY, JUNE 22ND.

6:30 am: As Crystal and I are driving to pick up the rental car we run out of gas. Completely. The car simply sputters and dies as we’re going down the road. It seems that Crystal has been hanging her ADHA badge on the steering column—over the fuel gauge—and she simply hadn’t noticed how little gas we had left. Luckily, the

two-lane access road was deserted (it was early Sunday morning) and the car came to a stop at the curb about a quarter-mile from the rental car lot. While Crystal waited for her business partner/ex-husband to come with gas (we owe him a BIG favor), I hoofed it to the lot and picked up the car. Crystal joined me shortly, we transferred the booth and boxes to the rental and I was on the road a little after 7 am.

12 noon: I’ve been barreling through the desert for five hours. My only stop was a Denny’s in Truth or Consequences, New Mexico. My soundtrack so far has consisted of Hank Williams, the *O’ Brother Where Art Thou* soundtrack and Bob Dylan’s *Blonde on Blonde* and *Highway 61 Revisited*. Things are good—until I realize the fuel gauge is on “E.” Fuck—twice in one day. I hear Caitlin in my head: after I told her the drive would be an “adventure” she replied that it’s only fun until you run out of gas on the highway fifty miles from anywhere in the hot sun and they find you dead



on the side of the road, your corpse picked over by vultures. (Actually, she didn't mention the vultures, but they were certainly implied.)

The last sign I remember seeing was a "last rest stop for 78 miles" sign. How long ago was that? I'm going a steady 90 mph now and sweating, a little from the nervousness but more from the fact that I've turned off the air to conserve gas and it's 105 degrees outside. And I have no cell phone reception out here.

I finally see a sign: "Wilcox - 10 miles." Please let me make it. Please, please, please, please... I make it the 10 miles to the exit, and I see another sign: "Wilcox - 4 miles." It seems it was 10 miles to the *exit*. Shit. I make it to what I assume is Main Street—Wilcox isn't much more than a stop on the highway—and with great relief I roll into a gas station. Whew...

2 pm: I arrive at the Tucson airport as Didier plane from San Diego is landing. We have 3 hours to find the convention hotel and set up the booth.

3 pm: We find the convention hotel—it's a huge Hilton "resort"—and we find the hotel where we are registered. They were supposed to be close; they're four miles apart. It's now 110 degrees. We decide to hold on to the rental car.

4 pm: We arrive at the expo hall. The other exhibitors give us "the eye" as we set up. It's the annual meeting of NEHA, the National Environmental Health Association, and full of health inspectors and others who deal with public health and policy. It's our—the APP's—first time here, and we're not quite sure what to expect. They don't know what to make of us either. We quickly set up the booth and the table and high-tail it out of there. We have to back for the expo opening and "party" at 6 pm, and we're already exhausted and drenched in sweat. It's 112 degrees outside.

6 pm: Didier and I open the doors and walk into the expo hall, and it's like the scene out of *Animal House*—the one where they go to the bar in the "wrong" part of town: Conversation stops and all eyes are on us. (I imagine the silverware dropping and a needle going "scrrrrrrt" over a record as the music stops.) It's a long walk from the doors to the table.

We set ourselves up and wait. (We are right in front of the door; you can't overlook us.)

The attendees start to slowly trickle in, and then we are *deluged* with people. Everyone, it seems is working on legislation/policy/protocol in their state/county/city dealing with body piercing. We give away the majority of our material in *two hours*. They love *The Point*. They grab handfuls of the brochures. They take the CD manuals like they've been handed the scriptures. (Well, that may be a bit of an exaggeration, but they are incredibly appreciative.)

I meet a health inspector from Florida who I've previously talked to only by phone. I talk to inspectors from Colorado and Albuquerque that have already worked with APP representatives on policy. I talk to people who have never heard of us but promise to contact us—and they will.

It was absolutely amazing, and this was only the first three hours.

9 pm: The expo closes, and Didier and I grab our things and head back to our hotel, as the floor opens again on Monday at 8 am. It is a little cooler outside—only 103 degrees.

MONDAY, JUNE 23RD.

