

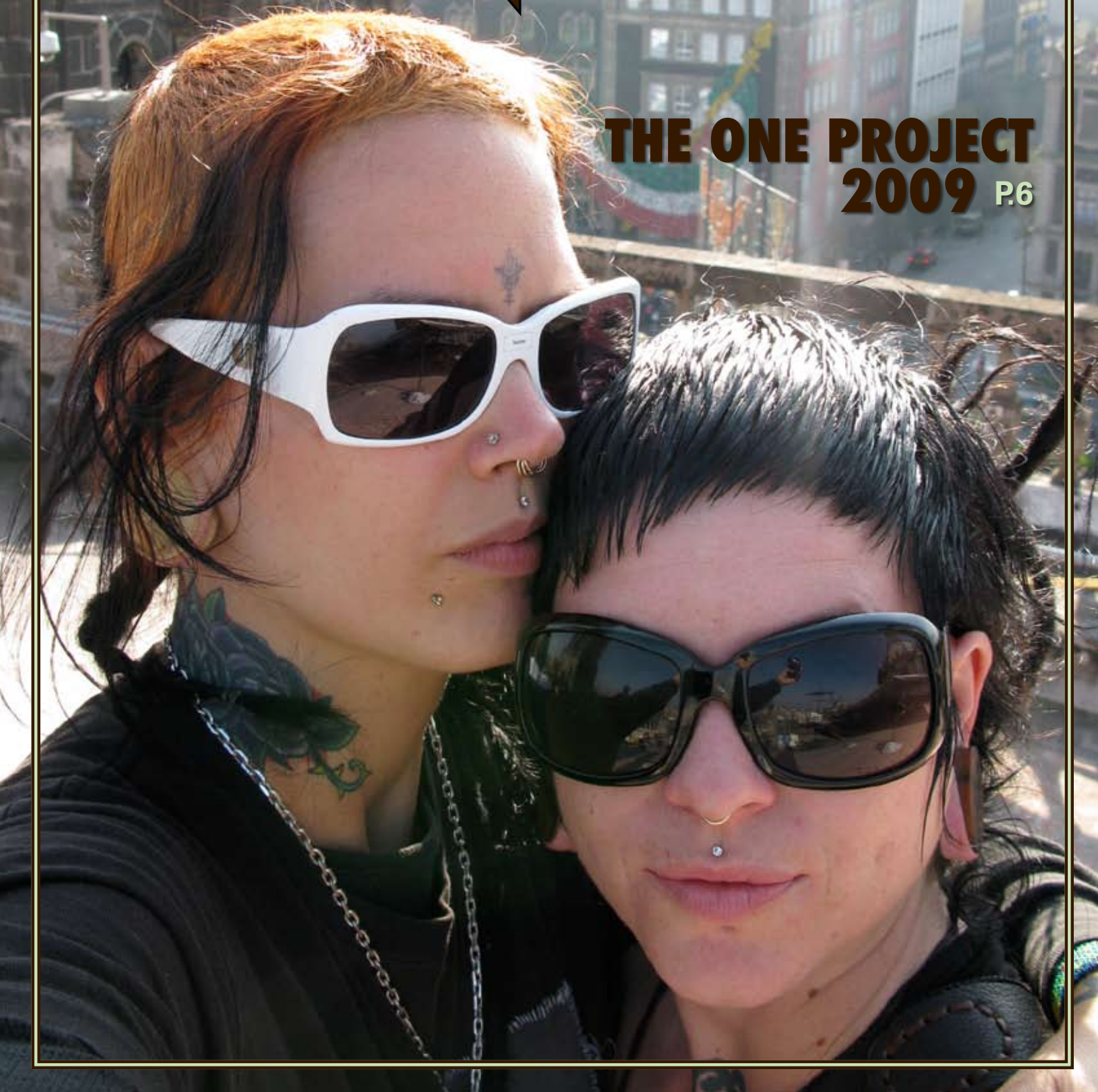
THE POINT

ISSUE 46
WINTER 09

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS



THE ONE PROJECT
2009 P.6



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FROM THE EDITOR



JAMES WEBER

APP President
Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

As I watched the national election returns from Philadelphia, I saw the footage of the celebration happening in Grant Park, in Chicago: the images of the jubilant crowd, the sea of people who, like me, thought we might never see a day like this one in our lifetime. Watching Jesse Jackson with tears of joy streaming down his face was an image I will not soon forget; the power of that night will stay with me a long time.

As I watched an early-February broadcast of *The Daily Show* (and on a TV for once; not online over my breakfast), I saw an interview with former National Economic Council Director Lawrence Lindsey. He was promoting his book, *What A President Should Know (...but most learn too late)*. John Stewart asked him—with Obama only several weeks into his term—what advice he would give the new President:

STEWART: *Broad strokes; what would be the things he needs to know?*

LINDSEY: *Focus on substance, don't focus on communicating.*

He then went on:

The more you see a President on TV, the less time he's spending actually talking to his advisors about solving problems. And what President Bush did, President Clinton did, they tried to communicate to us by talking about something other than substance.

This resonated with me, as I often find myself conflicted with the same choice: when faced with not enough time to do both, do you choose the work that needs to be done, or the membership's (and the public's) desire to be told about it?

This decision has also been one I've had to make with *The Point*. There are many reasons for the delay of this issue: lack of articles and lateness on the part of contributors were two, but my own difficulty in scheduling the work was also a big factor. To make the time to solicit and compile articles, edit them, oversee layout and then publish each issue can be difficult, even with the help of other volunteers.

I found what Lindsey had to say pertinent and timely because I often have the same dilemma—the entire Board of Directors does. Very often we must make a choice: a choice between getting work done and telling everyone about the work we're doing. This quarter—with everything else demanding the time of the Board of Directors—"substance" won out over "communicating."

So, with the publication of issue #46 slowly being pushed further and further back, and the publication date of issue #47 getting closer and closer (in order to have it printed by our annual conference), the decision was made to combine issue #46 and #47 into one, the result being what you are now reading.

Delays notwithstanding, I am especially excited about this issue (well, these *two* issues), in a large part because of the diversity of content: in #46 there are two articles on The ONE Project, which was held in Mexico this year; one on a new museum exhibit in Portland; a primer on proper handwashing; and part one of an extensive piece on the use of glass in body jewelry. We have the spiritual rubbing elbows with the technical; the esoteric and the practical, along with everything in between.

If you are reading this on a computer, you will also notice another change: this is the first issue to be distributed in color. While the print distribution of *The Point* is not huge—especially compared to our more commercial counterparts—the majority of our readership finds us through our online PDF's (available at safepiercing.org). Printing *The Point* in full color is still cost-prohibitive, but there is no reason to keep the online version black and white. From now on, the digital version will continue to be produced in color.

So enjoy issue #46 (and #47) of *The Point: The Journal of the Association of Professional Piercers*. And remember the next time your issue is late: it may not be we're taking a vacation, but that we may have been forced to make the tough decision between doing the work, and reporting on it. **P**

THE POINT

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS

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The mission of the Association of Professional Piercers is to disseminate information about body piercing to piercers, health care professionals, legislators, and the general public.

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Front Cover: Corey Lolley and Hydi Zaster in Mexico for The ONE Project. Photo by Hydi Zaster.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



JAMES WEBER

APP President
Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

There are many conflicting ideas about what the members of APP Board of Directors actually *do*. While some find it most serving to their indignation toward the organization to imagine our Board meetings as huge Bacchanalian orgies—with Board members rolling around on piles of free body jewelry, lighting cigars off hundred-dollar bills pulled from the organization's savings—those who now or have previously served on the Board know how much work it really is.

A lot of the work the Board does is simply to maintain the basic functioning of the organization. Keeping the publications updated, reviewing legislation, processing membership applications, attending speaking engagements, teaching classes, and planning the annual Conference all take an incredible amount of work. It's often hard to start—much less complete—large projects outside of our basic “maintenance” duties because there simply isn't enough time.

That being said, it is with great pleasure that I announce the completion of one of these projects. On the below is the statement drafted by the Board of Directors explaining changes to the APP's *Minimum Standards for Jewelry for Initial Piercings*. While this is a short and concise document, the process necessary to compose it was a time-consuming one, and the result of work done by the

entire Board.

The APP's *Minimum Standards for Jewelry for Initial Piercings* is considered by many to be the definitive statement on the subject of proper jewelry materials and quality for healing piercings. As this document is increasingly integrated—in some form or another—in legislation and written policy in the United States and abroad, the importance of keeping it current becomes glaringly important. And while the APP's focus is not creating and enforcing jewelry standards (even though there are certainly those who feel it should be) it is important the organization's standards for membership are current, and reflect the collective knowledge of not only the membership, but of the industry as a whole.

It's satisfying to know that, in the middle of all the important work, the *really* important work is being done as well.

[*Special thanks to Bethra Szumski, as she did the bulk of the research into materials specifications and compliance terminology. Because of this (and because, as Bethra knows, no good deed on the Board goes unpunished), questions about this document should be directed to her at secretary@safepiercing.org. Copies of this statement are available in PDF form at safepiercing.org.] P*

MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR JEWELRY FOR INITIAL PIERCINGS

The APP Board of Directors has adopted a revision to the APP minimum membership standards for jewelry for initial piercings. Although a Members' vote was taken to adopt the original standards, a membership vote is not required when establishing or revising membership requirements. The Board has opted to proceed without member polling for the following reasons:

- 1 This revision simply updates and expands the standards set forth in the original document.
- 2 The new revised standards better reflect the current practices of both the APP membership and the piercing industry at large.
- 3 The APP has had extensive communication—both in person and in writing—from piercers questioning the out-dated and confusing nature of the previous standards.
- 4 Regulatory agencies often utilize the APP standards and incorporate them into law. Maintaining the outdated standards can therefore have negative consequences for piercers using acceptable products that were previously not listed.

The practice of relying *solely* on the implant designation of a material has now been addressed. Although implant standards address bio-compatibility of a given material *when used for surgical implants*, they cannot be directly applied to the use or required finish for body jewelry. Agencies that determine these designations and standards do so for both material quality and end usage. Implants rest permanently against internal tissue unless surgically removed or replaced, and are designed for greater tissue adhesion. Healing piercings, however, form tissue against the smooth non-adhesive surface of the jewelry, and this jewelry can be changed when appropriate. **For these reasons we list designation compliance as it applies to material content *only*; the finish requirements are described separately below.**

Products with an ISO or ASTM designation are so noted and a statement specifying the finish requirements particular to body jewelry has been added. In addition, several materials

designated for applications other than implants have been proven through historical and practical application to be suitably bio-compatible for initial piercing.

The revised Minimum Standard for Jewelry for Initial Piercings is as follows:

- Steel that is ASTM F-138 compliant or ISO 5832-1 compliant
- Steel that is ISO 10993-6, 10993-10, and/or 10993-11 compliant (EEC Nickel Directive compliant)
- Titanium (Ti6Al4V ELI) that is ASTM F136 compliant or ISO 5832-3 compliant
- Titanium that is ASTM F-67 compliant
- Solid 14 karat or higher nickel-free white or yellow gold
- Solid nickel-free platinum alloy
- Niobium (Nb)
- Fused quartz glass, lead-free borosilicate or lead-free soda-lime glass
- Polymers (plastics) as follows:
 - Tygon® Medical Surgical Tubing S-50HL or S-54HL
 - Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE) that is ASTM F754-00 compliant
 - Any plastic material that is ISO 10993-6, 10993-10 and/or 10993-11 compliant and/or meets the United States Pharmacopeia (USP) Class VI material classification.
- All threaded or press-fit jewelry must have internal tapping (no threads on posts).
- For body jewelry purposes, surfaces and ends must be smooth, free of nicks, scratches, burrs, polishing compounds and metals must have a consistent mirror finish.

This revised wording will be used on all future APP publications and correspondence where the earlier version of the standards was published.

IN THE OFFICE



CAITLIN McDIARMID
APP Administrator

It's only when you hitch your wagon to something larger than yourself that you will realize your true potential.

—BARACK OBAMA

The town I live and work in isn't very large; we have about 90,000 people. Our downtown area has been a thriving place where our community shops and eats and spends time at events. We get a strong influx of visitors from neighboring towns because of the local shops that are here and the energy that our city still cultivates.

As the country and the world have been impacted by the recent downturn in our economy, Lawrence has seemed somewhat immune. Articles in our paper have assured us that our job market and banks are stronger here due to key industries in our state. My partner and I have often commented about how grateful we are to both be in positions that seem less likely to be impacted by the current stressors. While we look for a house to buy we are happy to be in a good rental situation – with no urgency to buy or sell.

But there are signs all around us that others are not faring so well. When our local police force went to “shut down” the local squatters’ camp by the river, they found a city. An established city with houses built of wood with lights and “washrooms.” The housing prices are dropping and foreclosures are rising – which I know is good for us house-hunters – but I have issues about benefiting from others’ desperation and misfortune. This month, two downtown stores that had been open for 50 years announced that they are closing. This week, the State of Kansas announced no future raises for employees and trouble with the retirement funds. Today, there was a notice that local soldiers were re-enlisting due to their inability to find jobs.

I worry for our community and for our country. I see hope and the potential for salvation in our new President – but salvation will take some time. I have begun to worry about my family: my sister has been unemployed for a full year, and my brothers (who had invested wisely) are now worth significantly less. And now today, I worry about my industry and my job. I hear piercers across the nation are beginning to suffer. I also know of a few piercers who are doing better than they have ever done before! Apparently personal choices about modification are sometimes stronger than a country’s financial woes.

As we engulf ourselves in organizing the 2009 Conference, the Board and I wonder if many of you will be able to take time off of work or afford the costs of traveling in order to make it to Conference. We hope you will. Especially now in troubled times, our industry needs all of us to be working, learning, and serving the needs of our communities. By being a part of the APP or

being a part of our Conference, you show your clients, yourself, and your community of your commitment to improving as a piercing professional.

Conference still amazes me every year: in the pure joy of it all, in the friends I make every year, and in the old friends I get to see only at this time. I am happy that the Board has kept prices low. I am excited about the new courses – and the celebration of Modern Primitives – and a new venue too! I urge you all to scrimp and save. The Conference experience is worth it to revitalize you as a piercer, give you new perspectives on how to do your work and serve your customers. It will also provide you an expanded network of friends and colleagues, and you will have a joyous indescribable bigger-than-you experience – I promise you. **P**

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VOLUNTEERING



EDUARDO CHAVARRIA

Membership Liaison
Blue Star Tattoo
Concord, CA

There is a big misconception about volunteering at Conference. When people think of volunteers, they think of the Al D. Scholarship recipients, without whom the week of Conference would be even more stressful and difficult. These scholarship recipients are worked very hard and they earn what they receive for their efforts. But there are many other types of volunteering—and volunteers—that are crucial to Conference.

We need more volunteers. It is not as scary or time-consuming as it sounds. I would like to clear this up for all members: If you volunteer for conference you are not giving up your week. For many Conference attendees, the event is it for them. I am friends with many attendees that, literally, do nothing all year but work—and for them going to Conference is vacation. To these people the idea of volunteering is never an option. However, I again say, *if you volunteer you are not giving up your week*. We can use volunteers of all sorts. There are many kinds of behind- and in-front-of-the-scene jobs for which we always need help.

By having volunteers do the work at Conference, the organization is able to keep costs lower for all attendees.

and so on and so forth. There is lots of little work to do, we are exhausting the little help we get, and this only makes it more tiring for everyone toward the end of the week.

I am now putting up a big “Help Wanted” sign. If you know you are going to take an easy load of classes, and know you are going to have a little time here and there, why not help out? Think of it as giving back. It doesn’t have to be for the entire week; it can be for one day of a five-day conference that you volunteer two to four hours of your time. If you know you are going to take classes all day Tuesday but only one or two classes on Wednesday and Thursday, it isn’t hard to volunteer for two

hours on one of those days. Maybe you are the type that flies out a day early. Is it too much to ask that maybe you volunteer before the event? What I am asking is for all members to take time while you are planning your week and see where it is you can help out. There is enough for everyone to be able to do something.

Be aware: By having volunteers do the work at Conference, the organization is able to keep costs lower for all attendees. For every Al D. Scholar we have working the entire week we have two to three other volunteers—covering a single shift at a door, at the APP booth, or helping move materials.

Even if you think you don’t have the time, we could still use your help.

If you are willing, please contact me at members@safepiercing.org or Caitlin in the APP office at 888-888-1277, or by e-mail at info@safepiercing.org. **P**

instance, on the Sunday before Conference starts there is the volunteer meeting. After this meeting, all the shirts sold during the week are separated and sorted. When this is done, the folders attendees get when registering are stuffed, and then everything is taken to the registration site—which requires muscle and several people. During the week, doors need to be manned for classes, as well as for the expo,

and so on and so forth. There is lots of little work to do, we are exhausting the little help we get, and this only makes it more tiring for everyone toward the end of the week.

