

THE POINT

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THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS



CONFERENCE 2009

MODERN PRIMITIVES
TURNS 20 **P.16**



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FROM THE EDITOR



JAMES WEBER

APP President

Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

In late 1999, I went to a book signing by J.K. Rowling at a small, suburban bookstore for the release of the third Harry Potter book, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. As we all waited several hours in line for our quick meeting with the author (she was quite gracious, for those who want to know), we all marveled at the young attendees. There were hundreds of kids there—many were dressed as their favorite characters from the series—all waiting excitedly with their copy of one of the three Harry Potter books they were hoping to get signed.

One image from that day I remember—so vividly, in fact, I wonder if the memory isn't one of a photograph of the event—is of three kids, probably around 10 years old, sitting three-across on a parking stop in the lot next to the bookstore. They were all dressed as characters from the series, and they all had their noses in a copy of the new book, absorbed. Remember: this was two years before the first movie came out. It was a *book* that was making this impression on them, a book that was having such a profound influence. I was amazed at the power this book had.

This is the same way I felt about *Modern Primitives* when it came out.

Any of you who have followed my tenure as editor of *The Point* know I often focus on the place of writing and media as it relates to our industry. Coming of age as a piercer, I was changed by *Modern Primitives*. I read through it repeatedly. I collected *PFIQ* and *Body Play* magazines, hunted down issues of *Body Art* and *Piercing World* from the U.K., and even bought the several issues of *In The Flesh* magazine. Looking back, I see how pivotal these publications were in leading me where I am today.

So at Conference this year, I was especially excited by the presentation from both V. Vale (editor and author) and Charles Gatewood (photographer), the duo responsible for the publication of *Modern Primitives* 20 years ago. This book had a profound influence on our industry that is hard to fully understand unless you were there. (If, like me, you were there, you know what I'm talking about.) Both men have also graciously contributed content for this issue of *The Point*: V. Vale writes about not only *Modern Primitives*, but also his experience at this year's Conference (plus an interview with Danny Yerna). Charles Gatewood contributed several iconic images to this issue, two of which are on pages 16 and 21.

(In case you're wondering about the strategically placed text on these images: *The Point* goes out not only to subscribers, but also to health care professionals and legislators on our mailing list, in addition to being sent through international mail. This forces us to be mostly "penis-free" in our print version. If you want to see the full images, an online search will undoubtedly lead you to them. Or better yet, buy your own copy of *Modern Primitives*, or go to charlesgatewood.com to purchase prints.)

Conference this year also saw the official release of Elayne Angel's new book, *The Piercing Bible*, which can be ordered—signed—directly from the APP office. (See the ad on page 25.) But the biggest news from the APP in (digital) publishing was announced at this year's Members' Meeting: the new APP Web site is now live. After literally years of false starts, oversight responsibilities passed from one Board member to the next, and developers and designers hired and fired, we finally have the (almost) finished product up and running at safepiercing.org. In addition to all of the content from the old site organized with new navigation and a new look, we are busily working on many new improvements as well. And while we all knew this job was a huge one, just how big it was is only now becoming all too obvious.

So to all the members: thank you for your patience while we get all of the bugs worked out of the members' listings and searches. For everyone else: keep checking in on the site as we slowly drag the APP publications into a new era.

The APP publishes a lot of material: in addition to *The Point* and articles written for publication elsewhere, we have our brochures (seven titles currently, with more on the way) and Spanish translations of these brochures (six total) that are constantly being updated and revised. We have the procedure manual (almost 100 pages of information) and now our even-more-expansive Web site.

And while part of the huge impact of *Modern Primitives* was that it was so much a product of its time (and that time will not ever be repeated), it is still my hope that the APP can—and does—publish writing that for someone, somewhere, gives an introduction to another world, another way of being. Writing that not only educates on health and safety, but on something bigger than all of us. Just once in a lifetime, it might have the power of a book like *Harry Potter* had on those 10-year-olds, or *Modern Primitives* had on that impressionable 19-year-old who had just discovered piercing. I hope so.

Welcome to issue #48 of *The Point: The Journal of the Association of Professional Piercers*. **P**

In our article about the APP involvement at the Philadelphia Tattoo Convention in last issue, we unfortunately neglected to thank the two people responsible for organizing the convention and inviting us to teach. Troy Timpel and Jared Anderson, thank you.