8 am: After a hurried breakfast at the hotel—consisting of a pre-cooked omelettes and stale pastries—Didier and I arrived at the opening of the expo. Most other attendees were complaining about the early start time. I'm still on East Coast time; I was up at 4:30 am.

The second day was much less busy than opening night, but the people Didier and I spoke to at length were no less appreciative of our presence or the work that we do. We spoke to representatives from Arizona, New Mexico, Florida, Alaska, Georgia, New Jersey, Washington DC, Utah, Minnesota, Oregon, Washington, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas, Massachusetts, Alabama, Indiana, Michigan, New York, Maryland, Ohio, Illinois, Nebraska, Colorado, Montana, British Columbia and Great Britain. (This may not be a complete list, but this is what Didier and I could recall after brainstorming in our hotel room.) Many of these people are directly responsible for either the inspection of body art establishments or the policies or legislation that governs and informs those inspections.

The most memorable thing I heard was from a woman from



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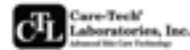
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Montana, who talked about regulations and inspections in her state. She thanked us for our efforts—as an organization—and closed by saying, “We couldn’t have done it without your help.” I was almost knocked over by the power in her words.

The stated mission of the APP is to disseminate information about body piercing to piercers, health care professionals, legislators, and the general public. As piercers, we will most likely never all fly the same flag, and the crusade to educate the public is just at the beginning of a long and hard road. But health care professionals now know who we are and where to find us; my trips to the annual conferences of APHA (the American Public Health Association), ACHA (the American College Health Association), and ADHA (the American Dental Hygienists’ Association) have proven that to me. The reception that Didier and I received at NEHA showed that we have are succeeding with legislators as well. “We couldn’t have done it without your help” speaks volumes.

2 pm: The expo closes, and Didier and I pack up the booth and load the car. (The temperature gauge in the car says 116 degrees; we can’t tell if that means outside or inside the car.) We head to the Post Office to ship what few supplies we have left—along with the booth—to San Diego in preparation of the APHA conference the end of November, and then drive the hour to the airport for Didier to catch his flight. I don’t leave until

tomorrow morning, so after dinner I head back to the hotel to finish my blog of the trip and prepare for an early bedtime. I will not be leaving the comfort of the room or the air conditioning again until I leave for the airport tomorrow morning—I have to return the rental car before 6 am, so I’ll be up at 4:30 again.

[While this may not be the typical experience manning the APP booth at health conferences, it’s certainly not unusual. As part of our outreach to the Medical community the APP has a yearly presence at the annual conferences for the American Public Health Association (APHA) and the American College Health Association (ACHA). As of last year we added attendance at the American Dental Health Association (ADHA) conference, and this year was our first time at the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA) conference as well. While there is a significant time commitment involved in volunteering (and with my new duties as President I may not be able to attend as many in the future as I may have hoped) they are tremendously rewarding, for they give you the opportunity to talk face-to-face with people who are directly affected by the outreach we do, the material we provide, and the education we offer. Like most work on behalf of the APP, it can be incredibly hard, but the rewards more than make up for it. Many thanks to all who have helped represent the APP all over the country through the years, and thanks in advance to those set to do it in the future.] P





LAS VEGAS
CONFERENCE
2008





Big Sandy & His Fly-Rite Boys perform before this year's banquet dinner.

A LOOK BACK: THE APP 2008 CONFERENCE



Jesika Bornsen
Saint Sabrina's
Minneapolis, MN

This was my eleventh time as an attendee and—truth be told—I wasn't really even looking forward to going this year. Conference came less than three weeks after my return from a private yoga resort in the southern end of the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, and the energy, noise, lights, and stimulation of Vegas were so different from the blissed-out lagoon, organic food, coral reefs and twice-daily yoga of Mexico.

But from the first step into the Riviera hotel it hit me: the smiles, the hugs (sometimes with a running start), and the camaraderie of my fellow attendees. The excitement, the thrill of seeing old and new friends, the desire to learn and to teach—it all rushed at me at once and I don't think I lost my smile for three days. This is my family, people who I can connect with on a level that I doubt many other industries understand. This year, I continued to see older members greeting first time attendees with open minds and open conversation. The great part of this gathering is that we are not competing against each other; we all want to share knowledge that will better ourselves in our service to our clients. Each of the past eleven years I have met

new, amazing people that continue to inspire me.