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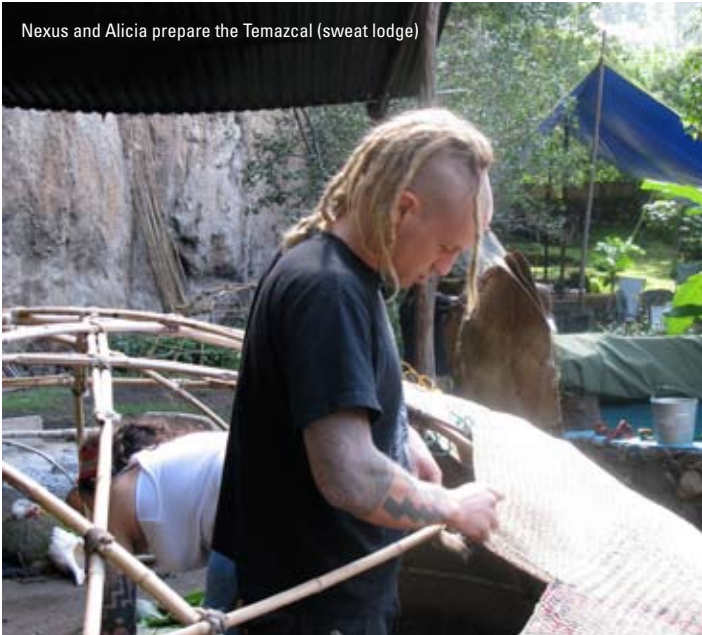
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Nexus and Alicia prepare the Temazcal (sweat lodge)



The Teepees where we would live together for our time in Amatlan

THE ONE PROJECT



COREY LOLLEY

Maya Organic Body Jewelry
San Diego, CA

ONE is an organization dedicated to the cultivation, preservation, and integration of community, ceremony, and culture. In an era based upon independence, intolerance, and division, the human heart is awakening to a modern vision of community through a new depth of interpersonal relationship.

As a collective, we feel when people come together with a common intention and with openness a support system is created in which anything is possible. Our community is based upon a devotion to cultivating self-awareness. Through the practice of group ceremony we dynamically engage one another in the growth process, challenging the borders of ego, and celebrating the one life that connects us all.

In order to transform society, we must first transform ourselves. The ONE Project is an opportunity for us to discover ourselves radically supported in an evolving new dimension of community.

I have been organizing The ONE Project since 1999. (Its inception seems so long ago.) In 2007, I chose to take a year off from facilitating the retreat. I had a lot going on in my life: a new business and a new career; a new beginning. Although 2008 was a year of motivation, creativity and inspiration, I felt there was something lacking. There was a longing for this ritual that I had been providing for myself over the years and for the community that it created.

I pondered holding the project as it had been before, but there was something that was not right about this. There needed to be a shift as I had shifted. I needed a get away from my usual surroundings, I needed my community, and I needed new knowledge.

In conversation with my good friend Hydi, we discussed my desire to hold the project in a different way, and my fear that people may not understand my new vision. In the past few years my idea of what ceremony is has shifted. As a piercer, my first introduction to ritual was through the piercing community. I learned to utilize piercing as an instrument to both alter and gain consciousness, to become one with the body and also to leave the body, to step out of my ego and be to humble. During this time—in the early 90’s—we began playing with needles and hooks. We did our first flesh pulls, our first suspensions. These experiences for me were life changing. They allowed me to tap into, understand, and be part of something ancient and sacred. Something I had not known before.

Through my experience I became a facilitator of suspensions. Walking others down this path taught me more than I ever received personally from participating. Creating an environment for people to practice the tradition of suspension and body play was sacred. As the years of the project unfolded, many different aspects of ceremony became integrated into the three days we spent on top of a mountain in Southern California. The vision for the project was always to teach from inside of the circle. As more of our community became facilitators of different traditions we integrated these practices: We became yoga teachers, so we practiced yoga together; we became masters of meditation, so we shared this gift; we became interested in religions like Buddhism, so we tried on the robes; we became artists who found silence through their art, and so we did our art.

I began to shift, and this shift happened from within. My community began to show me a different way and I found the results

Alicia Cardenas sits with the Huichol Indians admiring their famous peyote stitch art



to be more profound than anything I learned from working with my physical body. For years I had been taught the hierarchy of mind, body, and spirit, and I began to question this. Was this indeed the key for me to unlock what I was searching for within myself, or was it instead the spirit, then the mind, and then the body?

This evolution manifested into this idea, to take a journey into the jungle outside of Mexico City where we would meet with the shamans who reside in the mountains there. What occurred there was again profound. I was reminded of my humanity, my remarkable circle of friends, my purpose, my responsibility, and most importantly how grateful I am for everything that I have received from this amazing community.

If I could share anything about the teachings I received from our trip to Mexico, it would be to look into your community as your teachers and as your reflection. Find inspiration and momentum among us. We will speak more loudly to each other in silence than any book can whisper. We all ultimately come from the same place: A place of searching for answers; a state of walking as warriors and revolutionaries; and a way of speaking the truth without saying a word. **P**

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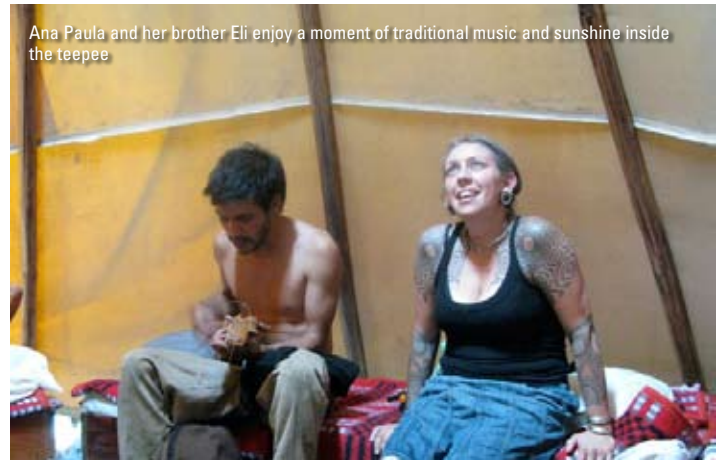
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Alicia and Nexus prepare for the Temazcal ceremony. The structure had to be virtually air-tight in order to keep the heat and steam inside for the ceremony



Ana Paula and her brother Eli enjoy a moment of traditional music and sunshine inside the teepee



The altar that was constructed from items we brought from afar. These were offerings for the land, the spirit of the land and for friends—both present and away



Matt Southwood, Mathew Watts (AKA Nexus), Luis Pingarron, and Corey Lolley on top of the Temple of the Sun, Valley of the Dead, Teotihuacán, Mexico.

ABRE CAMINO



HYDI ZASTER

Infinite Body Piercing
Philadelphia, PA

I realized about a year into piercing that a piercer is never off the clock. Between answering questions about my earlobes posed by a cashier ringing up my kombucha when I'm already late for work, or waking myself up at night sleep-talking the aftercare, it's safe to say my life is consumed by piercing.

The way I respond to the cashier can either bring us a new customer or turn another person off modification. In this way, a piercer is never off the clock, and in a similar way, everything I do as a human affects my actual piercings, interactions with clients, coworkers, and the industry as a whole. I have a responsibility to myself, to my coworkers, to my clients and to "strangers" on the street to study myself and to care for myself the best I can in order to better help others.

I have been an avid practitioner of yoga for almost as long as I've been piercing. Over the years I have noticed many links between yoga and piercing and the way they complement each other. Anyone who utilizes breath awareness to help a client through a piercing is essentially teaching that client yoga.

All this led me to Mexico City. Where Ana Paula lives. Where the buildings are every bright color, where the taxis are red or green and guarantee a manic ride, where for one U.S. dollar you can get the best vegan quesadilla of your life.

There were nine of us: seven piercers, one tattooer and one mythical creature named Nexus. The plan: five days in teepees in the jungles of Amatlan for ceremony, relaxation and yoga, visiting temples and eating the best homemade vegan and veggie Mexican food ever. The result: flawless execution.

I arrived in Mexico City three days before the official festivities would begin to hang out with friends I hadn't seen in a while. Corey and Matt met me at the airport and we took a taxi back to the hotel where the Mexican APP conference was winding down. A few people I know were in attendance, so I was lucky to see them too, not the least of whom is my employer, friend, and fellow yogi, James Weber.

That night, at James' prompting, a bunch of us went to the

There were nine of us: seven piercers, one tattooer and one mythical creature named Nexus. The plan: five days in teepees in the jungles of Amatlan for ceremony, relaxation and yoga...

75th anniversary of Lucha Libre (Mexican wrestling). It was an important match between Villano and the Blue Panther. Corey and I were delighted to scream our heads off along with the crowd of thousands. Everyone was shrieking, chanting curse words, and stomping to the sound of live trumpets and drums intended to incite mania.

The next couple of days we ran around the city visiting various markets. One day we visited the Santeria market for candles, herbs and incense to enhance and make physical our offerings and intentions and to help create a sacred space. We were encouraged by e-mail ahead of time to bring items for the altar, and we did bring many meaningful things, but not everything. I picked out an *abre camino* (open road) votive to make my way clear and free from obstacles.

The next morning we left Mexico City for Amatlan. We piled into a rented van and rode a couple hours outside the city through beautiful mountains layered with green trees and small villages complete with graffiti (evidence of the arms of a city of 20 million people far outstretched...) We stopped along the way to enjoy some more incredible food, sopes, quesadillas de hongo, calabaza, y huitlacoche.

We reached the mountain in the afternoon. I hopped out of the van and was drawn immediately to a beautiful altar for the Virgin de Guadalupe in the rock face of a cliff. Candles, flowers, and her, welcoming. The walk down a dirt path led to a gate opening on a magic zen garden we would call home for the next five days. Every tree, fern, and flower was perfectly placed with paths winding different directions through soil and rocks, scattered teepees nestled between shrubs, and a brook tinkling in the background. We were here, a far cry from the urban jungle that is my current reality in Philadelphia.

I learned later this is the place where squash, corn and beans were born. The cave of Quetzalcoatl is where this revered god became an ant to walk through "the door" to retrieve these seeds for the Americas. As legend goes, the crevice in the rocks opens once a year to worthy candidates who are invited in. To them it seems they've been inside for only a day, but come out a year later, having witnessed incredible things I'm sure.

EA is the keeper of this space. He is of the earth. When he moves he's less human and more like wind rustling the leaves, or sands shifting in the desert. If you're not watching closely, you might mistake him for the shadow of a cloud moving over the ground, or the waves produced by gasoline or heat that makes whatever he passes in front of look trippy for a minute. He is an animated clay sculpture giving freely of his wisdom. I imagine as he is dying he will be dignified, simply moving slower and

slower until he's an actual rock on the mountain. So here he is. He has reached a point of inextricable connection with the earth through total disconnection with the world. He keeps the spot sacred by sharing his magic with earnest seekers. EA is not fucking around.

After meeting EA, I made my way to the open-air yoga shala, an earthen square, raised knee level, a large step up over rocks building up the edges. The ceiling was a blue tarp spread over bamboo poles. Bamboo mats were strewn about, evidence of an earlier practice. I got to know the place where I was to lead my friends in yoga practice over the next few days. This was the place where I first made my main intention known to the land, kneeling and bowing my face down to the earth, to my creator and to T. Krishnamacharya, with a simple offering of incense and prayer.

That night we gathered in the same spot to make our altar and state aloud our intentions for our time on the land. We each placed our items on the altar, honoring and representing our higher selves, our friends who could not be there, our ideals, our hopes for the future, our acknowledgement of the present with each other and the powerful communion we felt with that place. Here was where my journey as a teacher of yoga would begin and I only wanted to honor those who have gone before me in right spirit, and progress as a help to my fellow humans.

Although, as a piercer, I have the opportunity to introduce people to themselves, not everyone is consciously seeking this when coming in to have a piercing. I used to believe people were seeking and receiving something unconsciously through piercing, but I don't necessarily believe everyone is anymore. I have worked at a very high volume shop for the past year and my views on piercing and on people's motivation for being pierced have definitely changed. I don't feel comfortable claiming something to be true for another, especially not something they themselves are unsure of. I have no more power than they give me, and can't exercise any more than is asked of me.

I now believe many people want their nostril piercing for decoration alone. I'm not doing anything special for them beyond helping them enjoy their physical appearance more fully. I would say for yoga, everyone is there for self-improvement, and I want to be able to give help in the best possible way. I have dedicated almost one third of my life to honing my craft and striving to give safe, clean, comfortable piercings, and now I am embarking on the yoga teaching path that requires as much, if not more, dedication. So here was my chance to enter onto the path, and I was terrified, like doing a piercing for the first time, not wanting to fuck up, to give misinformation, to get someone



The Huichol Shaman with his son



The lush jungle where we stayed in Amatlan

going the wrong way. I found myself once again entrusted with people's fears and insecurities and I was challenged to put them to rest and guide us all in a safe healthy beneficial way.

So, I lit my abre camino candle, and placed a tile painted with Ganesh, remover of obstacles, with my intentions clearly stated on the back: yogic diet, yoga training, less resentments, and a safe happy return to California, the home of my heart, at the right time.

We placed with care our precious and significant items, photos, toys, rocks, plugs, flowers and fruit. As we went around the circle stating our intentions, a storm was picking up ferocity outside our meager shelter. It grew stronger as though each person in the circle were a number on the dial and our prayers were the hand moving the dial louder louder louder, a crescendo up to ten, and that was Corey. She blew out the speakers on that shit. By the time we got to her the wind had blown out all our candles, and rain was coming under the tarp in sideways sheets, thunder was shaking the earth and the wind became so forceful we had to shout to hear each other. We finished and raced the fifty steps to our teepees, thoroughly soaked.

The next day we hiked together up the side of a pyramid where I was baptized in highly energized water falling down the side of the temple face. Ana Paula and Alicia were a great source of encouragement and support for me in this endeavor, as I was more than a little nervous to stick my head in under the heavy pressure of massive amounts of rushing water. Along this walk we stopped every so often to show respect, our guide said prayers in Nahuatl, one of the indigenous languages before Spanish was spoken in Mexico. We found magic red beans on the ground for good luck and protection. When we reached the top where Quetzalcoatl's mother lived when she was pregnant with him, we rested. We enjoyed a view of the surrounding valley, backlit with the approaching sunset, organic landscape speckled with villages, warm, seductive, surreal.

As we continued, the way became treacherous. We reached the edge of a deep crevice in the ground. The sides were slippery rocks we had to navigate carefully to reach the safety of the ground about ten feet below. Poor Ronnie had the extra, added challenge of having to perform this tricky feat with one arm in

a sling. We helped each other along, we held hands through the dark parts, we picked each other up and brushed each other off when we fell, gave support when we were unsteady and unsure, when the way was slippery, sharp and uneven. As a group we were able to help each other through what we might not have been able to accomplish as individuals alone. It's not too much of a stretch to imagine how this might apply to our industry.

After a day of fasting, hiking, and resting, we gathered at the inipi at sunset to continue our journey together. EA would lead us in an intense sweat lodge, but not before giving us our Mayan names. According to the Mayan calendar, each person is given a name and intention by and on the day of their birth. This way, a person is not confused and searching, probably overwhelmed by too many options in the "civilized" world. We can be paralyzed by "freedom." This way a life purpose is known from the day of birth, allowing freedom to move in a specific direction with focus, no time wasted with wondering and false starts. My name is Tzi Tzi, and, naturally, my intention is to flow. No big surprise the main focus of my trip is to begin in the direction of teaching yoga; Vinyasa flow. Ok then, glad we could look at a chart and discover in five minutes what took me half a lifetime of searching.

Next we honored the four directions and our ancestors with a small prayer and log lighting ceremony for the fire to heat the rocks to be used in the sweat. Thirty-three rocks, representing embarking on a spiritual path. I usually get awkward with these things, feeling like I'm going to blow it somehow, probably by laughing inappropriately, but somehow I managed to get through this one without drawing unnecessary attention to myself.

And on we went. We got down on the dirt to honor our ancestors before entering the structure, crawled around to the left, clockwise around the circle and squeezed in tight next to each other. Everyone in, now we pray our asses off. Anything we can't speak finds its way out of our hearts in sweat, sizzling on hot rocks in the center of the lodge, our collective womb, signifying the center of my being is also the center of your being and the center of all beings in the lodge and everywhere, the center of the universe, in that one very humbling powerful moment prostrating our selves, our desires our fears our passions

Luis Pingarron, Nexus and Matt Southwood at the Temple of the Moon



Our gang and our Chariot in Amatlan, on the way to Amatlan, outside of Eli's house



Although, as a piercer, I have the opportunity to introduce people to themselves, not everyone is consciously seeking this when coming in to have a piercing.

our mistakes our flaws before our gods and our centers and ourselves and each other all uniting in one big steamy herbal masterpiece of a ceremony. Here we admit we have acted out of fear and blown it bad! We have fucked up, fucked over people, they have fucked us over and we let it burn on that fire, we let each heart we hurt become ash in that sacred space and watch it blow away on the breath of EA.

We came out sick and clean and new. We were sleepy from being born but we had a long night ahead of us, so there was no point in wallowing in exhaustion. Instead we were rooted in our newfound knowledge and floated on the freedom we'd been rewarded by doing this difficult thing together.

After two hours of rolling around in the mud created by our own sweat, EA instructed us not to shower. He said, "You are cleaner than you have ever been right now!" My unspecified friend and I had another idea. We wanted to be cozy, not crusty, for the next eight to ten hours outside in the cold. We snuck over and took a shower anyway, giggling, reveling in the excitement of a shower, wonderful anyway, rendered epic by the added bonus of being forbidden. What can I say except we are rebels through and through.

The sound of the conch shell let us know the time had come to get our rebellious asses over to the yoga shala for the main ceremony. We all wandered over through the darkness with our blankets and pillows, protection against the damp chilly air.

Here sat the beautiful Huichol Shaman and his son. Their

wardrobe was astonishing. I had seen the Huichol in photographs but they seem to inhabit such another world that to be sitting with them in real life gave me the feeling of being in a book myself. They had white hats with red pompoms all around the rim like dingle balls in the windshield of a classic car. They wore brightly colored apron shirts embroidered with flowers and foliage over white cotton jumpsuits. The shaman's son was 12 years old and tended the fire for us the entire evening. He stayed near and controlled the direction the smoke blew based on the changing whims of the wind. As the night wore on they snuggled in their blankets and put down their heads so all you saw was the white glowing circle of the hat atop a triangular bundle of warmth with cute stubby feet sticking out the bottom.