THE POINT

THE QUARTERLY JOURNAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL PIERCERS

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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



JAMES WEBER

APP President

Infinite Body Piercing, Inc.
Philadelphia, PA

One of the best things about serving as President of the APP Board is being able to present the APP President's Award. Since 1999, this award has been given annually to those whose accomplishments have positively impacted the field of professional piercing, the APP, or both. The choice of recipient for each year is solely the prerogative of the incumbent APP President, and the award is given out at the banquet dinner at the annual APP Conference.

In 2003, in issue #26 of The Point, then-President Bethra Szumski did an article on the President's Award recipients up to that time. This President's Corner begins where that one left off—and ends with this year's recipient. Many thanks to Bethra for penning the merits of the recipients during her term, along with the sections for Elayne Angel and Paul King.



2004 Sean Christian

Presented by Bethra Szumski

Sean became involved with the piercing community in the early 90s. He worked with Alternative Accessories (a wholesale jewelry company), Sub-q, as a piercer, and then Revolution Body Jewelry. While an owner-operator at Revolution, Sean did a great deal of work disseminating information about 316LVM and ASTM standards. His outreach continued once he moved on, in the late 90s, to work at Anatometal. Sean was and still is an incredibly skilled networker. He not only promoted stronger relationships between himself and his colleagues but he also brought people together for the greater good. His efforts brought much of the sense of community that has been crucial to the continued survival of the APP and the industry as a whole. He no longer has an active role in the profession but maintains Patron membership and attends the Annual Conference.



2005 Shannon Larratt

Presented by Bethra Szumski

Shannon, an accomplished programmer, avid enthusiast and then-owner of BMEzine.com was presented the award due to his incredibly long-standing—if sometimes controversial—influence on the piercing community. Shannon presented an unflinching look at body modification from simple to extreme. His contribution to the world of body art has earned him a prominent, permanent place in its history. For information about what Shannon is working on visit www.zentastic.com.

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD: Michaela Grey

Presented by Bethra Szumski

Michaela Grey is a Gauntlet Master Piercer who is credited with founding the APP. During her time with *The Gauntlet*, among other things, she assisted with the *PFIQ* magazine, led training seminars and organized a political action group in order to address pending legislation in the State of California. She was one of the visionaries that steered and developed the political action group with a single legislative focus toward what we now know as the APP. Her work to secure the stability of the organization in the early days was critical to its survival. Piercers have had the opportunity to speak up about the regulations that govern them worldwide as the result of her efforts. For information about what she is working on now visit www.michaelagrey.com



2006 Elayne Angel

Presented by Alicia Cardenas

Elayne is arguably the best-known female piercer in the world and is credited with popularizing many piercings now done daily worldwide. She began working at Gauntlet when it was the first Body Piercing specialty studio in the U.S. She received her Master Piercer Certificate from Gauntlet founder Jim Ward in 1992; it was the first ever to be issued. She went on to found Rings of Desire in New Orleans, Louisiana. She has served two full terms on the APP Board of Directors and is now serving a third. She has taught countless seminars, edited and written for *The Point* and provided countless brilliantly drafted letters to legislators and health care providers. Most recently she has authored *The Piercing Bible*. Her piercing studio has closed, but current information about Elayne is available on www.piercingbible.com.



2007 Paul King

Presented by Alicia Cardenas

Paul King, a Body Piercer since 1991, served his apprenticeship at Gauntlet under Elayne Angel and worked in all three former Gauntlet locations. Jim Ward, founder of Gauntlet, awarded him the title of Master Piercer. He apprenticed many piercers for Gauntlet as well as co-taught Gauntlet Training seminars. In 1999 Paul King partnered to create Cold Steel America. He served a full term on the APP Board of Directors and now serves in an appointed position of Treasurer for the organization. He is an avid traveler, collector and layman anthropologist. He has taught extensively at conferences worldwide, written many articles for *The Point* and compiled a documentary *Rituals of life: The Phuket Vegetarian Festival*. His professional ethics and integrity have been key in the financial health of the APP.



2008

Fakir Musafar

*Presented by
Alicia Cardenas*

A self-professed
shaman, artist,
master piercer

and body modifier, Fakir Musafar has played a crucial role in modern body piercing, branding, and other body modification practices. Along with Jim Ward, he is one of the originators of what we think of as body piercing, developing many of the piercing techniques that are currently used today.