This year, new instructors breathed new life into many of the old classes. Even though most attendees had taken some form of the *Aftercare* class in the past, this year's class—taught by Ron Garza and Steve Joyner—had people excitedly talking in the halls. This is the great thing about continuing education: we are never too old or experienced to learn. Nick Martin and Adam Block (from Body Vision) presented a class on gold and precious gemstones that was, for me, the highlight of the Conference. Even after years of selling these materials, these presenters had me taking notes on alloys, gem qualities, and selling tips.

Raelyn Gallina taught this year's *Anthropology* class. Though the history of our industry is so often taught as one of nomads, tribes, and indigenous cultures, Raelyn spoke of the generations of piercers in America, the evolution of woman in the industry, and her personal journey of one of its first female practitioners. As our numbers continue to be dominated by male piercers, Raelyn Gallina's perspective was a welcome one. Like all indigenous tribes, we too have our elders.



Without them there would be no us. It was a privilege to hear her speak, and to learn of our history from one who was there.

Other classes inspired me as well. *Bloodborn Pathogens*, taught by Kris LaChance, was anything but the usual, boring class we've all been forced to sit through. Karl Schiemann—of the Denver Department of Environmental Health—headed a round table on MRSA, leading a progressive conversation that introduced information from his line of work to ours. And at the exposition, Health Educators, Professional Piercing Information Systems (PPIS) and others offered more education—in addition to selling personal protective equipment, new products on infection control, aftercare

products and safe-sex HIV prevention information.

The exposition this year was amazing. While the past few years saw the expo looking like... well... the same old thing, this year the layout was brand new—and very impressive. It was inviting, exciting, and full of (non-competitive) energy. Several new vendors—like Glass Heart studios, Relic Stoneworks—had small but absolutely gorgeous displays of jewelry. Future Primitives and SM316 had a fun, welcoming, sit-down area to view their jewelry, and Safe Products had smiles and hugs and beverages to accompany their vast jewelry selection. I went to the expo thinking I had already reached my quota of jewelry bought for myself—with the multiple pairs of Anatometal “bling” eyelets I purchased earlier this year—before I came to the booth for Reign Custom Designs. I wouldn't even call this a booth; it was a store-quality display of some of the newest and best designs in plugs and weights the industry has seen in years. My self-control in purchasing jewelry for my personal collection went out the window as I bought another pair of plugs: fossilized coral set in stainless steel.

On the whole, this year's Conference left me inspired, tired, and feeling very loved. Our industry is a powerful network of individuals who practice their trade in different ways, with differing viewpoints and various levels of skill. The respect shown to each other among attendees and vendors, and the effort put forth by the outgoing and incoming Board members left me proud to be a member of the APP, and proud to be a member of the body piercing industry.

I'm already looking forward to next year. **P**

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Some of our best insights to Conference come from our volunteers: some of our great ideas, fabulous class suggestions, some of our best laughs, some of my most emotional moments.

THANKS TO THE 2008 CONFERENCE VOLUNTEERS



Caitlin McDiarmid
APP Administrator

Thanking the volunteers is a joy, a struggle, and a tremendous responsibility. How do you thank people for doing all they do at the APP Conference? Is it important? How can a thank-you give back to them? I don't have the answers but it wouldn't be right to not acknowledge their hard work. They do more than work; they lessen the stress of the Board of Directors and the Administrator (no easy task). They are truly the glue that holds Conference together and puts a "face" to the APP throughout the week. Every year they excel at this—each year they somehow are more competent, more joyous, more responsible, more at ease—just more, in all ways possible. Some become volunteers and volunteer every year; I like to say "once a volunteer, forever a volunteer" when I pull former volunteers out of a crowd to help me on the fly.

This year the schedule was more full than it has ever been before. We had more classes, longer hours, and fewer volunteers. Many of my long-time volunteers had to take this year off, and I understand. Some asked for the time off and then came looking for extra shifts; "I don't know what to do if I'm not volunteering," Tiana said.

Some of our best insights to Conference come from our volunteers: some of our great ideas, fabulous class suggestions, some of our best laughs, some of my most emotional moments.