We set our bedding down along the edges of the dirt square on the bamboo mats. The Shaman called us each one by one to be cleaned with feathers, incense, and shaman essence. He dusted me off with his soft shaman feathers by firelight, showered me with blessings, vacuumed my soul with his clear safe breath. He placed in my palm a small piece of cactus and away I went, back to my mat to enjoy it between Corey and Nexus enjoying the hell out of theirs. The plant was mildly bitter but fresh and juicy, not at all difficult to swallow like I was expecting. The hours went by gentle but firm. I said my prayers, but it wasn't like usual where I just say words, reading off my brain to a distant god crossing my fingers I'll be heard. It was like being deep inside myself, like yoga teaches us to do, and finding for the first time what I've been struggling to find all along. It was like being introduced to myself in an ornate room in the palace of my creator. It was like meeting God. It was like the prayers were formed in the hearts of angels (my friends) rather than the weak mind of me, human. In colorful flowing flowery rooms I received messages to bring back to friends in Philly and blow their minds with. It was like plugging into the network, always available; whatever I chose to focus on I had an all-access pass to the knowledge. Paradoxically, for the first time in my life I was cool with the realization that many things are not meant for me to know in this life or maybe ever. Many questions will go unanswered and it's ok.

Soon it was time to stand on our tired rubbery knees and receive our Huichol names. After a long night of self-discovery,

we went one by one to stand quietly before the Shaman while he listened as our souls told their secrets to him, and after a few moments the name would come and it was perfect every time. Nothing but hits. We had an elder deer, a hunter, a mother, an addictive substance and some others I don't recall.

Soon it was my turn. Nervous, I walked to the Shaman, hoping I wouldn't fuck up somehow. Overwhelmed with the power of this ceremony, I cried once already when one of my closest friends received his name. I was afraid I wouldn't handle myself respectfully. Once I stood before him I centered instantly and grounded in my breath. I closed my eyes, swept away on the wave of his holy presence. I was only breath now, my body dissipated along with my fear. His power was soothing and safe and pure and I flew on his light and we were on a rock at the edge of the universe and it was bright and I was free and we were soaring together and I could feel the fresh air of newness flowing through me, if you can imagine what the air must have felt like when it was born, that's the air of clarity, crisp on my celestial skin. We stood together firmly rooted in the solid ground and flying simultaneously somehow and then he spoke, "Tanana."

EA said "Wow, Tanana. Creator of the Universe." And I walked away embarrassed, and of course I cried. In that moment with the Shaman it was only him and me and we watched the universe being born and it was much more beautiful than the birth of a human if you've ever witnessed that, there was nothing messy or ugly about it. It was clean and bright and I was humbled by this heavy name and I thought well he saw divinity in me, that's all. I am not devaluing the experience of the name, it's only that I see the creator of the universe in each of you, in everyone, and this is what I mean when I say namaste at the end of every asana practice. I mean the divine in me honors the divine in you. I can mean it even more now that I've seen it for real.

As the ceremony came to a close we were invited to ask questions or share our experience with everyone. I thanked the Shaman for honoring the ceremony in the right way, allowing us a smooth flight. He said, "I am no one special. I am not elevated above you. We are all on the same level. There is no point in anyone raising himself up above others as he will only be knocked back down to level with the rest of us."

In the morning Looney sat on a swing with a child-like look of awe and wonder on his face as a tropical green caterpillar the

size of my thumb from joint to tip rolled around with an orange flower-face, somehow dangerous in the sunlight of breaking dawn, tempting us to tickle his belly with a warning from EA – don't touch it! This time we followed the advice of EA.

The following day I left my travel-size bronze Shiva statue with EA and we departed. He said, "Now a part of you will always be here," and he was not bullshitting. At times I sit with the Huichol beadwork bracelet Corey gave me and close my eyes and go back to the edge of the universe with the Shaman and I am whole again.

So, if you've come this far and still think seven piercers, a tattooer, and a mystical animal running through a tropical storm in the jungles of Mexico doesn't have anything to do with piercing, you're wrong. Plain and simple.

What we experienced and everything

I've experienced the days following that event shaped us as people,

thereby changing the way we

relate to others, the course of our

relationships with each other

and everyone we encounter

from then on. I'm pretty sure

this is the purpose of ritual and

ceremony, having practiced in

many different ways at many

different times over the years,

in many different places,

many times with different

groups of passionate piercers.

This is not to say I am now

enlightened, cured, in perfect

control of my behaviors, a master

of my emotion, or anything remotely

close to that. Some of my relationships

have gone dormant as a result of the work

we did that week. Some of them have weakened,

some of them might have even ended. The power of the

ritual works for the best possible outcome, this I believe, even if it's sometimes painful.

I have more awareness and am better able to tune in with my clients, figure out what they need and give them that rather than forcing something I believe they need on them, or placing my needs before theirs. Again, this is not to say I have become a magic piercer, just that I have worked to improve on one aspect of my interactions with people in a very specific and meaningful way.

I have been able to tap into the power of that ceremony since. I remember the name the Shaman gave me. I remember standing with him on the edge of the universe. I remember my closest friends there with me, sharing the experience of a lifetime and I know I don't have anything to worry about. So much of my experience in this life depends on where I choose to focus my attention and there is a lot of cool shit to focus on. **P**



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THE “NOMAD GUY” MAKES GOOD ON CULTURAL PROMISE, PART 2



BLAKE PERLINGIERI

Nomad Piercing Studio
Bend, OR

The Point has traditionally done an admirable job filling its pages with regulatory, legislative and procedural articles. On occasion, it departs from the clinical in favor of the cultural—certainly my personal preference, for a balance of the cultural and the clinical serves to enhance piercers’ understanding of the origins of our art form, which benefits our clients and the collective mythos of all.

For the second time on these pages, there is the opportunity to profile a museum body art exhibit as it relates to piercers and jewelry. The first surfaced in the pages of *The Point* #39, when then President Alicia Cardenas wrote an article on the San Diego Museum of Man’s exhibit titled, “*Body Ornamentation: Artistic Representations of Self.*” Though this was brought to the attention of *Point* readers after the exhibition had ended, I was fortunate enough to catch the exhibit while visiting family in San Diego on its last weekend. (I salute Art from Church of Steel for his work with the exhibit.)

It is a rare event when a major museum features an exhibit that has body modification as its main focus. (Some of you may be familiar with the Sarawak Museum and its body art installation.) In the late 1990s, the Met seized on this idea with a tattoo-related exhibition that focused on contemporary people primarily—big photos of “freaks” from our industry shocked viewers, and there was little narrative. But many people saw that exhibit, which I feel sadly missed the point.

Which brings us to the present: a new exhibit has just opened at the Portland Art Museum. I had the rare opportunity and honor to co-curate a special exhibition at their newly opened pre-Columbian wing. This exhibition, from conception to fruition, has been in the works for several years. (I learned the wheels of change can turn very slowly in these matters; is was truly a Zen exercise in patience for me.) It certainly helped to have the credentials of author, [See *The Point* #42] and having a collection of relevant ornaments with impeccable provenance* to loan the museum was also helpful. But a greater synchronicity of events with the “Powers that Be”—and their personal connection to the topic—was what helped it all come together.

Before the installation there was much archival work to be done: We redesigned the exhibit to include jewelry, as well as relevant ceramic figures and polychrome vessels—all of which embody, or are rendered upon, adorned images of the people of the pre-Columbian world. Working behind the scenes—with blue gloves—with Curator Anna Strankman was truly an exhilarating experience. We designed, for the first time at any American museum (to my knowledge), an exhibit that would provide the true context for the jewelry. In my years of haunting museums around the world, I have heard many say, “How is that an ear

ornament?” (Many great museums are guilty of such minimalist “text panel” interpretations for their displays. The finest of Walter Alva’s pre-Columbian excavations at the Met are diminished when a viewer does not understand what they are looking at, or how it was worn.) There is also a large display devoted to Western Mexico. Though jewelry does not survive in abundance from this region, the large and exquisite ceramic figures are all depicted with earplugs and a variety of septum jewelry, as well as having heavy tattooing.

It is a rare event when a major museum features an exhibit that has body modification as its main focus.

At the Portland Art Museum, we tried to make clear what the viewer is looking at, and provided context as never before—I even provided original illustrations and text for the exhibit. We have also clearly delineated the difference between a “perforator” (ritual bloodletting) and a “piercer” as well as, illustrated with jewelry, the actual process of enlarging of a piercing. The installation includes life-sized ceramic figures from the famous collection of Phil and Sue Bogue, with the timetable ranging from

the preclassical/formative periods (2000-1000 BCE) to the late classic period of the Maya and the Aztecs (1500 CE). [Technical note: Museums have shifted away from the old terminology of BC (before Christ) in favor of the more neutral BCE/CE, which denotes “before the common era” and “common era.”]

The museum also recently received a multi-million dollar endowment, and kids 17 and younger are admitted free forever! As a father of three kids younger than 17, I confess that the opportunity to educate the children of the future (and make contemporary people aware of ancient rituals) was my primary motivation for this project.

I have always been acutely aware of my responsibilities—as a piercer—to pay homage to the ancient cultures from whence our profession came (and from where we are all descended), and provide the educational forum embodied by my studio, Nomad. After 21 years as a piercer, and 16 of those years as “The Nomad Guy,” it has become apparent that in order to bring my vision of



Archival work, cataloging and research in the Museum's basement. A storage area for priceless artifacts in their permanent collection that are not on display.



Installation of the art (note the "kid in a candy store" here).



Curator Anna Strankman and her enthusiastic assistant working in the new wing.



Pre-Columbian gold jewelry and the Nomad Guy.



Poppa and Mayan in front of the completed Mayan installation. The chubby baby (pictured in my arms) from my book six years ago has grown into this amazing young lady.



A portion the new pre-Columbian wing at the Portland Art Museum. Kids admitted for free!

culture to a wider audience, to the next level, a far grander venue than Nomad was necessary. A big museum attracts all sections of society, while a piercing studio attracts mostly studio clientele, and by design is limited in its scope. Though piercing is now part of the mainstream, a mainstream audience is where the power to educate has the biggest impact.

This new exhibit will be on display for all of 2009, and will delight anthropologists, enthusiasts, collectors and kids alike. Special thanks to Anna, Bruce, Steve and Matthew for their fine work, and

for helping to contribute to the culture of our community.

(*Provenance is documentation associated with art or collectables which authenticate the item, establish the value of the item, and also speak to the items origins and dates.)

nomadmuseum.com

portlandartmuseum.org

P

HANDWASHING VS. ANTISEPTIC HAND GELS



DAVID A. VIDRA & LAURINA MARIKA

Health Educators Inc.
Cleveland, Ohio

With the increase in popularity of antiseptic hand gels over the past six years, we have seen a significant decrease in compliance with hand washing protocols. However, hand gels were never intended as a replacement for hand washing, but were meant to be used only in cases where hand washing was not feasible.

Per Federal law, hand washing is the primary method for cleansing hands. OSHA standards make it very clear that antiseptic hand gels do not replace the act of washing hands. In plain English, it clearly states that antiseptic hand cleansers can be used only when it is not feasible to provide hand washing facilities with running water. In our industries, running water should always be available for hand washing. Also note, per OSHA standard cited below, after the use of antiseptic hand gel, hands must still be washed with soap and water as soon as feasible:

1910.1030(d) (2) (iii) - *Employers shall provide hand washing facilities which are readily accessible to employees.*

1910.1030(d) (2) (IV) - *When provision of hand washing facilities is not feasible, the employer shall provide either an appropriate antiseptic hand cleanser in conjunction with clean cloth/paper towels or antiseptic towelettes. When antiseptic hand cleansers or towelettes are used, hands shall be washed with soap and running water as soon as feasible.*

1910.1030(d) (2) (v) - *Employers shall ensure that employees wash their hands immediately or as soon as feasible after removal of gloves or other personal protective equipment.*

1910.1030(d) (2) (VI) - *Employers shall ensure that employees wash hands and any other skin with soap and water, or flush mucous membranes with water immediately or as soon as feasible following contact of such body areas with blood or other potentially infectious materials.*

In the *CDC Guideline for Hand Hygiene in Health-Care Settings*, the use of hand gels was addressed and protocols were written strictly for health care workers. This was in response to a long history of non-compliance and nosocomial infections due to lack of appropriate hand washing in the health care profession. It was not intended for all industries.

Another issue is the proper application of hand gels. Antiseptic hand gels must be used per the manufacturer's instructions. The gel must be applied interdigitally (between the fingers), and manually agitated for at least fifteen seconds, as in hand washing, or it is not effective. It must then be allowed to thoroughly air dry. If antiseptic hand gels are used regularly, hands must be washed

after every 4 to 6 applications.

For the modification artist, this does not make sense. A quote on hand washing from the CDC website (<http://www.cdc.gov/od/oc/media/pressrel/fs021025.htm>) states: "Hand washing with soap and water remains a sensible strategy for hand hygiene in non-health care settings and is recommended by CDC and other experts." Let us revisit good old-fashioned hand washing protocols below.

Hand washing should be performed:

- Upon arriving to work
- Before gloving
- After the removal of gloves
- After contact with any potentially contaminated surface or item
- After working in common areas or performing housekeeping duties
- Between direct contact with different clientele
- Before and after eating, drinking, or handling food
- After personal use of toilet facilities
- When hands are visibly soiled, including after sneezing, coughing, or blowing your nose
- Before leaving work
- Whenever necessary (use sensible judgment)

Hand washing with plain soaps for 10 to 15 seconds is effective in removing most transient microorganisms. Plain soaps may not remove resident microorganisms that are located within the deep epidermal layers of the skin. However, resident microorganisms can usually be killed or inhibited with antimicrobial products.

An antiseptic is an agent that inhibits the growth of some microorganisms on skin and/or tissue. Examples include parachloro-meta-xyleneol (PCMX) and Triclosan.

- These products should be used no more than four times per 8-hour shift, or per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Most antiseptics used within the body modification industry are antimicrobial soaps (e.g. Provon and Satin), 1 percent Gentian Violet (used as a marking dye in piercing procedures), and surgical skin prepping products used in both piercing and tattooing procedures (e.g. Technicare).

Though alcohol-based antiseptic solutions (e.g., Purell®) have gained popularity within the medical community, they are not acceptable as a substitute for hand washing within the body modification industry. Hand washing remains the single most important means to prevent the spread of infection.

OSHA standards make it very clear that antiseptic hand gels do not replace the act of washing hands.

REMEMBER:

- Antiseptic solutions should never replace hand washing.
- Antiseptic solutions are not to be used when hands are visibly soiled. Organic matter (blood, proteins, etc.) will inactivate their antimicrobial properties.
- Antiseptic solutions are acceptable for use at the front counter after casual contact with clientele.
- Antiseptic solutions are acceptable for use in a convention setting. A bottle of Purell® located at each tattoo booth for the practitioner to use immediately after glove removal would be ideal. Hands should then be washed as soon as possible.
- Always use antiseptic products according to the manufacturer's instructions.

Antimicrobial soaps have been used within the body modification industry with great success. However, improper or excessive use of the antimicrobial agents can cause the destruction of the resident flora that lives on our skin. In addition, a breakdown in skin integrity can increase the risk of acquiring allergic contact dermatitis (ACD). It is suggested that hand washing with antimicrobial soaps not exceed four times a day.

Non-antimicrobial soaps (plain soaps) can be used in conjunction with antimicrobial products between hand washings. Plain soaps do not kill or inhibit the resident microorganisms of the skin. Alternating the use of plain and antimicrobial soaps helps preserve skin integrity and aid in the decrease of ACD occurrences.

Friction is the most important part of handwashing. Routine hand washing should take 10 to 15 seconds and should be accomplished as follows:

1. First, all jewelry must be removed from hands and wrists prior to hand washing.
2. Wet your hands with warm running water.
3. Apply a small yet sufficient amount of soap (either antimicrobial or plain) and thoroughly distribute over hands.
4. Vigorously rub together all surfaces of lathered hands for 10 to 15 seconds
 - a. Interdigitally (between the fingers)
 - b. Don't forget those thumbs!
 - c. Wrists
 - d. Nail beds
 - e. Beneath fingernails
 - f. Palms of hands
5. Thoroughly rinse your hands (from the top of the wrist down to the fingertips) under warm running water to remove residual soap.
6. Dry hands with a disposable paper towel. Take the time to pat your hands dry. Do not vigorously rub hands together. This can cause micro-abrasions that compromise the skin's integrity.
7. If the hand washing sink does not have foot controls or an automatic shutoff, use a clean paper towel to turn off faucets to avoid re-contaminating your hands.

Always use warm water. Hot water is much harder on the skin. It will strip the essential oils that protect the skin, thus causing excessive dryness and irritation. Also, washing hands in hot water for the recommended amount of time will likely be uncomfortable. Cold water can cause pores in the skin to constrict, thus trapping microorganisms in the superficial layers of the skin. Cold water also inhibits the proper lathering of soap.

Proper rinsing to remove residual soap and taking the time to thoroughly pat your hands dry will help prevent chapping and cracking of the skin.

Always pat hands dry gently with a disposable paper towel. Roughly drying them (vigorous rubbing) can cause micro-abrasions and remove the top layer of your protective skin.

Use hand lotion throughout the day. However, keep in mind that many lotions contain products that may compromise glove integrity. Check with your glove manufacturer or distributor to find a product that will not affect glove integrity.

Fingernails are a good source of infectious bacteria. Keep fingernails short and unpolished. Microorganisms can hide in the cracks of the polish and under long or false nails. Having long nails increases the risk of tearing gloves. Natural or artificial nails should be no more than 1/4 of an inch long.

In conclusion, although hand sanitizing gels have their place in our industry (at the front counter where money is handled) they are never to be used as a substitute for good, old-fashioned hand washing with soap and water.