Throughout his long career, he has been most closely associated with the term “Modern Primitive,” through his work to bring the performing of rituals from “primitive” cultures into a modern context. The most memorable of these was the Sun Dance ceremony, featured in the 1985 documentary *Dances Sacred and Profane*.

He has extensively documented not only his own practices but those of the larger body modification community, beginning with his early experiments as a teenager, through his contribution to *PFIQ* and his interviews in the 1989 book *Modern Primitives*, up to his publishing of *Body Play* magazine from 1992 to 1999. His early photographs have shaped much of the self-image of modern piercing, and his views of our role as body modification artists in the larger world continue to influence what we do, and what we feel is our place in the culture.

For almost two decades, he has overseen the Fakir Body Piercing and Branding Intensives in San Francisco, training the industry's next generation of body piercers and branding artists.



2009

Raelyn Gallina - *Presented by James Weber*

The following is the text of the speech I gave at this year's banquet dinner:

“I would like to say this year's APP President's Award recipient needs no introduction. I would like to say this—but unfortunately, I can't. I hope to start to change this, tonight.

“The accepted history of body piercing in this country is usually spoken of—and written—as one with two fathers (and a paternal grandfather in Doug Malloy): Jim Ward, as the man to take it from the gay male leather underground in San Francisco and inch it toward the mainstream with the founding of both Gauntlet and *PFIQ* magazine; and Fakir, as the one to champion the role of ritual in piercing and its origins in earlier cultures.

“While our industry would not exist—at least in the form it is in today—without their contributions, there was another figure—working a little later, but following a similar path—who was just as influential in shaping piercing in a different community: among women.

“And this is women with a ‘y’” Womyn who took body modification—not just piercing, but branding and scarification as well—and made it part of their lives. At a time when feminists were leading the movement to politicize the body, she was creating a safe space for lesbians, leatherwomen, butches, femmes, the queer-identified, and the occasional man as well; men like me.

“She was a pioneer in piercing, branding, and scarification, and even one of the early organizers of the APP, and without her influence I would not be here today. It is a great honor to give this year's President's Award to Raelyn Gallina.” **P**

IN THE OFFICE



CAITLIN McDIARMID
APP Administrator

Another Conference has passed and here I sit in my office. I sit and I think about this year's volunteers. Our volunteers this year were exceptional. Hell, words fail me. They went above and beyond the call of duty on all tasks assigned. They were friendly and smiling (sometimes even singing) no matter how tired (or at times hung-over). They stood firm on enforcing rules, for which I am proud of them; it is one of the most difficult parts of the job. They backed each other up, they showed up for their shifts, and they were patient with their boss. They came to me in the middle of the night and in the wee hours of the morning to volunteer to help with my ever-present workload. They let me vent in front of them, they let me cry, and they kept me sane. They kept me fed, and most importantly, they helped to deliver the most successful and joyous Conference I have had the pleasure of experiencing.

It wasn't easy for them. Before, during, and after Conference, I listened to them share their own stories of struggle. They talked about what it took to get there – their personal paths different – their desires much the same. They talked about what they learned and how they discovered there was so much more to learn. They met their heroes in the industry and realized how many heroes are in the shadows unseen and unheard, until you find them at Conference. They talked about how people influenced their piercing experiences, their emotions, and their lives – sometimes even their desire to live.

The volunteers of the 2009 Conference are listed below, and we thank them from the bottom of our hearts for their dedication to this Association and our industry. I hope this year smiles upon all of them and that they remain in our volunteer family for a long, long time.

Tiana McGuire
Sonya Adams
Ryan Ouellette
(and his mentor
team)
Gus Diamond
Pierre Rogers
David Kelso
Damian Valdez
Tye B.
Jake Bradley
Samantha
Matthews
Noel Ullery
Molly Callahan
Dusty Massey
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Casey Kutilek
Dominic Klumpe
Anna York
Sarah Wooten
Warren Hiller
Ricardo Hernandez
Autumn Spinks
Mark Montgomery
Darrin Walters
Kathy Norton
Jon Ho
Terry Schwartz
"the Rabbi"
Tyson Charboneau
Nate Sexstella

Larren Adams
Rick
Spider
Random Table/
Bulletin Board
carriers
and, of course,
the APP Board of
Directors:
James Weber
Bethra Szumski
Didier Suarez
Eric "Sque3z"
Anderson
Danny Yerna
Elayne Angel
Ed Chavarria

To anyone I have forgotten: know that you were fully appreciated in the moment and are thanked now, even though my brain has temporarily lost you....