People like Kathi Norton, from Kutter's Edge, who purposely didn't participate in the raffle so she could help me with the pulling of the small prizes (which takes hours and is tedious and boring work). Now that's a volunteer! (This year two of the volunteers were first on the scene when a gentleman had a grand mal seizure in the elevator and hit his head on the rail on the way to the floor. Not really part of their duties, but who better qualified?)

So I thank them; I thank all that volunteered hours upon hours

and all that provided that one hour of service when I needed it—or even those ten minutes.

In no particular order:

Jean-Pierre Rogers, Tiana McGuire, Gus Diamond, John Johnson, Sonya Adams, Anna York, James Sens, Sarah Wooten, Cody Vaughn, Mark Montgomery, Casey Kutilek, Tye "Golem" Ballantyne, Christy Moorehouse, Andy Knag, Christopher McReynolds, Zak Crouch, Patrick Kuhn, Justin Mendez, Marc Williams, Kathi Norton, Alejandra Deoliviera, James Maldonado, John McLean, Vikki Johnson, Darren Walters, Zane and Rick, Shawn Pappas, Crystal Sims, Ed Chavarria, Didier Suarez, James Weber, Bethra Szumski, Elayne Angel, Alicia Cardenas, Paul King, April Johnson, Eric "Sque3z" Anderson, Danny Yerna, Luis Garcia...

Inevitably I forget people, please know in the moment you were important and made a difference and I truly am sorry if I have left you off of this list.

Special thanks to:

Paul Kriner, for making me smile and saying hello, every time I saw him—he's got to be one of the friendliest guys at Conference.

Tye Ballantyne, for giving us that little shove to get the APP Conference to go more green, and for committing to helping us get there.

Patrick Kuhn for giving me a completely new perspective on who Conference can impact and what that impact can mean.

The staff of the Riviera who has made the last 6 years pleasant and the AV people who have always gone beyond the expected for our group, treated each attendee with respect, and became my 'annual' friends. I will miss you guys. **P**





Nunivak Island, Alaska lies north of the Aleutian Islands in the Bering Sea and women living here continued to wear labrets similar to those of the Aleut until the 1930s.



A Chugach woman of Prince William Sound, 1778. Drawing by John Webber.



A Tattooed woman from Unalaska Island, 1790.



Eskimo men around Bering Strait, 1900.



An Alutiiq man of Kodiak Island, 1817. Drawing by Mikhail Tikhonov.

TATTOOING AND PIERCING AMONG THE ALASKAN ALEUT



Lars Krutak
larskrutak.com

In 1741, the German naturalist Georg Wilhelm Steller became the first European to describe the Native peoples of Alaska - Unangan or Aleuts on the Shumagin Islands: “One man had a piece of bone three inches long struck through crosswise above the chin just under the lower lip. Still another had a bone like it fastened in the forehead, and another, finally, had a similar one in each of the wings of the nose.”

Stretching 1,500 miles from Kamchatka, Russia to the Alaska Peninsula, the Aleutian archipelago is a chain of windswept islands that has been inhabited for about 7,000 years. Traditionally, the term “Aleut” was used by Russian fur-traders to describe the indigenous peoples they met. Today, the Unangan (who speak the Aleut language) and Alutiiq (Kodiak Islanders) see themselves as distinct from one another culturally and linguistically. But with the invasion of the Russians in the 18th century, each group was gradually enslaved and organized into a collective force to labor for the Russian sea-otter fur trading empire.

Besides the dramatic decline in populations due to the introduction of foreign diseases after European contact, the indigenous cultures of the Aleutian Islands were disrupted to the point where many traditional practices almost disappeared by the time of the American occupations in the mid-19th century. Whether fueled by the Russian distaste of the “hideous” customs of tattoo and piercing or the Christian missionary’s efforts to eradicate aspects of dress, grooming,

and ritual they found “deplorable” and “savage,” body piercing, labrets and tattoos were rarely seen after 1800. The early 19th century explorer and writer Georg Langsdorff, speaking of the Unalaska Islanders, wrote:

Tattooing was at one time very much in use among them, particularly among the women. The neck, arms, and chin were, and a sort of coal-dust mixed with urine rubbed in; at present these ornaments are rare, and chiefly to be seen among the old women; Russians have made the young women understand that they do not consider their beauty increased by them, and this has rather brought them into disrepute.