[References available upon request from Health Educators.] P



Flame sculpting borosilicate glass on a torch

GLASS AS A MATERIAL FOR BODY JEWELRY (PART 1)



JASON PFOHL

Gorilla Glass
Oaxaca, Mexico

Glass is a ubiquitous and mysterious material. We use glass everywhere: in architecture, food preparation and storage, eyeglasses, car windshields, tableware, scientific and medical applications, fiber-optics and cosmetics.

Glass is also an excellent material for body piercing jewelry. This article examines why and explores some of the physical properties of glass.

BRIEF HISTORY OF GLASS PIERCING JEWELRY

Glass has been used for at least 3,000 years for piercing jewelry by cultures all over the planet. The pharaohs of the New Kingdom in Egypt wore brightly colored opaque glass plugs in the form of papyrus columns and solar discs. On the Indian subcontinent cast glass ear plugs were worn in expanded ear lobes in a tradition that lasted 2,000 years and is still practiced by the Naga women in northern India today. Southeast Asia produced an astounding variety of glass piercing jewelry reflecting the diversity of cultures in that part of the world; glass plugs were carved in Burma to imitate amber and in Vietnam the Sa Huynh crafted elaborate hanging glass ear weights. In Mesoamerica, hundreds of pre-Hispanic civilizations carved elaborate labrets and ear plugs out of volcanic glass. Glass has been used since the 1990s in the modern body jewelry and piercing revival.

WHAT IS GLASS?

Glass is not one material, but many.

Glass is a collective term for a vast number of materials of different nonorganic compositions that retain an amorphous structure when cooled rapidly after melting. Because of this amorphous structure glass has been described as a super cooled liquid. In composition, glass may range from a pure element such as selenium or a pure oxide such as silica, to a complicated mixture of oxides and compounds. Glass occurs in nature and is also manufactured artificially by man. Obsidian is volcanic glass formed by the heat of the Earth's core. Other forms of naturally occurring glass types are tektites and moldavite, which are created from the intense heat of meteorites passing through the atmosphere.

GLASS FOR PIERCING JEWELRY

Glass is an excellent material for piercing jewelry for many reasons.

- Glass is virtually nonporous with an exceedingly smooth surface.*
- Glass is easy to clean.
- Glass is odorless.
- Glass is autoclavable.
- Glass does not freeze in cold climates.

- Glass is lightweight.
- Glass is attractive and colorful.
- Glass is sufficiently chemically stable to be worn in healed piercings for long periods of time without any change in surface texture or scaling.

**Note: some glass may have a matte surface from sandblasting or acid etching for aesthetic effect.*

All of these characteristics make glass an excellent option for body piercing. Many piercers have been using glass successfully for years to help heal problem piercings and in procedures such as dermal punching. The smooth, nonporous surface and lightweight, nonorganic nature of glass are all advantageous for rapid healing.

ACRYLIC VERSUS GLASS

Acrylic and glass share several characteristics. They are both available in a wide range of transparent and opaque colors. They are both inexpensive and lightweight. They are both available in a variety of shapes and styles, including spirals and plugs.

But the differences between glass and acrylic for body piercing are greater than their similarities, and anyone with experience wearing both materials will tell you which is more comfortable. Glass is autoclavable, acrylic is not. Glass is nonporous, acrylic is porous. Glass is odorless, acrylic is not. Glass is easy to clean, acrylic is not. Acrylic breaks down over a relatively short period of time. The optical clarity, color and transparency of glass are far superior to acrylic.

Responsible piercers should recognize the difference in these materials, and enjoy the superior results that can be obtained in healing and wearing comfort with glass jewelry as opposed to acrylic.

TYPES OF GLASS USED IN PIERCING JEWELRY

There are several glass types used in glass piercing jewelry.

All glass types share certain characteristics that make glass an excellent material for piercing jewelry: nonorganic, smooth surface, odorless, autoclavable, light weight and easy to clean.

Color selection is the main reason for manufacturers to use different glass types. Generally there is a wider color palette in the soda-lime glass, but the borosilicate glass color selection has been rapidly expanding over the last 10 years.

Different glass types have different working characteristics; some are better for fusing and kiln forming, while others are easier to work on a torch or blowpipe.

Most people have heard of “hard” and “soft” glass. “Hard” and “soft” are not scientific terms and can be confusing. “Hard” and “soft” glass are trade terms originally used by glass workers to describe the viscosity and flow of different glass types and have been adopted by the general public without the same reference to viscosity. Glass

does not have a specific melting point or definite temperature at which it changes from a solid to a liquid the way metal does. Rather glass has a “softening range” in which it gradually begins to become more malleable as it heats up. Soft glass has a relatively low softening point and longer working time. Soda-lime, barium crystal and lead crystal are all soft glass but have very different chemical compositions. Hard glass has a high softening point and a high viscosity with a very short working time. Borosilicate, quartz and aluminosilicate are hard glasses. In order to be more precise specific glass types will be referred to in this article by their chemical composition and not by their viscosity and workability.

- **SODA-LIME GLASS** is the most common glass type, used widely in food and beverage containers, windows, and art glass. It contains three major compounds in varying proportions, but usually silica (about 60 to 75 percent), soda (12 to 18 percent), and lime (5 to 12 percent.) Colorants generally constitute 1 to 5 percent of the composition and consist of metal oxides and elements. Soda-lime glass is available in a wide range of transparent and opaque colors. While soda-lime glass has less resistance to thermal shock than borosilicate glass, it can be autoclaved without problems.
- **BOROSILICATE GLASS** is any silicate glass having at least 5 percent boron oxide. It is widely used for bakeware and laboratory equipment because of its resistance to thermal shock and good chemical stability. While borosilicate is not physically stronger than soda-lime glass, it has a greater resistance to scratching, which helps prevent abrasions that act as crack initiation sites that considerably weaken the ultimate strength of the glass. Borosilicate rods are extruded out of large furnaces, giving superior consistency in sizing.
Pyrex® has been widely used synonymously for borosilicate glass, which can be misleading because the Pyrex® brand name sells both soda-lime and borosilicate glass products. The proper designation should be Pyrex 7740®, which refers to the borosilicate glass. In recent years the quality of Pyrex® has declined and most body jewelry manufacturers use other borosilicate brand name glass types such as Simax® and Schott Duran®.
- **FUSED QUARTZ GLASS** is a clear vitreous solid, formed by purifying quartz and sand in the melting process. This glass can withstand extremely high temperatures. Quartz glass contains 99.98 percent SiO₂. Although difficult to work this glass because of its high softening point, fused quartz is one of the chemically purest glass types with good biocompatibility characteristics.
- **BARIUM CRYSTAL** is a high quality art glass famous for its crystal clear transparency. It is similar to soda-lime glass in composition. The addition of a small percentage of barium increases the refractive index in the glass making it more brilliant.



Hot glass being worked on a bench



Pulling glass into rods

- **LEAD CRYSTAL** is glass that contains a high percentage of lead oxide (minimum 20 percent of the batch, generally more than 30 percent.) The lead increases the density and the refractive index of the glass. Lead crystal is not acceptable for body jewelry.
- **OBSIDIAN** is a volcanic mineral that was the first form of natural glass used by humans. It is usually black, but can also be very dark red, green, blue or even a rainbow of colors. Obsidian has been carved into piercing jewelry by Mesoamerican civilizations for millennia.

COLORANTS IN GLASS

Coloring agents are added to the glass melt in the form of pure oxides. Generally, the amount of oxide used to color a glass batch is very small, less than 1 percent of the volume by weight. As an analogy you can imagine using a drop of food dye to color a glass of water. The same chemicals used to color soda-lime glass are used to color borosilicate glass. The reason there is not as much color availability in borosilicate glass is that some colorants cannot survive the high temperatures needed to heat borosilicate without boiling and pitting. Coloring agents are modified into a stabilized matrix during the glass melting process. Particular elements can be identified by chemical analysis, but they no longer possess the properties of those elements or raw materials used in glass production.

Glass colors can react to temperature changes (striking colors) and also to the type of flame environment being used to melt the glass (oxidizing or reducing flame environment.) Glass chemistry and color can be compared to baking bread, using the same ingredients does not guarantee the same result. The method of mixing, the cycles of heating, and the type of oven are all factors in the finished color. Because of the nature of striking colors and the unpredictability of glass alchemy, consistency in some glass colors is challenging (red in particular.) Since glass manufacturers use preformed glass in the form of colored rods and sheets to create jewelry, the quality and color of the raw material determines the quality and color of the finished jewelry.

GLASS AND LEACHING

After discussing glass colorants it is natural to address the concern of glass leaching, or better said the danger of ingredients leaching out of glass. Generally speaking, glass is a relatively inert material, but it

would be untrue to deny that leaching occurs. In fact, leaching is an ordinary event and can be identified as a discoloration or dullness on the surface of the glass.

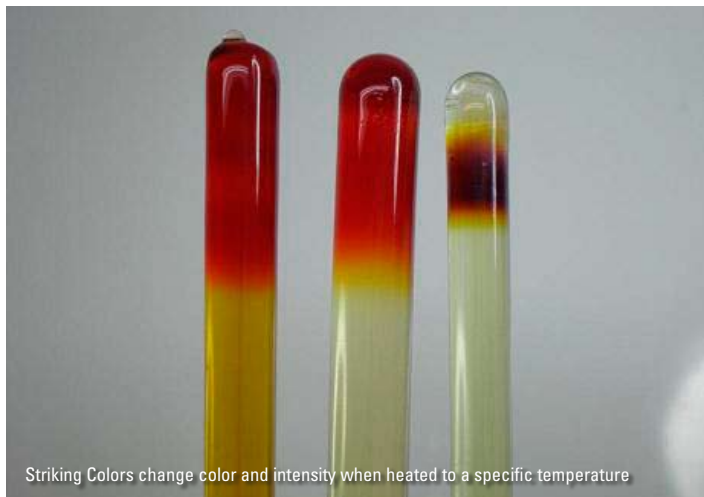
The *Schott Guide to Glass* describes the leaching process, “Leaching causes sodium and potassium ions to be dissolved from the glass structure. The concentration of hydrogen ions (pH value) is changed by the implantation of hydrogenous ions in the glass; water molecules infiltrate the glass while alkali ions go into the solution. A thin gel layer of low alkali and poor water content is formed, about 100 millionths of a millimeter thick. If that layer becomes thicker it becomes visible as dullness. Drinking glasses may show that appearance after several hundred cycles in the dish washer.”

It is the sodium and potassium that principally leach out of the glass, in minuscule amounts and after multiple washing cycles over long periods of time. Some very unusual circumstances may accelerate leaching such as autoclaving glass jewelry hundreds of times, and is not recommended. Stomach acids can cause leaching. Glass should never be eaten and is not recommended for tongue jewelry. Acidic substances such as wine can also accelerate leaching. Under everyday circumstances and during the average lifetime of glass jewelry, leaching is negligible. Glass is widely used in packaging food and beverages, cosmetics and perfumes, and in the pharmaceutical industry because of its chemical stability.

Leaching of metals and oxides is primarily an environmental concern, and pertains to glass manufacturing and waste disposal. The gradual leaching of harmful elements into the ground water from the leaded glass from old television monitors in land fills is an example. This is a manufacturing and environmental concern and should not be confused with health concerns related to piercing jewelry. Glass leaching and exposure to unhealthy byproducts of glass are of the biggest concerns to the glass artist who is exposed to glass powders and fumes released from the glass in the work environment.

As an extra precaution, colored glass can be clear cased, so that the colored glass never comes into contact with the skin. Clear casing glass serves two purposes. First it guarantees that colorants cannot leach out of the surface of the glass. Second it prevents thermally sensitive colors (such as cadmium colors) from bubbling and pitting. The textured surface of colored glass that has boiled can leave dangerous sharp edges and pockets for bacteria to accumulate, therefore glass surfaces should be smooth without pitting.

Fuming 24k gold and pure silver can also be used to color glass. A small piece of silver or gold is heated on a torch, and as it vaporizes



Striking Colors change color and intensity when heated to a specific temperature



Rods and blocks of the raw material that will be made into piercing jewelry

the metal leaves a coating on the surface of the hot glass held in close proximity. This coating needs to be encased with clear glass to protect the coating from being rubbed or scratched off. It is easy to identify fumed metals that have been clear cased. The clear casing creates a lens that adds a magnified effect and greater depth.

GLASS FOR INITIAL PIERCING

Glass does not have medical implant grade ASTM specifications like titanium or stainless steel, but it has been used successfully for years by experienced piercers for stretching and dermal punches, as well as to assist healing in problematic piercings.

Glass is autoclavable, which is important for sterilizing body jewelry. The nonporous and smooth surface of glass allows for easy insertion, as well as cleaning of the jewelry during the healing process. The light weight of glass also eases stress in new piercings. Glass is an insulating material that does not transfer heat and cold easily, and therefore does not freeze to skin like steel in winter climates.

Not that glass is completely problem-free. A condition identified by piercers as “wet ear” will occasionally occur. It has been theorized that wet ear happens not as a reaction to the glass itself, but paradoxically because of the nonporous nature of the glass (normally a great advantage in inserting glass and in wearing comfort.) In humid climates and on certain individuals, a slight irritation and sweatiness may occur as the glass does not “breathe.” Normally the body adjusts and the irritation goes away after a couple of days.

BIO-GLASS 8625

Although not yet used for body jewelry, there is one glass type that has been approved for body implantation, and deserves a brief review. In the late 1960s scientists began experimenting with special glass types to be used in bone reconstruction and dental applications with great success. Certain bioactive glass types actually bond with tissue and bone, and demonstrate antimicrobial and anti-inflammatory properties. Powdered bioactive glasses have actually been formulated into skin creams, makeup and toothpaste for their healing properties.

A cousin to the bone-bonding glass was developed for “fibrous tissue encapsulation,” a biocompatible sheath for transponders implanted in animals. This glass is Schott Bioglass 8625. Bioglass 8625 does not bond to soft tissue or bone; it actually has the opposite problem of migrating (anti-migration caps are added in transponders to solve

the problem.) Bioglass 8625 has been extensively tested in a series of studies on rats, rabbits, dogs, pigs and horses since the 1970s. This technology is now used to track tens of thousands of dogs in the U.S., to identify herds of cattle, as well as track and identify endangered species. More recently it has been implanted in humans to record individual health information.

Bioglass 8625 is a soda-lime glass. When implanted Bioglass 8625 is not inert, it actually forms a calcium capsule around the implant. You can compare the calcium layer around bioglass to the oxide layer around titanium that gives titanium its biocompatible characteristics.

“As Thieme et al. (1987) have already measured by means of X-ray emission (PIXE), an ion-exchange reaction occurs in the aqueous environment on the surface of the alkali-containing bioglasses, which proceeds in two phases as claimed by Hench (1974). Phase 1 is dominated by the alkali loss in exchange for hydrogen ions; calcium also diffuses from the material. In phase 2 the hydrolytic cleavage of the Si-O-Si bond occurs with subsequent disintegration of the material. The exchange reactions proceed over about two weeks. Later on is formed a predominantly calcium-containing surface film preventing further leaching of the material.”

In 2004, the Food and Drug Administration in the U.S. approved Bioglass 8625 for use in humans. The VeriChip Corporation has been implanting transponders in humans for several years to provide health information on diabetic patients. The electronic chip inside the glass sheath contains the patient’s health history and data. Chips are placed in the upper arm or in the hand.

There has been a storm of opposition by Christian groups and other privacy advocacy groups who are worried about the misuse of the technology and the “Mark of the Beast.” In 2007, the Associated Press published an article about cancer tumors forming around transponder chips in mice, implying that they are unsafe. The FDA defended their approval and the VeriChip Corporation issued a twenty page paper describing the “Rodent Foreign Body Sarcomagenesis Phenomena”, which basically says rats and mice have a unique propensity to develop tumors around implanted devices, regardless of the type of implant. The Associated Press article did not speculate what the cause of the tumors was, but considering that bioglass has been tested in many studies on different animals and even on humans in bone reconstruction, it seems unlikely that the glass itself is the cause of the tumors in mice.

(Article Continued in Issue #47)



Didier and John Johnson at the APP booth.

APP AT THE ANNUAL APHA CONFERENCE



DIDIER SUAREZ
APP Vice President
Enigma Professional Piercing
San Diego, CA

This year's APHA (American Public Health Association) conference was held over the course of four days in sunny San Diego. That also happens to be the location of my hometown, my studios, and the region in which I have done most of my outreach to the community and to health officials. I take pride in the work that my employees and I have done educating our clients about safe piercing. We look at it like planting the seed of safe piercing, so to speak. As body piercers, we sometimes forget what a difference we can make as professionals in our communities. At APHA I had the opportunity to do outreach to a group wider than my own community, as people were visiting from all over the country. As far as the APHA attendees, their sole focus is the issue of public health and safety.

This APHA conference gave me a chance to see the impact the APP has made through its ten years or so in regular attendance. Although the majority of conference-goers were happy to see we had returned, many others were not aware of the information and services we provide as an association. The attendees ranged from medical professionals and public health workers to educators and graduate students. I noticed there is a high turnover rate in these fields, which makes it necessary to have an ongoing presence at conferences like these.

The schedule of presentations and classes offered at this event filled a book that resembled an encyclopedia. The vendor floor occupied row after row across the entire bottom of the San Diego Convention Center. Despite the size of the conference, we were one of the more notable displays thanks to our corner placement and our "colorful members" staffing the booth. We stood out in the crowd not so much because of representing the APP, but because we were not

selling a product or service like almost all of the other booths there. By educating attendees about how body piercing can be done safely (without any attempt to sell them something), it seemed to help them overcome some of the prejudice and stigma associated with body art.