And on a personal note – I will take this opportunity to thank the two men in my life, without whom I would never make it through the Conference experience: Todd Love and Paul King. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[Editor's Note: While Caitlin has always been good at thanking the multitude of volunteers, the rest of the Board is often not so timely in returning the sentiment. It's true that Caitlin—as the APP's only full-time employee—is doing what she was hired to do, but her work around Conference is not "just" a job. Her long hours, her amazing skill at organizing both tasks and people, and her unwavering dedication to the organization are a large part of what makes this event possible every year. On behalf of the Board: thank you, Caitlin.] P

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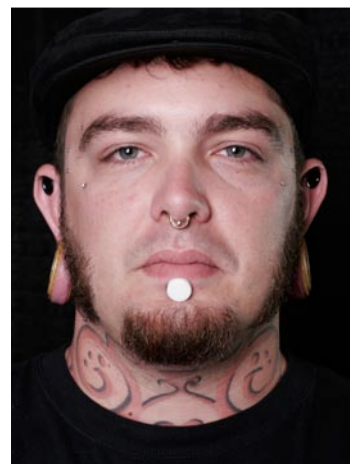
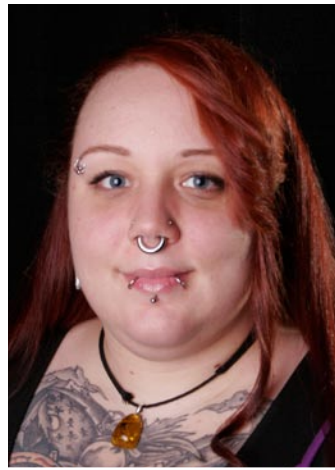
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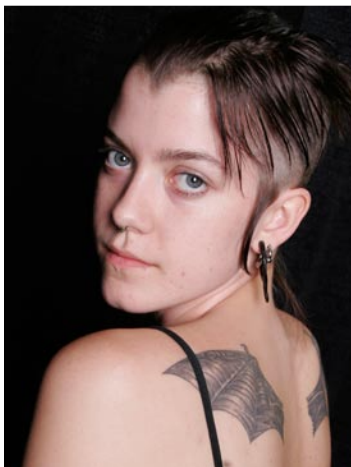
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LAS VEGAS CONFERENCE 2009

Conference portraits by Sean Hartgrove







APP 2009 CONFERENCE REVIEW



ELAYNE ANGEL
Medical Liaison
Yucatan, Mexico

This year's APP Conference and Expo was a huge hit thanks, in part, to a return to the Tropicana Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, the site of our first APP Conference in 1996! The change of venue was clearly welcome after six years at the Riviera Hotel. The event took place May 3-8, and some of the meeting rooms we occupied were the exact locations where we met well over a decade ago. Positive comments about the Tropicana were plentiful; attendees appreciated its convenient features, reasonable prices, extraordinary pool and Jacuzzi areas, and friendly staff. A number of returning piercers remarked that it was the best APP Conference ever!

It was an incredibly full week, but the vibe throughout was so positive that some people seemed to be energized by the end if it, instead of depleted.

Registration and check-in began on Sunday night, and the first social event took place that evening as well: a meet-and-greet party for APP members, Expo vendors, and the always-important Conference volunteers. The party was held in a unique, roomy hotel suite, and sumptuous food was brought in from a local Indian restaurant. There were spicy dishes for vegans and carnivores alike. It was a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere for the members and those who were working at Conference to meet, chat, eat, and enjoy.

Monday morning kicked off with a free yoga class (which was held daily throughout the Conference). The change of venue made registration a little confusing at first, but everything sorted out and all parties were eventually assisted. As always, an orientation was held and we were amazed and delighted to see that this year's

Conference had many, many first-timers in attendance.