According to most historical accounts, tattooing among the Aleut was first practiced when women reached maturity. On Kodiak Island, it not only signaled adolescence, but social standing as well. One 1790 report stated:

The tattoo at the chin the girls receive it at their first cleaning [menstruation]. [Menstruation is said to start late among these people, close to or after their twentieth year]... women pierced themselves with needles made of seagull bones, and they blacken[ed] it immediately with coals.

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In the Unalaska Island district, the Russian priest Veniaminov observed in 1840 that aristocratic women were more heavily tattooed than laypersons:

The Aleut women had the habit of tattooing different designs, by ‘sewing’ or pricking...They tattooed the whole chin, two bands from cheek to cheek across the nose, two bands on the sides of the face, and one below the nose. But all did not have the same designs. The pretty ones and also the daughters of famous and rich ancestors and fathers, endeavored in their tattooings to show the accomplishments of their progenitors, as, for instance, how many enemies, or powerful animals, that ancestor killed.

On the whole, ethnographic information on Aleut tattooing was limited to outside European observers. Just as tattoo methods and forms were widely scattered, so too were other forms of personal adornment. In an attempt to offer some rudimentary interpretation of the meaning and function of the tattooing itself, it is necessary to include in this discussion a description of the other forms of Aleut body modification including: nosepins, ear ornaments, and labrets. Aleut piercing and tattooing were natural symbols simultaneously linking nature, Aleut society and culture into one organic whole. Body adornment justified human existence by not only influencing the supernatural and the dead, but by influencing the wishes and actions of other living individuals in the community itself.

Nosepins

Nosepins were worn by all indigenous groups of the Aleutian chain, by both sexes, with the incision being pierced shortly after birth. The ornament might be an eagle’s feather shaft, a sea lion whisker, piece of bark, bone, or a leather thong with dentalium shells worn horizontally through the nose. Sometimes, women strung various beads of coral and amber on the nosepin and let them hang down to the tips of their chins.

More specifically, amber and dentalia were highly prized by both men and women. Although there were natural outcroppings of amber in the Aleutian Islands, most of it was obtained through trade from

other indigenous groups living to the east. In 1814, the Russian sailor Urey Lisiansky noted that the Aleuts valued amber “in as high estimation as diamonds in Europe.” Among the adjacent Chugach Eskimo of the Alaskan mainland, Captain Cook’s crew recorded that “one pair of amber ornaments was worth two sea-otter skins (\$90-100 a skin)” in the 1780s. Dentalia, however, were procured exclusively from indigenous traders living southeast of the Aleutian Archipelago in the vicinity of Hecate Strait near the Queen Charlotte Islands, Canada. Here the indigenous traders of the shell immersed “in the water the body of someone who has died, or of a slave killed specially for the purpose” to attract the worms that live in the shell casings. On Kodiak Island, a pair of dentalia was worth “an entire squirrel-skin parka” in 1805.



Eskimos of Kotzebue Sound, Alaska wearing labrets, 1822. Drawing by Louis Choris

Ear Ornaments

Ear ornaments were another common form of adornment. Oftentimes, there were holes pierced all around the rim of the ear with dentalium shells, beads of shell, bone, and amber placed in each orifice. An Unangan Attu Islander, before she was given to her husband in marriage, had ten sea lion whiskers pierced into each ear. Sea lion whiskers were considered

to be very valuable and were regarded as trophies that indicated a good hunter, or the wife of a good hunter, since each animal has only four whiskers and “any number of them together must be a testimony of having captured a great many.” These whiskers also adorned the wooden hunting gear of Aleut men or were used as ornaments in the nose.

A visitor to the Andreanov Islands in 1761 noted, “instead of earrings put into their ears the women wear eagles’ and geese feathers behind the ears.” In the Kagamil Island burial caves, the physical anthropologist Ales Hrdlička found numerous bird skulls, bones, the skins of hawks, dried bird wings buried with the mummies of children and even a bird feather “still stuck in the ear of one of the mummified heads.”