I used every consulting and education tool I had available just short of breaking out a projector and PowerPoint presentation. The public needs to know the Association's mission and the information that relates to their health and safety. What seems obvious to us as body art practitioners sometimes needs to be pointed out to the laymen, and in some cases, spelled out letter by letter. For instance, many attendees were unaware of the dangers of ear-piercing guns: that they cannot be sterilized, that the jewelry is an inferior material, and that a blunt stud is used to puncture the tissue. Just that information was an eye-opener to almost every attendee I spoke with personally. It may seem like everyone in your world knows and understands this information, but that is the point of outreach. Getting out there and shining some light on the information helps to make our industry safer and open to acceptance from other professional communities.

One thing I heard over and over was "Do you have information on tattooing?" Hearing that made me feel great about the work the APP does for our industry year after year. Even though tattooing is clearly very popular, and we know there are many tattooists out there, they had no presence at this conference. I hope piercers will understand that when APP members attend these conferences and do outreach, we are not just helping our own members, but also body piercing as a profession, and even body art, as a whole. **P**

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THE APP AT THE APTPI CONFERENCE, ITALY P.7



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FROM THE EDITOR



ELAYNE ANGEL

Medical Liaison

Yucatan, Mexico

This could more accurately be called “From the Co-Editor,” but that doesn’t exactly roll right off the tongue. This issue of *The Point* marks my enthusiastic return from the self-imposed exile I’ve been in for the past year. I was completing work on my new book, *The Piercing Bible—The Definitive Guide to Safe Body Piercing*, which will have its formal release at the APP Conference in May. I’m so excited!

The APP has already presented me with an award for “Best Shameless Self-Promoter,” so I might as well live up to it now: I’ve written the first reference book in the English language to delve deeply (and exclusively) into the subject of safe body piercing, and I believe it will be useful to everyone with an interest in the subject. For more information, please visit my Web site: <http://piercingbible.com/>

The Piercing Bible is entirely in keeping with the mission of the organization because it fulfills our purpose of disseminating vital health and safety information related to body piercing to piercers, health care providers, and the general public. In fact, it is so much in line with the mission that following conference, it will be available directly from the APP website! Rather than offer up a share of the purchase price to Amazon.com or other huge corporate interests, I prefer to support the Association instead—and so we have formed a symbiotic retailing relationship. Piercers who would like to purchase in quantity to sell the book in their studios can order wholesale directly from my publisher. Please see me at conference for details or contact Lea Yancey at (510) 559-1600, ext. 3029, or e-mail lea_yancey@tenspeed.com.

Now to get back to *The Point* (literally). In my previous stint as editor (15 *Point* issues between #17 - #32), I was as timely as can be, but had a tendency to rely heavily on articles I authored myself, rather than try to coax them out of our members and other volunteer writers. James, on the other hand, has a facility for getting articles from a wonderful variety of authors, but has found it increasingly difficult to continue to meet *Point* publication deadlines along with his many new responsibilities as APP President. It is our sincerest hope and plan that together as co-editors, by combining our finest skills and abilities, we will be able to turn out the best possible *Point* issues.

In this one, you’ll see that our members aren’t just hanging around at home and in their studios, they’re going places (sometimes foreign countries) in support of safe piercing. This issue contains an array of articles including coverage of the APP’s appearance at a tattoo convention in Philadelphia in which our members taught several classes, and multiple reports on a series of meetings dealing with the formation of California’s body art regulations. There’s some international flair with a perspective on the APTPI (Italian) Conference, and a new feature in which an article authored in Spanish by a piercer in Mexico appears both in its original form, and with an English translation. You’ll also find the second part of a wonderfully informative article on glass, and a practical piece on how to minimize damage from oral piercings by yours truly. The regular columns also appear: “In the Office,” and even though I’m covering this particular section, you still get to hear from my co-editor, James Weber, in the “President’s Corner,” in which he clarifies the new APP logo usage guidelines.

I’d like to extend my warmest welcome for submissions to *The Point*, and my thanks for being a reader of our publication. **P**



Available for purchase through the APP office:
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or APP website:
www.safepiercing.org

For wholesale orders contact Lea Yancey at (510) 559-1600, ext. 3029, or email lea_yancey@tenspeed.com

THE POINT

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The mission of the Association of Professional Piercers is to disseminate information about body piercing to piercers, health care professionals, legislators, and the general public.

Material submitted for publication is subject to editing. Submissions must be in a digital format, and should be sent via e-mail to medical@safepiercing.org.

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Donations to The Point are always appreciated.

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



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

APP Members are proud of their membership in the organization, and they should be. We insist Business Members adhere to our *Minimum Standards for Jewelry for Initial Piercings*, in addition to specific environmental criteria. They must also complete an intensive—no matter how we strive to simplify it—application process, including a video walk-through of their studio. Members have earned the right to proudly display proof of their membership by including the APP logo on their Web site, blog, MySpace page, business cards, and other promotional materials.

But there are those who seek to use the logo in ways inconsistent with our mission statement: to advertise products, for example, or deceptively promote piercers who are not members, or shops with no APP affiliation.

Historically, the APP has attempted to police the use of its logo in an attempt to minimize its misuse. While this may have been marginally successful in the past, in the digital age this strategy is about as effective as making sure a new Hollywood blockbuster doesn't show up online before the DVD is released. (It simply isn't realistic.)

For the same reason, we also switched to a less restrictive copyright on our publications (see the *President's Corner*, issue #45); we want people to see the logo. Everywhere. And we want everyone with an interest in promoting the organization to be able to do so.

The new APP logo usage guidelines attempt to address both of these issues. The basic logo is now freely available to use by anyone online (as long as it links to the APP Web site and does not imply membership or endorsement by the APP) and Business Members now have a set of logos that can be proudly displayed on their promotional materials. Furthermore, these new logos put the responsibility on the viewer to verify the piercer's membership. They say, "Don't just take my word for it; check out my credentials."

[For those not familiar with our different member classifications—and for a PDF of our logo usage guidelines—please see our site at safepiercing.org.]

APP NAME & LOGO USAGE GUIDELINES

The APP does not certify piercers or piercing studios. Wording such as "APP Certified" should never be used. While the APP does provide education to piercers, we do not train piercers, so "APP Trained" is never acceptable. Having a certificate of attendance to one of our conferences does not constitute certification or membership.

THE APP LOGO IN DIGITAL MEDIA

The Association of Professional Piercers freely licenses the use of its trademarked corporate logo in all digital media on the condition that the trademark licensee uses the mark to point to the APP homepage, <http://safepiercing.org>, and only to the APP homepage. The APP

retains full, unfettered, and sole discretion to revoke this trademark license for any reason whatsoever or for no specified reason.

Simply stated, the APP gives free use of its logo to anyone, for any digital media, including, but not limited to, Web sites, social networking pages (IAM, MySpace, Facebook), blogs, etc., as long as the following two conditions are met:

The logo must point to the APP homepage (safepiercing.org).

The logo must not be used in any way that states or implies membership in the APP for any individual or organization.

This logo may not be used in print media without express permission.

PATRON MEMBERS

Patron Members may use this logo in the same fashion as non-members and the general public, but may not use the APP name or logo in reference to piercing services or products of any kind.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS, BUSINESS MEMBERS, AND BUSINESS MEMBERS-AT-LARGE

Associate Members, Business Members, and Business Members-at-Large *only* may use the APP Members' Logos. They may be used in digital or print form, including—but not limited to—business cards, Web sites, advertising, etc. *It must be used in a way that makes it clear the membership belongs to the individual, not the studio.*

If any APP Associate Member, Business Member, or Business Member-at-Large uses the Members' Logo in any print advertising, the Member is making a commitment to maintain his or her membership through the end of that print run. *Failure for the piercer(s) to renew membership during the duration that the APP name or logo is used in print will result in the studio being listed on the impostors page of the Web site, even if there were members on staff at the time that the printing was done.* This includes business cards, fliers, print ads, yellow pages ads, and any other print media.

Anyone misusing the APP name or logo to falsely state or imply membership will be listed on the APP Web site as an imposter and may be subject to legal action.

Please replace all former logos with the current logos.

CORPORATE ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

See the guidelines for name and logo usage specific to Corporate Associate Members.

PRODUCT ENDORSEMENT

Many products fall within the various guidelines suggested by the APP. However, the organization does not "endorse" or "recommend" specific products. Any company making such claims and any product bearing "APP" on the labeling is doing so erroneously and without APP sanction. **P**

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IN THE OFFICE



CAITLIN McDIARMID
APP Administrator

The Board of Directors and I recently attended a Board meeting in San Diego. It had been a while since I had been to a board meeting and it was good to see the changes the directors have made in how the meeting was run, hear the committee reports, and watch other committees being formed. This restructuring has been crucial for the evolution of the Association, and one of the added benefits is meetings that had begun to stretch out to four long days are now two manageable days of work.

I know we ALL
felt moved by
how this reflects
on our industry
as a whole,
the Association's
corporate sup-
porters, our
vendors, and
the people who
have worked in
this industry
for years

While in San Diego we were invited to tour Industrial Strength Body Jewelry's new(er) location in Carlsbad, California, about 20 minutes north of San Diego. After some deliberation, and an agreement to work later into the evening to compensate for time lost due to the "field trip," we piled into two vehicles and took off on the road.

Arriving at an office complex in what appeared to be a suburban area, we met JD at the door. He dropped us off in a small conference room after taking a massive coffee order with the comment, "Feel free to look around a bit, but please don't interfere with the work. I know how you guys are." Didier (based in San Diego) showed us around the office area a bit – room after room of sorted, packaged, and labeled jewelry, a central sales area (shhhhhh – they're working...), a pre-package area, a shipping room

(enough to make this worker-bee drool). He kept saying, "but you haven't seen anything yet..."

In my head I pondered the fact that I haven't really spent much time considering the process of making jewelry on a large scale, yet at a high quality. Before coming to work for the APP I knew nothing about it. Now I know about materials and biocompatibility and appropriate finishing...but I hadn't

thought about it in terms of "The Life of a Barbell from Birth to Purchase."

At some point when I was a child, I do remember figuring out that almost everything in our world was made by someone – someone was doing it by hand, or standing at a machine making every nut and bolt, every piece of metal, every item in my house, and every part of my house, etc. Crazy.

Um...so back to the tour... JD arrived coffees in hand. Safety glasses were distributed. We went through some hallways, up some stairs, through his office (something between my office and a metal shop!) – and then (tada!) out on to a landing overlooking the manufacturing floor.

Ok. I know I am often overly emotional. But frankly looking at the others – looking at their faces – I know I was right in having an emotional reaction. It wasn't about "who is bigger or better in the industry" or "How cool JD is." It was about how far our industry has come – the progress of an individual in our country – and what can be accomplished by a human in our times. It made me proud to work in our industry. In that moment, it made me certain that anyone who speaks of the "fad" of body piercing, or minimizes the place body modification has in our society, or talks smack about doing things at a higher quality level is wrong. Plain and simple – they are wrong.

So we got a tour of an *amazing* facility. I wish my hunny had been there because he has a metal shop packed in our garage but no space or time for creative pursuits these days. He would have delighted in (and understood) all the machines – Swiss precision – and lots of hands and sharp eyes.

We watched the raw materials go in, and watched tiny barbell posts come out, or ends for gem sets ... or a dozen other items. We saw all the checking and rechecking of each step on each piece in the process that is required.

Members of our group hefted raw materials – felt the difference in weight between steel and titanium before they were turned into jewelry – when they are still long rods inches in diameter. "You're gonna get oil on your hands... you always get oil on your hands down here..." JD said.

Our tour guide talked about the machines, how the process works, the amount of work they did themselves to the building to save money, the oil they use, and their internal processes. I was suitably impressed. Impressed with the workers keeping their hands on their work, their minds on their responsibilities, and sometimes one eye on our group.

We saw assembly – gems being set – tiny screw threads being made; more checking and rechecking.

JD took us to the finishing room – cleaning and polishing – by hand. Holy crap that's a lot of little pieces to polish and clean!

But the filtering system was amazing and the air was clear. All along the way we saw hand-built machines – the basics of how things got done “back in the day” – and how in some instances that is still the best way to get the job done.

As an Administrator I had to ask, “Who puts your internal systems into place? Establishes your processes?” JD pointed at Rhoda, “She does. And it’s all in her head.” Every piece gets tracked. Everyone signs off. They always know who did what and when. How long it’s taking. How long he’s taking. How a machine or a person is performing. Where the problem is, if there is one. Who should be promoted and who should get fired.

As we wrapped up the tour, our guide informed us of two things, “Those labels in the baggies describing the items – my dad puts those on. And I still check about 80 percent of the orders before they get shipped out.”

I kinda wished my dad lived near to Industrial. He would be good at doing that and enjoy the busy work. He might be too sloppy for their standards however; their quality control is pretty

off the charts.

A hands-on owner is best in all businesses; we know this. As the board and I lingered you could tell we were all a bit speechless over the scope of the operation and the hidden lives of body jewelry. The tour was worth getting up early and working late. Our host was gracious and humble. I know we ALL felt moved by how this reflects on our industry as a whole, the Association’s corporate supporters, our vendors, and the people who have worked in this industry for years, both piercers and manufacturers.

I urge all of our readers to reflect on what makes their career possible. Who put together the building blocks of this industry? Who were the piercers, the jewelry manufacturers, the educators from the start – and who continues to exceed expectations and quality standards in our industry? And if you want to meet them face to face, take classes from them, eat a meal with them, and talk to them about their own struggles in our industry – then come to Conference – they will all be there! **P**

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FIRST APTPI INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL CONGRESS



APTPI PRESS OFFICE

If we didn't have memories of each and every congress clear in our minds, and most of all, the memories of the great sense of accomplishment we felt each and every time, we would have given up long ago.

As we get close to the opening of every conference, our supply of enthusiasm slowly drains away leaving room for skin rashes and an assorted array of nervous breakdowns. But we can guarantee you that the final speech and the greetings are always made with tears in our eyes and in a soft voice.

This was the "quantum leap" year. The congress officially opened its doors to the international community and guests from several foreign countries responded with great enthusiasm. There were attendees from Holland, Greece, France, Spain, Germany, Norway, Slovenia, Croatia, Mexico, Japan, United States, and of course, Italy. The congress caused an uncontrollable echo that brought coverage in several magazines and foreign networks.

Like always, the program was rich both in topics and in hours of lessons, which were spent discussing subjects of interest for both tattoo artists and piercers. We held classes about piercing techniques and Japanese tattoo philosophy, anthropology, neurology, dermatology, biocompatible materials technology, tattoo-applied calligraphy, and the building and working of rotary tattoo machines. The debates in each class were enthralling as always. The exchanges of information between professionals are still the most propitious and intense times, in which everybody can discuss their newly acquired notions and personal experiences. There's no such opportunity in any other convention on an international level.

Even the vast area dedicated to the expo, where the best suppliers

of the world had the chance to introduce their items and novelties, revealed itself to be right on the spot and full of possibilities for every professional.

On top of that, in order to relieve the burden for the organizers and the promoters, we hosted an amazing photographic expo with the theme "Eros and Thanatos." The now-traditional dinner had more than 200 guests, and an exciting burlesque show in which three wonderful girls entertained the audience making us feel like a bunch of friends spending a pleasant night out together.

We had teachers from Italy and abroad; we had interpreters and wireless headphones for everybody. One of our guys translated Kohki Sato's lesson from Japanese to Italian and back. Our instructors included Rob Admiral from Holland, Didier Suarez, Paul King, and JD Lorenz from the United States, and Dr. Andrea Locatelli (dermatologist), Dr. Franco di Palma (neurologist), and Professor Alberto Cigada (chemist).

Our teaching team was definitely able to capture our attention and feed us with what we needed to satisfy our professionalism.

This was just the latest of the amazing experiences we have enjoyed since 2003, when this incredibly motivated group of friends decided to start APTPI.

Along the road we've met many people; some just stopped by for a while, some stayed with us a little longer, and some left forever without actually leaving us.

Every year, at the end, we are tired, you are tired; and despite this, every year there are hugs and tears, thank-yous and incentives to keep going. Every year, at the end, we are ready to start over again. See you in 2010. **P**

APTPI MILAN



DIDIER SUAREZ
APP Vice President

In Milan, Italy, the first international Italian congress focused on the artistic, technical, and hygienic aspects of piercing and tattooing. The congress was held at the Leonardo da Vinci Hotel, January 18-20, 2009. After four successful national gatherings, the Association of Piercing and Tattooing Professionals of Italy (APTPI) decided to open the conference to the international community. Milan is not only the fashion mecca of Europe, it is also located close enough to the surrounding countries to make international attendance convenient. The level of professionalism and organization put forth by the Italian association was amazing and their successful efforts shined in every aspect of the event.

In addition to classes, the APTPI hosted an art gallery and vendor exposition. The gallery featured a show by Massimo Carlisi and Fabiano Salvalai, "Eros and Thanatos—Love and Pain Between Show and Reality." The black and white photographs exhibited dozens of beautiful women and a few men in suggestive poses with some tattoo and body modification-related artwork mixed in. It was an excellent addition to the exposition and a great place to take a break. The vendor floor had two rooms packed with body jewelry, piercing tools, clothing, and tattoo machines and supplies. The vendors included Industrial Strength International, Industrial Strength Europe, Quetzalli Jewelry, Trust Body Modification, WildCat DE, Micromutazioni, Tawapa, Little Seven Finery, Gorilla Glass, Diablo Organics, Intrinsic Precision Body Jewelry, and BME. It was an impressive showing on the vendor's floor and the attendees were obviously excited to have such a great selection set out before them.

The first day of instruction was held with piercers and tattooers together in the same auditorium for classes. They listened to lectures about anatomy, dermatology, and neurology provided by local physicians Dr. Andrea Locatelli and Dr. Franco Di Palma. Together these two medical professionals provided vast amounts of information about skin tissue, wounds, and the brain's reaction to piercing and tattooing.