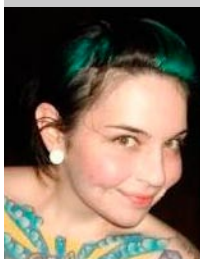
The opening-night party Monday night was a huge splash; it was held outdoors at the poolside. Some partiers enjoyed swimming and cooing off in the water while others sat at tables and dined on the food that was provided. The weather was delightful and the party was clearly a hit, as a number of party-goers overstayed the scheduled event time (from 8 p.m. to midnight) to continue conversations with friends old and new. I can't recall an opening party that had so many people clearly enjoying themselves as much, or one that took place in a location with such a pleasant vibe. It was a superb party that set the upbeat tone for the rest of the Conference.

Throughout the week classes and roundtable discussions took place from morning until evening; certain popular subjects were offered twice, to increase the opportunities to attend. Any rumors that Conference has been shrinking were shattered by the latest statistics: we had an almost 25 percent increase in class attendance over last year and 50 more attendees received seminar certificates. Conference-goers are focusing more on the educational offerings than ever before.

For the first time in APP history, body art industry veteran Steve Haworth joined the growing pool of Conference speakers and shared some of his specialized knowledge and expertise with our members. This year, there were numerous other new instructors who taught classes and facilitated roundtables: Dan Natkiel, D.O., Dana Dinius, Maria Tash, Meagan Barber, Michael Kolar, Rachel Larratt, Valko Sichel, Rick Frueh, Terry LeRoi, Peter Lozada, Autumn Swisher, Ben Overton, Kevin Jump, Julia Grow, Joshua Bryant, and Nick Wolack all did admirable jobs as first-time instructors. Great job everyone!

The APP Members' Meeting had a very welcome added feature: lunch was provided by the organization. A highlight of the meeting was the launch of the newly re-designed APP Web site.

More than 55 vendors displayed goods and promoted services



SAMANTHA MATTHEWS

Al D. Scholar
Absolute Ink
Murfreesboro, TN

I can remember when I started working on my application for the Al D. Scholarship like it was yesterday.

I stressed and slaved away on it for days and days. When I received the call saying that I had been awarded the Scholarship, I was so excited that I almost cried. At the first meeting between the Board and volunteers, I was overwhelmed with being around so many talented, passionate people. I knew this week would be memorable in so many ways. I also knew it would be hard work, but I couldn't have been more grateful to have this opportunity.

The APP Conference is amazing because it doesn't matter where you are from, what shop you work at, or how long you have been piercing - everyone wants to share ideas, network, and have fun. The classes were one of the main reasons I wanted to attend Conference - and they offered so much insightful information.

Volunteering made my experience even better. I had a chance to see how Conference is put together. I've always loved volunteering, and being able to help with a group of people that I feel so connected to enhanced this feeling. I learned things that I will carry with me every day, and met people that I know I will never forget. **P**

on the Exposition floor, which opened Tuesday afternoon with a one-hour preview reserved for APP members. The Expo at the Tropicana was held in a larger space than at the prior venue, giving a comfortable, open feel to the floor. Vendors reported that in spite of the state of the general economy and the full schedule of class offerings, the Expo was a successful venture.

An exciting new feature this year at the Expo was an Innovator's Award. See the cover photo, and the article about this on page 11.

As part of the celebration of the 20-year anniversary of the book *Modern Primitives*, *Re/Search* co-founder V. Vale and photographer Charles Gatewood were in attendance to share audio/visual presentations and discussions. Mr. Gatewood was also on hand to host a screening of the 1985 movie, "Dances Sacred and Profane," which was shown on Wednesday night.

On Thursday the International meeting was held and it turned out to be extremely well attended: there were 86 non-U.S. piercers which is far more than we've ever hosted at any prior APP Conference. In keeping with our expanded international flavor, there was another new addition to Conference this year: several classes were taught in Spanish. See article on page 11.

We happily returned to the poolside for the banquet dinner on Thursday evening, this time in formal finery. The food was delicious, the weather was perfect, and the company was superb. A salsa band provided the upbeat musical entertainment, and some

of our group got up to dance to the Latin beat. Brief presentations were provided by Board Members and the APP Administrator, then the generous grand prizes for the raffle were drawn.

On Friday, the final classes were held and the Expo came to a close in the afternoon. It was an incredibly full week, but the vibe throughout was so positive that some people seemed to be energized by the end if it, instead of depleted.