Certainly, particular birds were seen as protective animals in the afterlife and not surprisingly the early 19th century Kodiak Islanders raised eagles as pets, using their feathers in ritual festivals to honor the sun. Their beaks not only represented the power of predation and killing but also stood for the male procreative power. The speed, cunning, and accuracy of these birds were emulated by Aleut hunters who with their beak-like hunting visor, decorated with carved



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ivory “wings” and a “tail” of sea lion whiskers, became transformed into a powerful bird of prey whilst hunting upon the open seas in their kayaks. The hunter’s harpoon magically became a talon and bore sculptural forms of a fanged wolf-like creature that assisted in capturing game.

Labrets

Yet when the Russians first made contact with the peoples of the Aleutian archipelago, the one custom that intrigued them the most was the insertion of various types of labrets into the lower lip and cheek. Captain Cook noted in the 1770s “what the men have thrust thro the hole in the underlip has the resemblance of 2 Boars tusk, and are 2 pieces of bone about 1 ½ Inch long joining in the middle of the lip, & separating, by means of the tongue they can move these bones, & make them point up and down. Others have a single polished bone the shape and size of a large stud.” Men perforated the lip by placing several studs of walrus ivory into separate holes that appeared to Captain Cook as representing “another row of teeth immediately under their own.” This style of labretifery was common on the Turnagain River of mainland Alaska and on Kodiak Island in the 1790s where “men wear up to ten garnets – white in back, blue in front – underneath their lower lip.”

The Russian naval officer Gavril Davydov wrote in 1807 that Kodiak Island women made “several holes in their lower lip from which they hang a loop into which are placed beads and small white bones. These holes vary in number between two and six. Their lips are pierced by close relatives and there is a great deal of respect, therefore, for the girl islander who has the most.” Although labrets of this type were usually worn for decorative purposes, they also signified the social status, prestige, and age of the wearer.

Piercing Medicine

Because tattoos, nosepins, earrings, and labrets were significant visual symbols tied to important realms of cultural experience, it is

possible they were perceived as having medicinal value as well. The Aleut believed that a manipulable power resided in the body that persisted in the dead through mummification. In life, this power was regulated at crucial periods, mainly through joint-binding with sinew cords. Joint-binding was practiced when a young girl had her first menses, and when a husband or wife died. The Aleut also dismembered the bodies of enemies and dangerous persons at their joints as a way of protecting the living from the evil dead, because religious belief dictated that the soul of the departed remained on earth as long as the corpse was intact. The practice even extended to honored birds, such as the eagle and owl; creatures that were believed to embody supernatural power through their association with celestial bodies of both light and darkness.

The Aleut also practiced forms of medicine akin to acupuncture and moxabustion. In this sense, it is probable that they had some conception of Chinese yin/yang cosmology and attempted to regulate “good” and “bad” energies through the plugging of orifices. To this end, it would seem to follow that the Aleut had a similar concept in regards to body piercing. The anthropologist Grant Keddie has stated that “the labret may demonstrate one’s spiritual mastery over bodily entrances from which spirits enter and exit and therefore by analogy one’s power over the forces of nature.”



A man of Turnagain River, Alaska, 1778. Drawing by John Webber.

Transgendered Piercings and Tattoos

Aside from men and women's personal ornaments, it should be noted that particular forms of depilation and tattooing were also practiced by transgendered individuals. The Russian naval Captain von Langsdorff observed in 1813 that on Kodiak Island, "Boys, if they happen to be very handsome, are often brought up entirely in the manner of girls, and instructed in all the arts women use to please man: their beards are carefully plucked out as soon as they begin to appear, and their chins are tattooed like those of the women." Other Europeans writing in early 19th century suggested that the existence of transgendered individuals among the Aleut was influenced in some way by parental guidance, for it seemed that mothers who were "very fond of their offspring; dreading the effects of war, and the dangers of the chase; some of them bring up their males in a very effeminate manner, and are happy to see them taken by chiefs, to gratify their unnatural desires." Similarly in 1790 the Russian naval Captain Sarychev saw "among the arriving Kodiaks there was a 40 year-old, ugly fellow, clad in woman's garb; his face was tattooed and there were beads in his nose. This man played the role of a wife for a young islander and did all the woman's work." Others agreed stating: "There are among these people men with tattooed chins, carrying on solely female work, living always with women, and similarly to these having one and sometimes even two 'husbands'. They call these Achnučeks [*kássaq*]. These individuals are not only not looked down upon, but instead they are obeyed in a settlement and are not seldom wizards [shamans]."