On the second day of classes, the two groups split into separate classrooms. The tattooers attended workshops on rotary machines

and calligraphy. Meanwhile, the piercers had yours truly teaching surface piercings. Although surface piercings are not new to Italy, their theories and the types of jewelry they use differ from what we use in the United States. The group easily grasped concepts of flat surface bars and various freehand piercing techniques. My class was followed by a lecture by Prof. Alberto Cigada about chemistry and the biocompatibility of materials used in body jewelry. I've always found this type of information to be a useful tool in educating my clients about the quality of the jewelry I use in my studio.

The third and final day of the congress was definitely one of those "last but not least occasions." The tattooers had classes and workshops on tattoo techniques including traditional Japanese tattooing, and background and foreground perspectives. The piercers had the pleasure of listening to Paul King's lecture on the history of modern body piercing in North America and Western Europe. It's always entertaining to hear stories about our industry's founders as told by Paul. After Paul romped through piercing's past, we took a look at modern-day body jewelry manufacturing. JD Lorenz and Jonathan



Loveless took the class on a virtual tour of the impressive Industrial Strength body jewelry factory in Southern California. We were taken through the journey of the intensive processes the raw materials go through as they are transformed into body jewelry and end up in a piercing studio. After JD's presentation, Jonathan led a workshop on anodizing titanium jewelry. Once the day's educational offerings concluded it was time for the banquet. It was fantastic to see the whole group together to celebrate the three successful days of learning and networking. After dinner, the APTPI had the perfect ending to a perfect gathering: burlesque! Not just any burlesque, but a performance by Voodoo DeLux, which was one of the most entertaining shows I've seen in a while.

Organizing and executing a conference of this level is not an easy task for any group, and the APTPI did an excellent job this year. I am looking forward to watching the APTPI grow as an association and as an example for other communities. **P**

CALIFORNIA BODY ART LEGISLATION TAKES A STEP FORWARD

Last December, three of our APP members volunteered their time to attend meetings held by the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health (CCDEH) on proposed statewide legislation for body art and permanent cosmetics. The intention of this state agency was to inform piercing and tattooing practitioners about this proposed legislation and to solicit comments from them on the draft language of the bill that was slated for introduction early this year.

The biggest issue was the proposed separation of ear piercing guns from the legislation on body piercing.

The CCDEH announcement of the workshops stated:

“Assembly Bill 186 of 1997 required all persons engaged in the business of tattooing, body piercing and the application of permanent cosmetics to be registered in every county in which they practice. The law also requires local health departments to inspect these facilities and it charged the California Conference of Local Health Officers (CCLHO) to develop standards for sterilization, sanitation and safety standards for persons engaged in the business. Although the registration of these businesses has been taking place, many local agencies have deferred inspections pending the adoption of clear enforceable state-wide standards. The guidelines drafted by CCLHO have not been formally adopted as regulations by the State Department of Public Health, although several local governments have adopted – or are in the process of adopting – local body art ordinances that are enforceable.

In order to ensure that local health and/or environmental health departments have clear, uniform and enforceable standards against which to inspect body art facilities, The California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health (CCDEH), the statewide association that represents the local environmental health programs, in conjunction with CCLHO, has agreed to introduce legislation that will codify a set of guidelines into law.

CCDEH is holding three half-day meetings in Southern, Central and Northern California during December 2008 to inform the body art and permanent cosmetic practitioners of the proposed legislation and to solicit comments on the draft language of the bill that is slated for introduction early 2009.”

Our APP-member attendees, Didier Suarez, Steve Joyner, and Paul King have each shared their experiences and impressions from those meetings.



DIDIER SUAREZ

APP Vice President

December 11, 2008

I was invited to represent the APP at an informal workshop regarding proposed California legislation on body art and permanent cosmetics. The meeting I attended in San Diego was the first of three workshops held in California. Justin Malan, the representative from the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health, headed our meeting as well as the meetings in San Francisco on December 12 and Monterey on December 15. To provide input on the proposed legislation, a mix of body artists and county employees were personally invited by the state to be present at the meetings.

As soon as my attendance was confirmed, I called Steve Joyner, the APP representative invited to the Monterey workshop. Shortly afterward, Paul King, slated to attend the meeting in San Francisco, called me. Less than a week before the meetings were scheduled to start, we received the agenda and a proposed draft of the legislation. We immediately went through the list of terminology and numerous articles involving aspects of tattooing, body piercing and permanent cosmetics.

The three of us compiled a list of our concerns. The biggest issue was the proposed separation of ear piercing guns from the legislation on body piercing. The documents defined these as two completely different acts. This is not a new problem or an easy one to tackle with existing laws on ear piercing. With strong suggestions from my two colleagues, we decided against making this issue our main focus and worked primarily on straightening out the terminology. If anything, we planned to be over-prepared for the meeting.

As the meeting started, it was time to see what could be accomplished in just three short hours. I had previously worked with more than half of the attendees on body art legislation. Mr. Malan took us through a discussion about what the state was trying to accomplish by compiling regulations and questioned us about what we wanted for our industries. This helped with some of the concerns I had with the open-ended terminology throughout the proposed legislation. Leaving the language ambiguous makes it easier to amend when it reaches the county level. He explained that state legislation could be used as the foundation for county legislation.

After the first two hours it was apparent that we would not have time to go through the proposed draft as much as we would have liked. This was a little irritating but, in my experience, par for the course.

I couldn't help but address the issues with piercing guns to this group. I know that the laws for ear piercing guns make it difficult to change things on a state level, but when considering

what a huge public health and safety issue it is, I just can't get over the hypocrisy. The attendees from my local health department seemed understanding and asked the group if a ban on piercing guns was what we wanted. I know it couldn't easily be done, especially when it comes to the politics surrounding piercing guns.

The meeting brought some much-needed attention to the concerns of our industry. Overall this workshop was a great step in the right direction toward progress for California's body art legislation.



PAUL KING
APP Treasurer
December 12, 2008

Today is the second of a three-day, three-county, statewide tour by Justin Malan, Executive Director of the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health.

This isn't the first time I've rubbed elbows with Mr. Malan. In 1997, Assembly Bill 186 passed giving direction to the Department of Health Services to establish safety standards for persons engaged in the business of tattooing, body piercing and permanent cosmetics.

For those unfamiliar, the current California law is so compromising that it is virtually ineffective. Corporate lobbyists pulled strings to make sure their interests were protected. As an example, AB-186 wrote into law that the earlobe was not to be considered as part of the body, as such, ear stud gun usage did not fall under any supervision.

These problems were clear early on. And nearly 10 years ago, several of us across the tattooing, body piercing and permanent cosmetics industries were invited to the state Capitol in Sacramento to brainstorm ways to implement some basic safety standards. Unfortunately, all of our hard work sank in political quagmire.

In fact, 10 years later only six of the 62 counties in California have developed criteria for body art practitioners. That means only 10 percent of California County Health Departments perform site inspections. It's beyond the scope of this article to critique the quality of those inspections. Even when thorough inspections are made there is zero enforceability within the law as written. Health inspectors are left to plead with the local district attorney's office to go after worst-case incorrigibles using existing, often vague statutes, such as Unfair Business Practices.

To be perfectly clear, this is NOT another try at reworking AB-186. CCDEH is throwing a long pass, surpassing the usual

Sacramento political committees and writing a body art industry code book of statutes. All aspects of governance concerning standards are under review including site and operator criteria, registration requirements, fees and enforcement.

Once finalized they will find issue friendly state legislators to present the statutes for consideration into law. It's the normal governing process operating in reverse: working out the nitty-gritty details at the bottom, then presenting a neat, ready-to-implement package to the top.

It's far too early to get into specifics since everything is abstract and being debated. But the process is at the front of CCDEH's agenda. They're hoping California legislators may have the book of statutes in their hands by January 2010 at the latest. I'm not holding my breath. This is the world of politics and anything that can happen, often does. However, this approach has a very different feel than back in 1994 when a group of us from the body arts communities piled into a van and headed to Sacramento, to plead for inclusion in the process before a state hearing on AB-101—the fight that sparked the founding of the APP.



STEVE JOYNER
Former APP Vice-President
December 15, 2008

When I received the call to attend one of the three statewide meetings to be held by Justin Malan, Executive Director of the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health, I thought, "Here we go again."

I assumed that we were going to just revisit what was already in existence: AB-186. In 2004, Sky Renfro, Paul King and I went to Sacramento for a meeting and nothing came out of that visit, so I was a little skeptical. However, I soon found myself excited when I heard that the state of California wants to create a codebook of statutes that will encompass the "body art industry." To our industry this would mean that we would have accountability, inspections and enforcement, all of which would open a new direction that we have long desired.

I spoke to Didier about the first meeting held in San Diego, and attended the second meeting in San Francisco with Paul King in order to absorb what was being discussed and take notes for the third meeting, which I was to attend in Monterey County. Ultimately, I was glad to have attended more than one meeting; the meetings revolved around the same general topic, but all three ended up honing in on different attributes of our industry that needed to be addressed within the outline we were covering.

UPCOMING APP EVENTS

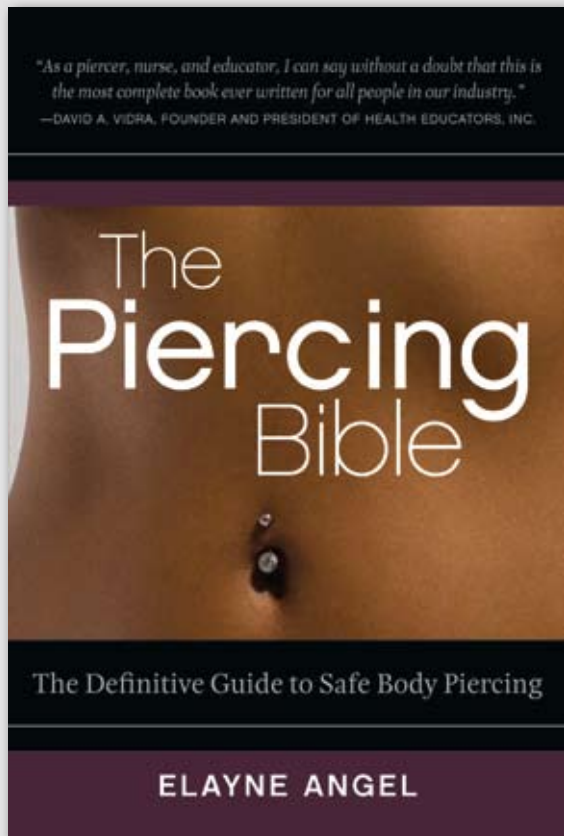
- ▶ **ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND EXPOSITION**
May 3-8, 2009
Tropicana Hotel and Casino
Las Vegas, NV
- ▶ **AMERICAN COLLEGE HEALTH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE**
May 26-30, 2009
San Francisco, CA
- ▶ **AMERICAN DENTAL HYGIENISTS' ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE**
June 18-20, 2009
Washington, DC
- ▶ **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT HEALTH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE**
June 21-24, 2009
Atlanta, GA
- ▶ **APP MEXICO SEMINARS**
October 7th-10th, 2009
Mexico City, Mexico
- ▶ **AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE**
November 8-11, 2009
Philadelphia, PA

The local host for the Monterey County meeting was Senior Environmental Health Specialist Maria Ferdin. In attendance were six other environmental health directors/coordinators/inspectors from three counties, six tattoo artists, two piercers, a studio manager and myself.

As chair of the meeting, Mr. Malan started off by orienting everyone with the goals of our meeting. After covering the definitions, legislative process and basic structure of how to get our codebook passed into law, he then went into more depth about registration requirements, operator's criteria, ear piercing guns, branding and scarification.

At this point, nothing is solid enough to warrant going into detail, but I was happy to hear and see our industries and the CCDEH able to not only speak on the same level but also feel like we had a common goal. California is a tough state to get our needs met in, because it is run by Environmental Health and not a state health department as most states are. For the first time since I have been working with the officials in California, I feel like we are actually getting somewhere, even if this is only the beginning of a new road. Now we have to agree on what is being presented, convince the legislators to listen to our public health issues, and have them voted into state law, which will hopefully occur in January 2010.

The APP will keep working with the CCDEH and will keep everyone posted as things progress. **P**



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

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PROUD MEMBERS



MINIMIZING RISKS AND DAMAGE FROM ORAL PIERCINGS



ELAYNE ANGEL
Medical Liaison
Yukatan, Mexico

While I like to think of body piercing as a safe and sane endeavor, the truth is that risks do exist and damage sometimes occurs. One popular area for body piercings is often problematic: the mouth. The most common oral piercings—those of the tongue and lip—can and do frequently cause harm, especially if the jewelry is too big or the piercing is improperly placed. When sound practices are carefully followed, the hazards are minimized, but they cannot be eliminated entirely. If a potential client has a history of bad teeth or problem gums, a tongue or lip piercing may, in fact, be inadvisable.

“Wrecking ball fractures” (small cracks in the teeth) will result if a piercee repeatedly clicks or chomps on oral jewelry, whether done for fun or by accident. When hard metal rubs excessively against the delicate soft tissue of the palate or gums, erosion occurs. Long-term wear of an overly long barbell has been shown to cause loss of jawbone density and gum recession. These two structures play key roles in holding the teeth inside the mouth. This is serious! Unfortunately, oral damage is often irreversible because enamel, bone, and gum tissue do not regenerate. Repairs (when they are possible) are both costly and painful.

Your best bet for maximum safety (short of talking all of your clients out of getting these piercings) is preventing problems by taking actions that diminish the dangers, and thoroughly educating each individual that you pierce. It is also important for you to be readily available to your clients if troubleshooting becomes needed so that any issues are handled promptly.

Informed consent is a must: do not pierce your clients without frankly discussing the true potential for risks and the precautions that must be taken to minimize them. Once the details have been thoroughly explained to the client, he can make his own decisions about whether the hazards are acceptable. Piercing first and disclosing the concerns later is inappropriate.

The mouth is a dynamic area. During normal activities like speaking, eating, smiling, or yawning, the tissue can move or change shape dramatically. Take extra care with the placement and angle of all oral piercings. While marking, request that the client replicate any of the relevant activities so you can familiarize yourself with the way the area changes in order to select the safest and most comfortable placement. Optimal positioning of oral piercings is fundamental for minimizing complications.

For a standard tongue piercing, a central position is popular because it diminishes visibility and keeps the jewelry away from the

teeth but still allows for fun and function. Piercing along the midline, top and bottom is absolutely fine. Many piercers seem to mistakenly believe it is somehow wrong or dangerous to pierce the center of the tongue on the bottom. When anatomy is normal, the piercing can rest right in the center, generally just in front of the attachment of the lingual frenulum. If the web is exceptionally thick or connects closer to the tip than usual, the underside of the piercing may need to be placed just a little off to one side of the midline. The major nerves and arteries are clearly visible well off to the sides underneath, so you should have no problem avoiding them.

For safety and comfort, I place the piercing slightly farther forward underneath to make the top of the barbell slant slightly back toward the highest part of the upper palate where there is maximum space for it in the oral cavity. This angle also prevents the jewelry from standing straight up in the mouth, which could jam the bottom ball against the lower palate. However, it must not have too steep an angle, or the bottom ball will rub behind the lower front teeth.

Informed consent is a must: do not pierce your clients without frankly discussing the true potential for risks and the precautions that must be taken to minimize them.

I insert initial jewelry that has a small (3/16-inch) ball underneath, where there is less room. I offer a choice of a matching size or slightly larger (7/32- or 1/4-inch) ball on the top, where there is more space for jewelry. Instead of a ball, some piercees may find a disc is better on the bottom of a tongue barbell.

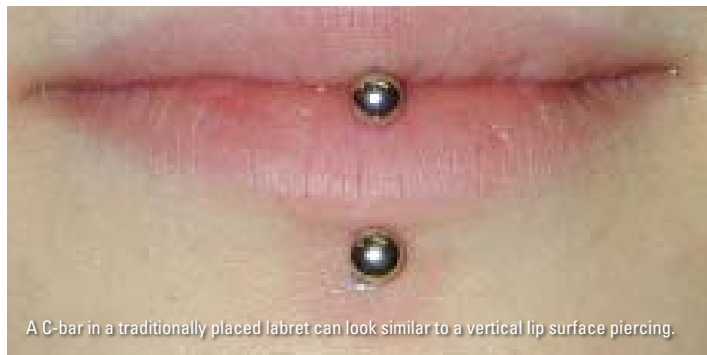
Oral jewelry made of acrylic, PTFE, or other non-metallic substances is softer than metal, and cheaper and easier to replace than a tooth. If a client has veneers or caps, or wears dentures, bridges, or other oral appliances, these materials are advisable over metal. These are also a good choice for any client who is concerned about oral health or who has a tendency to play with his jewelry. I advise clients who wear threaded acrylic ends to keep a spare handy because this material is relatively fragile. Some metal alternatives are suggested only for healed piercings. Acrylic posts in thin gauges can easily be broken, so they may be unsuited to daily wear.

If a piercee experiences soreness inside his mouth as he adjusts to labret jewelry, dental or orthodontic wax can be applied where needed to soften the impact. This harmless wax is inexpensive and can be obtained at drugstores. Problems are frequently resolved by wearing smaller or shorter jewelry once healing is complete—but not



always. Getting a static piece of jewelry to rest in the mouth both comfortably *and* safely can be challenging. Experimentation may be needed to find the most comfortable size, shape, and material for each client. Some piercees like a labret backing with a slightly more domed design (like a flat M&M's candy). Once a labret has healed, a 3 mm disc may be preferable to the 5 mm size that is ordinarily used for the initial piercing. Other piercees have better luck with the fishtail style for piercings of the lower lip, but a customized fit to the individual anatomy is essential. If pressure on the teeth or irritation to the gums persists in spite of trying all of the jewelry possibilities, the piercing will need to be abandoned. Do not encourage your clients to maintain piercings when damage is evident and the situation cannot be remedied by jewelry changes.