Putting on a Conference and Expo of this scale is a huge amount of work, and tremendous thanks go out to all of our hard-working volunteers (including the Board Members), and also the APP Administrator, Caitlin McDiarmid. Without her capable guidance, extraordinary organizational skills, and unwavering work ethic, the Conference simply wouldn't be the same.

The APP is also deeply appreciative to all of the vendors who so generously supported the organization by donating raffle prizes and through their sponsorship of the opening party, banquet dinner, food and beverage service in the Expo, and the Al D. scholars. Thanks to each and every individual and company who had a part in making the 2009 APP Conference a huge success.

Top Five Companies for Raffle donation:

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Body Circle Designs
H2Ocean

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Anatometal
Industrial Strength Body Jewelry
LeRoi, Inc.

Level Two: Opening Party

Tawapa/Wildcard
Care-Tech Laboratories
Safe Products
Anatometal

Level Three: Exposition Food and Beverage

Gorilla Glass

Level Four: Al D. Scholarship

Reign Custom Designs/ Maya Organic Body Jewelry
Glasswear Studios
SM 316
Wildcat USA
Venus by Maria Tash

Honorable Mention

NeoMetal, Inc.

We look forward to seeing you next year and in the years to follow! **P**

INNOVATOR'S AWARD

The Exposition at the 2009 Conference saw the introduction of the first APP Innovator's Award for jewelry design. Vendors submitted jewelry for display in a large case near the APP booth, and voting was done via ballot by the attendees at the Exposition. The entire collection of items submitted were then raffled as the top raffle prize of the year at the Banquet Dinner.

The definition of "Innovator" was purposely left open to interpretation, and the submissions were diverse. While there were many notable entries—glass tapers, plastic polymer surface anchors, and art-deco glass plugs, to name just a few—this year's winner was an amazing mixture of idea and craftsmanship. The jewelry can be seen on this issue's cover. Below, Phoebe Minona Durland, from Tawapa, writes about her inspiration for the piece.

Inspiration is one of the greatest keys to happiness in life. In life in general, I am grateful that the business I am in not only allows for, but inspires and challenges me to be constantly creative. Tawapa has provided me with an outlet for that constant creativity. I am always thinking of new designs and materials for jewelry: wearable, sell-able jewelry. Although creative, I am still making a product for a business.

I started Tawapa in 1996. Since then, Jenella and I, along with the rest of the beautiful ladies who have joined us, have come a long way. I started my own carving workshop a couple of years after Tawapa's inception. The long relationship I have had with my carvers has been infinitely rewarding and mutually beneficial. I am proud of the quality and craftsmanship that we have been able to refine over the years. I have been producing jewelry in silver and gold as well for many years with various silversmiths and metal masters. However, this year, I built my first-ever silver workshop. It has been quite a project and sometimes slow going, yet it has expanded the creative possibilities so much to actually be working in my own shop. Despite obvious trials and tribulations with a new project like this, it has given me great pleasure and new creative possibilities.

The Innovator's Award challenge gave me an opportunity to create art for art's sake, something I do not often associate with business. It was very inspiring to think that I could do absolutely anything, function and saleability aside. In considering materials, I decided to use the valuable resources that I have: the marriage of carving with precious metals.

How the bird cage design materialized is fairly random. I have been creating a lot of birds lately - one of my current points of inspiration. Incidentally, I have a friend in jail in Bali in the silver jewelry business, whom I was visiting quite often in the months before APP [Conference]. It was intense to visit the jail and I was thinking a lot about imprisonment. Freedom. Prisons. Cages. So I decided to do the bird cages, with doors that open. There are birds flying below the cages, and the bird inside has the freedom to come and go. Originally I planned to put bars on the back of the plugs, but opted to leave the back open. The bird is not actually caged. It is only an illusion from the front.

I drew the designs and then worked with a master silversmith as well as my carvers to create the pieces. The birds are horn and mammoth. I could delve further into the symbolism here, but that is left up to the viewer. The black and white contrast of the birds is more visual than symbolic. The cages themselves were silver at first. But when I saw them in their finished state, I knew they needed to be gold. It was an aesthetic choice, and I wanted them to be precious. There is something ironic about the concept of gold cages - beautiful prisons - more symbolism if the viewer so chooses.