Throughout the circumpolar region, shamans served as intermediaries between the living and the dead, between humans and animals, between the genders, and between the spirits and deities. They were considered "wise-men" able to forecast the future, the weather, and had the ability to purify or cure ailing individuals through physical and ritual diagnoses. Among the Inuit of Canada, mythology reveals that a transgendered shaman created all women and this was directly associated with his ability to straddle the procreative nature of the sexes:

They say that the world collapsed, the earth was destroyed, that great showers of rain flooded the land. All animals died, and there were only two men left. They lived together. They married, as there was nobody else, and at least one of them became with child. They were great shamans, and when the one was going to bear a child they made his penis over again so that he became a woman, and she had a child. They say it is from that shaman that woman came.

Among the Aleut, however, shamanic powers came to Aleut individuals through apprenticeship or more readily through dreams. And from the time an Aleut *kássaq* reached adolescence he was greeted by "apparitions in the shape of animals or marvelous beings until they were bewildered and willing to submit to their inevitable masters." A similar pattern held for Siberian shamans, especially among the Chukchi where "soft man being" or "transformed" shamans were commanded by the *ke'let* (spirits), who sometimes were female,



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usually at the critical age of early youth when shamanistic inspiration first manifested itself. Although there were varying degrees of transformation, the eminent ethnographer Waldemar Bogoras stated that the role reversal among the Chukchi was completed once the boy left “off all pursuits and manners of his sex...He throws away the rifle and the lance, the lasso of the reindeer herdsman, the harpoon of the seal-hunter, and takes to the needle and the skin-scraper. He learns the use of these quickly, because the ‘spirits’ are helping him all the time.”

Aleut Adornment


Aleut adornment not only satisfied the need for display, celebration, and accomplishment, it also embodied religious beliefs about the relationships between humans, animals, and the deities who controlled human destiny and the surrounding world. For the inhabitants of this broken island chain, body art was created not only to lure, please, and honor the spirits of animals; it also increased the social status, spiritual power, and beauty of the adorned by inscribing male, female, and transgendered personhood.

But Aleut tattoos and piercings also cloaked or camouflaged the physical body from supernatural forces that inhabited the maritime environment. This view, widely held for many indigenous societies around the world, falls into the long-standing tradition of prophylactic “magic” aimed at warding off penetration or possession by evil forces that targeted vulnerable body passageways: namely the natural openings of the body (eyes, ears, mouth, etc.). Because the fear inspired by spirits in the landscape was great, Aleut peoples were compelled to develop a complex of personal adornment to neutralize the advances of supernatural entities. And in this way, they attempted to project themselves beyond their everyday limits of space and time, and on some collective level, they perhaps envisioned supernatural control and, ultimately, their own immortality in the human bodies they manipulated.

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PIERCING WITH DARTS!



Karl E. Schiemann
Denver Department of Environmental Health

Its spring; it feels like an odd edited page from Mel Brooks' screenplay *The Producers*. Somewhere, in a dusty box, in the back of a storeroom, are pages from a song with scratched out words that sing something about springtime and Germans in Speedos.

About the end of April each year a colorful collection of body artists—piercers to be exact—converge in Las Vegas, Nevada, for conversation, friendship and discussion about safer ways to lead their industry. The 2008 Association of Professional Piercers (APP) Annual Conference & Exposition was my third visit in the last four years and my second visit as a speaker and roundtable moderator. I feel fortunate to be able to attend and participate in this wonderful experience. Not only does it provide a great opportunity to learn something new, but it also feeds my hidden sociologist with unique social interaction and observation rarely encountered in the daily world.