A custom-bent C-ring or U-ring is an excellent jewelry alternative for some piercees who have labret piercings. This is a small-diameter circular barbell that you widen out so that it is C-shaped (or U-shaped, depending on anatomy) rather than round. This will conform to the lip and help to avoid jewelry contact with the piercee's teeth or gums. There is a wide range of fit possibilities based on the way you bend it to accommodate individual anatomy. Sometimes an asymmetrical bend is best. This style may satisfy a client who likes the look of a vertical lip (surface) piercing but doesn't have suitably pouty lip anatomy. It also minimizes the higher risks of scarring and migration



A C-bar in a traditionally placed labret can look similar to a vertical lip surface piercing.

that come with a surface piercing. The jewelry can give the same appearance (one ball on top of the lip and the other right beneath it), but with the versatility and relative safety of a traditional labret.

It is common for jewelry to "nest" or sink somewhat into the soft tissue of lip and tongue piercings. Of course, these areas are also quick to regenerate cells, so jewelry that is too short can quickly end up embedded. Once healing has taken place, it is advisable to suggest jewelry snug enough to cause some nesting—it helps keep jewelry as

far as possible from the teeth and gums.

For piercings that require longer initial jewelry to allow for swelling, impress upon your clients that it is *absolutely vital* for oral health to shorten the post once the swelling has diminished. The longer initial bar is used *only* to accommodate swelling and should not be worn any longer than necessary. Ideally, the shortest post that is comfortable should be in place for permanent wear after healing. Labret studs sometimes need two downsizes: one after initial swelling and another after the piercing is fully healed.

A lot of preventable oral complications occur because piercees continue to wear oversized initial jewelry or they play with their jewelry. I consider it the responsibility of the piercer to sufficiently stress how dangerous these seemingly simple acts can be. I'm appalled at the large number of piercees I run into who weren't informed by their piercers about the crucial steps that must be taken to preserve oral health. When I have to, I use scare tactics to ensure cooperation: "If you don't downsize your jewelry, and if you keep playing with it, you are going to chip and crack your teeth and possibly lose them."

To encourage client compliance, have a printed "downsize policy" that graphically spells out the dangers and offers a discount on a shorter bar (or consider setting your pricing structure for the piercing and jewelry to include the downsize post.)

If you are a skilled piercer, you can safely insert a shorter post as early as a week after piercing if the swelling is down. However, if a client will be unable to return to you or another professional for help and he is not experienced at switching his own jewelry, I suggest he wait until after the minimum healing time to avoid damaging the tissue with an inept jewelry change. I also advise postponing downsizing until after healing if externally threaded jewelry was used initially. However, if you have a taper that can be used to avoid exposing the healing tissue to the threaded post, you can downsize once swelling is gone.

You may notice that no mention of cheek piercings has been made in this article. After my own personal experience with horrendous complications, I no longer perform piercings of the cheek beyond the first molars. Please refer to my article, "The Worst Piercing Story," on the dangers of cheek piercings in *Point #23*. It is available via free download at <http://safepiercing.org/point.html>.

It takes time and effort to go over all of the details so that your clients are fully educated on the potential hazards associated with oral piercings. But, once they are well informed, they are capable of engaging in behaviors that promote the safest possible outcome. **P**

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TRADITIONS AND LEGENDS OF BODY PIERCING IN ANCIENT MEXICO



DANTE SALOMO

Coyoacapan
Mexico City

I am a body piercer in my native country of Mexico. I'm a passionate investigator of the body modifications and related rituals that have been practiced for centuries in my land. Through research I have uncovered the information I will share with you now. It is perhaps just a taste from the vast history of time gone by; still, I find that it is fascinating.

From archeological sites that managed to survive the looting, destruction, and passage of time, we retain an amazing selection of images that can aid in our study. Offerings and tributes found in ancient tombs offer a rich body of information through pieces of art, jewelry and other items, as well as the ancient writings called codices that are still visible, sometimes carved in stone.

It is well known that piercing self-sacrifice was practiced using the thorns of the maguey (agave) cactus. Also used were sharpened bones and obsidian blades, claws and teeth from animals like the jaguar and eagle, shark's teeth and other fish bones, spines of the manta ray, and quills from the hedgehog. These instruments were used depending on the region in which the people lived. They were also chosen depending on their status: whether common citizens, priests, warriors or nobility. Materials including obsidian, jade, jadeite, magnetite, shell, gold, silver, amber and turquoise were used to make jewelry for labret piercings called bezotes, septum pieces, and ear plugs.

Among the stories of ancient piercing, there is one that specifically describes the nostril piercing of the great Eight Deer Jaguar Claw. He was an amazing individual because he came from the common people, yet he was determined to become a ruler. This type of upward class mobility went against all traditions of that era. He lived a path of personal growth and ultimately achieved his goal. He became a Zapotec ruler following the piercing of his nostril

with a jaguar's claw. His story is told in the Nuttall Codex where we can see the ritual called *yacaxapotlaliztli*, which literally means, "the deflowering of the nostril."

From a more mythical realm we have the ancient story of *Mayahuel*, the goddess of pulque, which is a fermented beverage that comes from the maguey cactus. It is still produced and consumed in some regions of Mexico. In the story, *Ehecatl-Quetzalcoatl* (the cosmic wind) went to visit the virgin *Mayahuel* in the heavens at night, when she was sleeping with her grandmother and her sisters.

He seduced her and convinced her to descend down to Earth and when they were on Earth they transformed into a tree with two branches. When the grandmother woke and looked for *Mayahuel*, she could not find her; she only found the tree. She became so upset she burned the tree down and it is said that the first maguey cactus grew from the ashes. This is how she became the goddess of the maguey.

The term *yecameztli* comes from the Nahuatl word roots *yácatl* (nose) and *meztli* (moon). This is a characteristic symbol of the gods of pulque. It is strongly related with the crescent moon, which also symbolizes fertility, which

is why these gods were believed to have been gods of agriculture.

Also, if we look closely at the name "Mexico," it comes from the Nahuatl language: *metzli* (moon), *xictli* (navel) and *co* (place). Others have suggested that the name comes from a stronger root: the Nahuatl *me*, *xixtl*, and *co*, speaking directly of the association of the maguey and the moon. So then, depending on the source, "Mexico" could mean, "The place in the navel of the moon," or "Place in the navel of the maguey."

Another impressive image is the one of *Mictlantecutli*, the god of death. He is represented with certain characteristics in which he is



Goddess of the maguey, *Mayahuel*. In her left hand she holds a bone punch and a maguey spike.
Diosa del Maguey Mayahuel. Porta en la mano izquierda punzon de hueso y espina de maguey.

shown in numerous codices, like the Codex of Borgia, for example. There, he can be seen with a skull for his head with the mouth wide open giving him a hungry look. Sometimes he is depicted with a sacrificial knife through his nose, meaning that his air, the intrinsic element for life, has been cut. Additionally, there is the gruesome detail of his earplug; he is wearing a human hand that has been ripped from a body with the flesh missing.

In various images we are able to see people performing piercing as self-sacrifice, or doing it to each other. If you look closely at the iconography used by the ancient Mexicans, you can find clear images of jaguar claws, like the one used to pierce Eight Deer, the sharpened bones as in the sacrifice of Huitzilopochtli, and the images of the maguey thorn. In numerous depictions, people are shown holding one or more of these sharp piercing instruments, which are called punzones (punches) by anthropologists.

I would like to finish by sharing some ideas that I've arrived at on my own:

1. I have seen a tremendous amount of images of the sharp objects used for blood sacrifices. Different characters hold one or more of them, and they are not always depicted as being used for self-sacrifice. We have seen, for example, the goddess Mayahuel carrying them. This makes me think that the sharp instruments weren't exclusively used for self-sacrifice: there may have been individuals who were dedicated to perform these procedures on others. Or, we could conceivably describe them as the body piercers of ancient Mexico.

2. The anthropologists say that the maguey thorns, carved bones and other items were used as piercing implements. I believe that the maguey thorns were used for making a new piercing and the bones were more likely used to stretch the piercings. I say this because the thorns are very sharp so they are suited to performing a piercing, but they are quite small in gauge. (In Mexico they are still sometimes used for piercing!) On the other hand, bones are not naturally sharp, and if they are, they could break easily. The bones are seen in larger diameters; therefore, I believe that they were likely used for stretching existing piercings.

With the thought of ancient piercers I end this discussion. I hope not only to share some information, but also to bring us to a deeper consciousness where we can explore the past and also contribute with our own experience and knowledge.

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- *Diversos Numeros de la revista "Arqueología mexicana" (various issues of Mexican Archeology magazine) P*

PERFORACIONES EN EL MÉXICO ANTIGUO



DANTE SALOMO

Coyoumary
México

Soy perforador en mi país y un apasionado investigador de las modificaciones corporales en el México antiguo. Es así como hasta ahora he encontrado algo de información al respecto y aunque aun es muy poca para todo lo que quisiera encontrar, aquí una probadita de lo que me ha parecido muy interesante.

Entre las fuentes que se pueden consultar se encuentran los códices, las zonas arqueológicas, las piezas hechas con rocas talladas, orfebrería, las tumbas con sus ofrendas que lograron sobrevivir a la destrucción y al saqueo. Es en estas donde encontramos imágenes a las que podemos estudiar y encontrar mucha información interesante.

El auto sacrificio se llevaba a cabo con puntas de maguey como es muy conocido, pero además se utilizaban huesos afilados, espinas caudal de raya, garras y colmillos de algunos animales como el jaguar y el águila, colmillos de tiburón, obsidiana filosa y huesos espinosos de peces como el michime y espinas de erizo según la región en la que vivían o si se trataba de el pueblo, sacerdotes, guerreros o nobles.

Entre los materiales usados para hacer joyería como bezotes, septum, orejeras entre otras ornamentas se han encontrado de obsidiana, jade, jadeíta, oro, plata, gilsonita, sílex, ámbar, magnetita, concha y turquesa entre otros.

Entre las historias de perforaciones muy específicas esta la que cuenta la historia de la perforación de la aleta nasal del señor 8 venado, garra de jaguar. El fue un personaje que no descendía de ninguna clase noble, pero se propuso a ser gobernante yendo contra las tradiciones. Después de realizar todo un camino de crecimiento lo logro. Su historia se cuenta en el Codice Nutall donde se muestra como en un ritual llamado yacaxapotlaliztli (que significa literalmente desfloramiento nasal) es por fin embestido gobernante zapoteco.

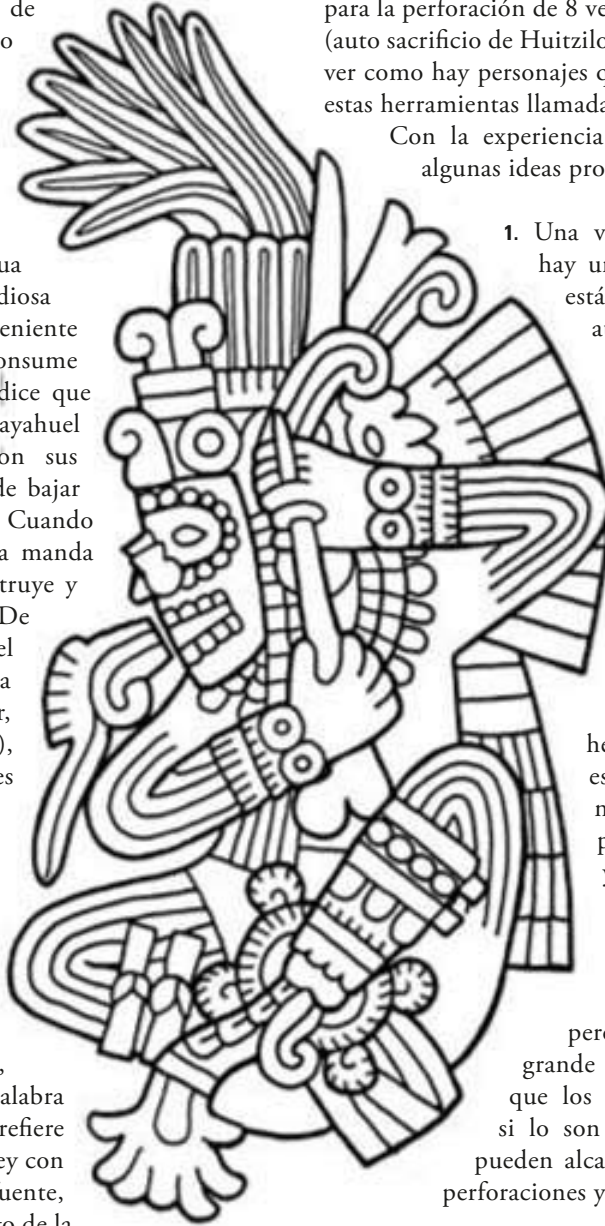
Por otro lado entre la mitología antigua se cuenta la historia de Mayahuel diosa del pulque (bebida fermentada proveniente del maguey que aun se produce y consume en algunas regiones de México). Se dice que Quetzalcoatl-Ehecatl fue a visitar a Mayahuel por la noche, mientras dormía con sus hermanas y abuela. El la convenció de bajar al mundo y formaron un árbol doble. Cuando la abuela despierta y no la encuentra manda por ella. Cuando la encuentra la destruye y quema el árbol que había formado. De las cenizas surge la primera planta del maguey. Fue así como se convirtió en la diosa del Maguey. La nariguera lunar, yecameztli (yácatl, nariz; meztli, luna), es símbolo característico de los dioses del pulque y se relaciona fuertemente con la luna creciente, que a su vez simboliza fertilidad, por ello se cree que estos dioses eran dioses agrarios.

Incluso el nombre "México" viene del Náhuatl, metzli (luna) y xictli (ombligo) y co (lugar). Sin embargo, algunos han sugerido vínculos etimológicos aún más fuertes, diciendo que "México" viene de la palabra Náhuatl Me xixtl co, donde Metl se refiere directamente a la asociación del maguey con la luna. Entonces, dependiendo de la fuente, México significa o "Lugar en el ombligo de la luna" o "lugar en el ombligo del maguey".

Otra imagen sorprendente es la de Mictlantecutli el dios de la muerte que tiene algunas características particulares cuando es representado en muchos de los códices como en el Borgia, donde aparece con cabeza de calavera con la boca abierta, lo que le da un aspecto hambriento; a veces lleva clavado un cuchillo de sacrificio en su nariz, lo que significa que se le ha cortado el aire, ese elemento indispensable para la vida; pero la parte mas espeluznante es que lleva como orejera una mano humana desollada.

En diversas imágenes se muestran personajes realizándose el auto sacrificio o realizándose los a otros. En la iconografía usada por los antiguos mexicanos, una vez que se observa detenidamente se puede distinguir claramente entre la espina de maguey (usada para la perforación de 8 venado, garra de jaguar) y huesos afilados (auto sacrificio de Huitzilopochtli). En muchas imágenes se puede ver como hay personajes que traen en una mano uno o ambas de estas herramientas llamadas por los antropólogos punzones.

Con la experiencia hasta ahora obtenida puedo aportar algunas ideas propias.



1. Una vez que vemos esto encontramos que hay una gran cantidad de imágenes que no están en ese momento realizando ningún auto sacrificio, pero que portan estos instrumentos (diosa Mayahuel por ejemplo) lo que puede significar no solo que eran para auto sacrificarse, sino además que pueden ser personas que se dedicaban a realizarlas a otros personajes, es decir los perforadores del México antiguo.

2. Los antropólogos manejan de igual manera los huesos tallados y las espigas de maguey y otros instrumentos indistintamente como herramientas para perforar, sin embargo es mas probable que las espigas de maguey si se hallan utilizado para hacer perforaciones o punciones nuevas y los huesos a su vez para expandir perforaciones ya existentes. Por un lado las espigas de maguey son muy filosas y pueden perforar y punzar muy bien (en el México actual hay quienes lo hacen) pero no tienen nunca un diámetro muy grande (dificilmente superan 1cm), mientras que los huesos no logran ser muy afilados y si lo son se rompen fácilmente, en cambio si pueden alcanzar diámetros mayores para expandir perforaciones ya existentes.