Interestingly, each year the APP shares the Riviera Hotel and Casino's Convention Center with a large group of dart throwers. The space becomes an odd mix of somewhat self-aware, earthy, colorful and modified body artists with somewhat friendly, loud, semi-inappropriate, true barflies. The convergence of these two groups results in a dance of differences where at any moment odd looks and audible comments of disgust or disbelief play out across both sides of the convention center; except, outside the back door where tobacco smoking seems to unite all flavors of people into the most agreeable tribe of humanity. In all, few problems arise and I think everyone truly enjoys the combined oddity of it all.

The APP takes the space for a week with about a thousand national and international attendees. Through the piercings, tattoos, scars, and sub-dermal implants it is hard to tell where anyone is really from. The dart throwers are there a whole week longer; about mid-week the national contingent of throwers is replaced by the international contingents. Much like the piercers, it is hard to tell the difference between the national or international throwers; their *language* is the same: a litany of throwing lingo filled with conversation about brackets, sets, and some extraneous gambling strategy.

Nothing really tells you much about who is from where. From my hotel room I could watch people cross the courtyard of the hotel. In the early morning the throwers could be seen on their way to what I would expect to be a match, since they were already drinking beer and smoking their breakfast. Only by mid-day, at the pool, can you kind of tell who is who among the throwers, for when the Germans hit the pool they seem to prefer to do it in a Speedo.

As a non-descript health inspector, it is fun to be part of the woodwork and watch the world in full color pass around me. And although it is Vegas, complete with all walks of humanity, I still manage to get some looks for being in a plain wrapper. Overall, attending the conference has many a benefit, namely being on the edge of a little understood industry looking at the parts, pieces, and details that keep it ticking.

The APP conference is probably the best conference I have been to in fourteen years with Public Health. It isn't necessarily better organized than

others—they never provide cookies or lunch—but yoga is free, though some power point presentations are still read line for line. But for a science geek it lends itself to the details and the thirst for something completely different in public health. Sessions start late in the morning, but also go late into the evening; it isn't uncommon for me to have at least one twelve hour day of back-to-back sessions. Non-stop two-and-a-half hour sessions fly without one snoring. Conversations about metal composition and polish carry into the hall. Details of the best and safest placement of a genital piercing are discussed in small groups. I think I have had heard more conversations about why a body part shouldn't be pierced than why it should. This is, for the most part, a government regulated group that has passion for the science of what they do, and in general they know their stuff very well. Experts in technique, glass, metal, jewelry making, sterilizers, wound care, every facet of the business show up year after year. Google a few names with the word piercing and you begin to realize the complexity of their experience: Fakir, Elayne Angel, Allen Falkner, Luis Garcia, Sky Renfro, and James Weber. They are the modern day experts in a body-adornment trend that started in the gay community in the 70's and became overwhelmingly popular in mainstream culture in the late 80's thanks to body piercing's exposure in music videos; it fills the spiritual and cultural needs of millions of practitioners.

Although the APP started out as a political action group in 1994, they quickly filled the need for health and safety education in a growing industry. They lead the way in piercing aftercare technique and partner with industry to make sure equipment, tools, and jewelry are being manufactured to the safest of standards. The conference carries this same attention to detail. Each year new topics are explored and the latest standards of safety adopted. Piercing friendly nurses and doctors teach anatomy classes, jewelry manufactures discuss metal composition and content; and experts in the manufacturing and maintenance of sterilizers share the latest tabletop autoclave information.

The APP has also taken a stance to be health-department friendly. They encourage our participation at the annual conference by making registration free; there is a roundtable for health inspectors to discuss concerns, trends, and to network. Thanks to that networking opportunity, I have, over the years, helped many departments across the country form new regulations, build better ideas about inspections, and find answers to the minutia. Those contacts helped shape Denver and El Paso County's new rules on special tattoo events and spore testing, and are helping build how Denver will treat apprenticeships in the future. The APP annually attends public health and nursing conventions, and they will be at the 2008 NEHA conference for the first time.

The 2009 APP conference will be held at a new location next year, so no more dart throwers. I wonder what slice of humanity will be sharing that spring week with my colorful friends. And more importantly, will the Germans in Speedos miss us?

[Originally written for The Point Source, the Colorado Environmental Health Association's quarterly newsletter.] P

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