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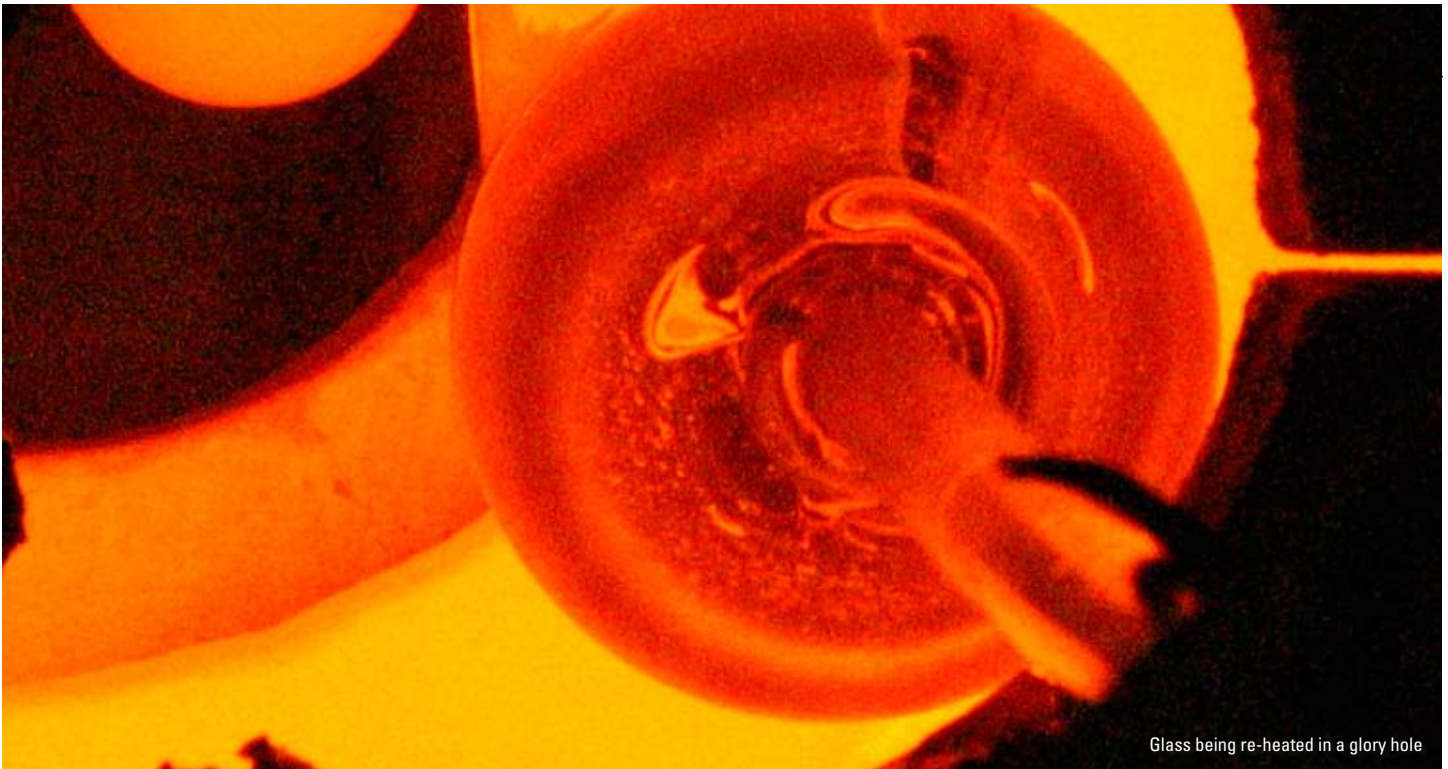


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Glass being re-heated in a glory hole

GLASS AS A MATERIAL FOR BODY JEWELRY (PART 2)



JASON PFOHL

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Oaxaca, Mexico

(Continued from Issue #46)

THE CALIFORNIA LEAD LAW

There was legislation passed in California in 2008 limiting the amount of lead allowed in piercing jewelry, including glass piercing jewelry.

Lead is added to glass mainly for its optical properties; it makes glass denser and increases the refractive index, making it more brilliant. Lead crystal generally has 32 percent lead content by weight. Other glass types may have lead added as an additional ingredient, including colored soda-lime and borosilicate glass types. MSDS sheets can be requested from glass manufacturers to confirm that lead-free glass is being used. There is already legislation in place that restricts the use of lead crystal for wine decanters, as the acidic wine causes a release of lead into the liquid.

Swarovski crystal is a leaded glass used as a decorative element in piercing jewelry. The California Lead-Containing Jewelry Law says this in regards to Swarovski crystal,

“Glass and crystal decorative components used in adult jewelry are considered Class 1 materials. There are no lead limits for Class 1 materials used for adult jewelry. Therefore, the use of leaded crystal, including Swarovski crystal, may be used in adult jewelry. The use of crystal or glass decorative components in children’s jewelry is limited

to a total of 1 gram. However, the law specifies that glass or crystal decorative components that contain less than 0.02 percent (200 ppm) lead by weight and have no intentionally added lead are not part of the 1 gram calculation. In other words, the use of Swarovski crystal (or any other crystal 0.02 percent (200 ppm) or higher in lead) in children’s jewelry is limited to 1 gram total. Crystal or glass components containing less than 0.02 percent (200 ppm) lead by weight with no intentionally added lead may be used in children’s jewelry without any weight limitations.”

Since the Swarovski crystal is used in gem sets AND weighs less than 1 gram, there is no legal problem in California using piercing jewelry with Swarovski crystal in gem sets where it does not come into contact with initial piercings or a mucous membrane.

STRENGTH AND BREAKABILITY OF GLASS

In truth, glass is a strong material used in skyscrapers and car windshields. But everyone knows glass can break. Glass is a paradox in many ways. The properties of glass should not be compared to those of metal. For instance, shear strength means a great deal with metals, but has little or no significance in glass. Hardness of glass must be measured in terms that rarely apply to ductile materials.

These are some of the mechanical properties of glass and how they are measured.

- **Ductility:** Glass does not plastically deform before failure and therefore breaks in a brittle fashion. In practice, it can be considered to break only from tensile stresses. Failure due to pure shear or compressible stresses is rare. Glass is a nearly perfect elastic material, meaning that it can bend, but will automatically return to its original shape.

- **Strength:** The intrinsic or theoretical strength of glasses is considerably higher than is normally measured, but stress concentrations caused by surface imperfections resulting from manufacturing or handling limit the ultimate strength to around 10,000 p.s.i.

Laboratory tests have shown glass fibers with tensile strengths of up to a million p.s.i. The practical tensile strength of glass however, is about 5,000 p.s.i. Between 70 and 80 percent of the failures in commercial glass occur near this value. To preserve a safety factor, a prolonged working stress of 1,000 p.s.i. is the maximum that should be used. The rate of loading is also important. Glass fatigues under constant load and the faster the loading rate, the higher the apparent strength.

These values can be used for current commercial glasses since the composition of glass has little practical effect on its strength. Most borosilicate glasses though, tend to resist scratching and therefore usually give better mechanical service.

- **Young's Modulus (Modulus of Elasticity):** Young's Modulus is the ratio between stress and strain, and is determined by measuring the sonic or ultrasonic frequencies of a simple beam at room temperature. Most commercial glasses have values between 9 million and 10 million p.s.i. By comparison, steel is 30 million, copper 17 million and aluminum 10 million.
- **Poisson's Ratio:** The longitudinal stretching of any elastic material is accompanied by a lateral contraction, and the ratio of the contraction to the proportional stretching is known as Poisson's Ratio. It is measured by a similar method of that used to measure Young's Modulus. A Poisson's Ratio of 0.20 is usually given for glass since the actual value is very seldom less than 0.18 or greater than 0.22.

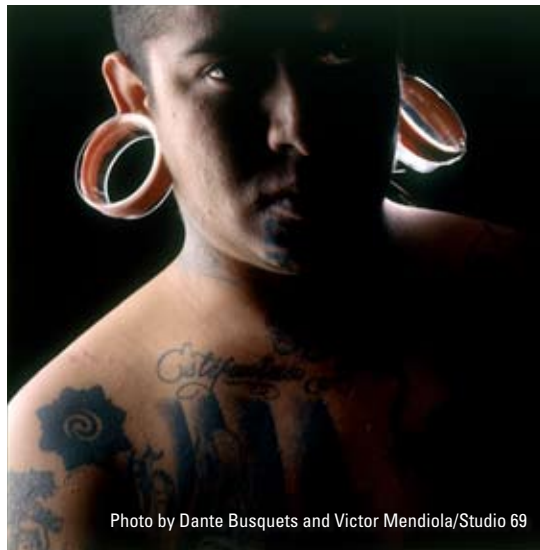


Photo by Dante Busquets and Victor Mendiola/Studio 69

- Glass hardness cannot be measured by the methods and scales (Brinell or Rockwell) used for metals. One of the three other scales is usually used:

- **MOHS:** Scratch hardness. Glasses lie between apatite (5) and quartz (7.) On this scale glasses are softer than (i.e., can be scratched by) sand, hard steel, agate, emery; and are harder than mica, aluminum and copper.

- **Knoop (and Vickers):** Penetration hardness. Typical values for commercial glasses range from 300Kg/mm to 366Kg/mm (Knoop Scale) when a load of 50 grams is used.

- **ZEISS:** Grinding or impact abrasion. Impact abrasion resistance is evaluated by measuring the glass resistance to sandblasting under standard conditions. All values are relative. Unity is assigned to soda-lime plate (standard window glass) and all other values are assigned relative to this standard.

- **Density:** Defined as the mass per unit volume. For glass, density depends upon its composition (primarily) and its thermal treatment (density for a particular glass composition will be greatest when the glass has been stabilized at the lowest practical temperature.) It is measured by one of several buoyancy methods, usually a hydrostatic weighing procedure.

FLAWS AND BREAKABILITY

Glass breaks the way it does due to its lack of ductility, and also because flaws concentrate stress increasing its breakability. Flawed glass under tension will fracture, but glass will not fail without both factors (flaw + tension = fracture.) Glass breaks only under tension, very rarely from compressive or shear forces.

The reason glass breaks more easily when dropped on a porcelain floor rather than a wooden one is because the hard porcelain will scratch or ding the surface of the glass, while the softer wood will not. It is the resulting damage to the surface of the glass that creates the crack initiation site.

These are some of the defects in glass that can reduce its theoretical strength:

- **DEVITRIFICATION** is the process whereby glass becomes partly crystallized as it cools (usually too slowly) from the molten state, and shows as texture or wrinkles on the surface of the glass. Devitrification may also occur on the surface as the

.....

result of unsuccessful annealing or accidental heating to a high temperature.

- **AIR BUBBLES** can be trapped in the glass during manufacturing. Sometimes an air bubble will be stretched, appearing as a thread through the middle of the glass that is sometimes confused as a fracture.
- **SEEDS** are extremely small gaseous inclusions trapped in glass.
- **STONES** are pieces of thermal insulating ceramic material from the glass furnace or other foreign material that have accidentally been mixed into the glass.
- **SCUFFS** are broad abrasions on the glass surface.
- **SCRATCHES** on the surface of the glass act as crack initiation sites and greatly reduce the strength of the glass.
- **THERMAL STRESS** is the flaw most difficult to detect in glass because it is invisible. Thermal stress is caused by uneven cooling in a piece of hot glass. Glass actually expands microscopically when it softens, and shrinks as it cools. If the glass surface cools faster than the core, thermal stress will develop within the object since the glass on the surface is shrinking more rapidly than the core, thus putting it into tension. Glass needs to be annealed in special ovens to equalize the temperatures within the glass as it cools. The rate of expansion and contraction in glass is called the Coefficient of Expansion (COE.) Glasses with different COEs cannot be combined in the same piece because cracking will occur. One advantage with body jewelry is that the pieces are relatively small; therefore there are fewer problems with temperature differentials within the glass. The larger or more complicated the piece, the greater the chance for thermal stress to develop. Although thermal stress is normally invisible to the human eye, stresses can be seen in transparent glass using a special lens called a polariscope.

THE MYTH OF FLAWLESS GLASS

While the goal for any glass jewelry company is to produce flawless jewelry, the reality is very different. Due to the nature of glass manufacture, there is almost always an air bubble, a scratch, or a seed hidden somewhere within the jewelry. It is not cost effective (or necessary) to discard all jewelry with a minor flaw. Easily, 80 percent of the glass would be rejected and the cost of glass jewelry would be greatly inflated (imagine paying \$120 for a flawless pair of glass spirals instead of \$14 for a pair with a small air bubble.) Moreover, glass accumulates flaws during its lifespan in the course of wear and handling. By careful storage and handling, the accumulation of new flaws can be greatly reduced.



Glass being formed into rods using heat and gravity

Quality glass jewelry manufacturers examine the finished products to see what kinds of flaws are in the jewelry, where they are located, and analyze what kind of risk they present to the integrity of the piece. Generally a minor air bubble or seed imbedded in the body of the jewelry can be ignored if it is not an aesthetic concern. A deep scratch or sharp edge caused by a seed on the surface of the glass would be immediately rejected. Some guidelines to what is unacceptable in glass jewelry are:

- NO BURRS OR SHARP EDGES
- NO DEVITRIFICATION
- NO POLISHING COMPOUNDS
- NO FRAX RESIDUE FROM ANNEALING OVENS
- NO COATINGS THAT CAN BE SCRATCHED OR WIPED OFF
- NO SCRATCHES OR NICKS
- NO LEADED GLASS
- GLASS JEWELRY MUST BE PROPERLY ANNEALED

Avoid glass coatings that can be scratched or wiped off, including external dichroic coatings, fumed silver and gold without clear casing, or any number of paint-on enamels and coatings.

GLASS GAUGES

Sizing glass is problematic. Glass rods and tubing are manufactured in two ways. Understanding the manufacturing process will help you to understand the problems encountered when attempting precise sizing in glass jewelry.

The first method of manufacturing is by hand, executed by a team of expert glass workers. Soda-lime glass and colored borosilicate rods are made by “gathering” glass out of a large furnace of molten glass on the end of a steel rod, much like twisting honey around a spoon. When the gob of glass is large enough (usually requiring three or four consecutive gathers in the furnace,) a second artisan attaches another steel rod to the opposite end of the hot glass, which is about the size of a football. Very skillfully, the glass workers wait until the glass is at the right temperature and viscosity and then walk backward away from each other, pulling the mass of glass into a long rod (sometimes as long as 10 meters.) The longer the pull of glass, the thinner the rod. As the glass is stretched out it cools and becomes solid, at which point it can be quickly cut into lengths and put into the annealing oven. This method of pulling hot glass into rods has been in practice for thousands of years, and is the same method being used today.

Hand pulling glass rods in this method presents several challenges for sizing piercing jewelry. If the glass is too hot or less viscous, it sometimes has the tendency to become oval; the glass is still sagging because of gravity as it is being pulled into the rod resulting in the oval shape. Another challenge is that because the glass is hot and the working time (the time it takes for the glass to cool and become solid) of the glass is short, everything has to be done in the moment by eye, with no time for precise measuring. Sorting and measuring the gauges of the glass rods does not happen until the following day when the rods are removed from the annealing ovens. It would not be cost effective for the manufacturer to select only the exact gauge sizes, they would lose the majority of the raw material, and the cost of the finished jewelry would skyrocket as a result. Therefore, there is generally a tolerance of one millimeter in sizing glass jewelry, with stricter tolerances in the smaller gauges. Slightly oval material is also sometimes used. Although it can be frustrating that gauges are not exact, it is also an advantage because in-between and difficult-to-find sizes are thus available.

The second method of producing glass rod and tubing is extruding glass directly out of a furnace. This method is used in the mass production of colorless borosilicate rod and tubing for the scientific industry. Massive furnaces gravity-feed glass out of an opening at the bottom of the furnace and stretch it onto rollers. The rod is formed directly out of the furnace without the additional labor and craftsmanship of an artisan team. Glass rod manufactured in this way has much more consistency in sizing and shape. Rod sizes are usually produced according to the metric system, each size is by millimeter. As a result, most glass piercing jewelry companies measure their jewelry in millimeters, which is much more practical for determining sizes and tolerances. The gauge size is offered as a reference.

CONCLUSION

Glass is an excellent material for body jewelry. Glass is nonorganic, nonporous, odorless, colorful, lightweight and will not freeze in cold environments. Glass is handcrafted and has a unique set of physical characteristics. Glass has some properties of a solid and some properties of a liquid. Glass has been used to make piercing jewelry for at least 3,000 years and is still widely popular today in 2009. It is advised to remove glass jewelry before showering or bathing because the glass may not survive a drop on a porcelain surface. Advise customers to take care of their glass jewelry. Glass jewelry is often most vulnerable when it is not being worn, and should be stored in a safe, dry place.

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Unless credited otherwise, photos by Carlos Franco P



Clay Wanstrath teaching *Bedside Manner*



APP publications at the booth



Kellan Smith and Cassidi Ballou, both from Infinite, volunteering at the APP booth



Luis Garcia teaching *Surface Projects*, while Kellan Smith looks on (in hat, at left)

THE PHILADELPHIA TATTOO ARTS CONVENTION



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

The APP was offered the unique opportunity to participate in the educational offerings at the Philadelphia Tattoo Arts Convention, February 27 to March 1 of this year. This was noteworthy for several reasons: This was the first time the APP has done outreach at a tattoo convention; and secondly, this was the first time—since the APP Annual Conference was held in Florida in 1999—that the organization has offered classes to piercers on the East Coast.

The Convention ran for three days—Friday through Sunday—with recruits from my shop—Infinite Body Piercing—taking shifts and manning the booth, distributing materials and answering questions about the organization. The response to the Association's presence was incredibly encouraging; many wondered why they haven't seen us at these events before.

On Sunday, the APP offered classes aimed specifically at piercers. These—with few exceptions—were variations on basic classes offered at our annual conference in Las Vegas: *Stretching* and *Bedside Manner* were held in the early afternoon, and *Surface Projects* and then *Studio Set-Up* in the evening. In between was scheduled *Internet Marketing*,

with Rachel Larratt (publisher and editor-in-chief of BMEzine.com, and this issue's cover model), and *A Selective History of Contemporary Body Piercing*, by Shawn Porter. (Because of a computer meltdown, Shawn's class was unfortunately cancelled.)

Even without the APP's attendance, this convention took shape as something quite different from the normal tattoo fare: in addition to world-class tattoo artists (and piercers), there were several high-profile scarification artists working on clients at the convention. This expanded demographic was incredibly well-received by the attendees; the convention was *packed*.

Special thanks are due my staff at Infinite Body Piercing for their tireless work to keep the booth manned all weekend, Kellan Smith and Luis Garcia for teaching, Clay Wanstrath, for stepping up to teach by himself at the last minute, Rachel Larratt for the use of her computer for teaching, and Bethra Szumski for making sure everything ran smoothly—all while I was laid up with the worst flu I've had in years. Hopefully, next year I will be able to attend; it sounded like a lot of fun... **P**