Another important component to this project and challenge was to make art for art's sake, something that I knew I would not keep, but give away. The idea of impermanence, of not being attached to objects - to something that I poured myself into, without regard for cost. This is an important practice that could be transferred to other aspects of life. Almost the opposite mentality to the business mind. I like it.

Although I knew I would not hold on to the earrings, I wanted them to be documented and was very happy that the APP photographer was able to do so.

I really enjoyed this project. I hope to continue to be challenged and to challenge myself in this way. I think it is important to bring this kind of focus to our industry, which has been inundated with replicas and mass production; to recognize art, jewelry, and business, and where they can all happily meet. It is a reminder that we, the jewelry designers in the piercing industry, are artists and craftsmen - innovators.

I am inspired to carry these sentiments into the future of Tawapa; to continue to rise to the challenge of new and innovative design. **P**



THE APP IS INTERNATIONAL



DANNY YERNA
International Outreach Coordinator
Wakantanka
Mexico City, Mexico

The 14th annual APP Conference was a great success, with its many classes, (lots of them new), roundtable discussions, teachers, and guests. The ambience at the new venue was wonderful, and almost 1,000 piercers from around the world showed up at the Tropicana Hotel & Casino.

One amazing aspect is that we are continuing to see the piercing industry experiencing growth. Every year there are more new attendees hungry to take classes. And as the International Outreach Coordinator, I am extremely proud to say that this year (even with the global economic crisis, H1N1 flu, and so on) has the absolute record for international attendees.

We had piercers from all over the world: a total of 86 non-U.S. piercers showed up from countries including Australia, Afghanistan, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Holland, New Zealand, Norway, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Thailand, and the U.K.! This is clear evidence that the APP is becoming more and more international. Another amazing accomplishment is that the APTPI, the Italian Association of Professional Piercers, and BMXnet, the German Association of Body Modification are now new Associate Corporate members of the APP.

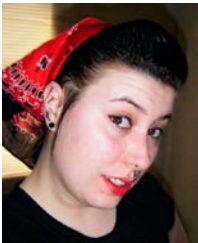
As you might imagine, this year's International meeting was packed

with piercers from all over the world. The language barrier was not an issue, and almost everyone had something to contribute. Bruno from Italy, Stephan from Germany, Jon from France, Muffe from Denmark, Lori from Australia, Lea from Slovenia, Mariona from Spain, and others shared about what is going on with piercing in their part of the world. We discussed legislation issues in each of those countries, the use of piercing guns, misuse of the APP logo, and impostors. We heard that similar problems seem to arise everywhere around the globe. We also spoke about how everyone is networking and helping with education of piercers and legislators. We had a lot to share and to learn from each other. It was amazing to see the efforts that all of these individuals are making in their home countries to make piercing better for everyone.

For international piercers or travelers, check out these events:

- APTPI Conference in Livorno, Italy
(September, 13-15, 2009)
- BMXnet Conference in Essen, Germany
(October 2-4, 2009)
- APP Seminars in Mexico City, Mexico
(October 6-10, 2009) **P**

A PROGRESSION OF PASSION



JEZEBEL VOULÉ
Sugar Daddy's Tattoo
Amarillo, TX

I have always tried to follow my dreams. I live by the view that there is no other option but to follow one's dreams. I believe in the magic of the world and that the world conspires to give us our hearts' desire when it is a part of our destiny.

About a year ago I was pushing my boyfriend to be a piercer in a studio that was in need of a new piercer. About that time, he took a job offer at his tattoo artist's shop. I realized the reason I was pushing so hard to get my dude in a shop was that I was vicariously living my dream through him. So I put my fear of being an under-qualified person wanting to join the piercing field to the side and asked for the chance to prove myself, even though I had no past experience. He said he would be willing as long as my boyfriend was willing to teach me.

I didn't really have the training that I would have desired under different circumstances, but this was an opportunity I knew I

needed to jump at. From where I stood it was my destiny and one can not be picky on how an opportunity presents itself. Once I had a taste of piercing, it became a passion and I soon realized I didn't want to stop at adorning people with jewelry. I want to explore the world of body modification, suspension, and that which has yet to be dreamed of.

My shop is not a high-traffic shop. It gives me time to study but not enough income to sustain life. But it's a small price to pay to fulfill my dream. I stumbled across the APP Web site in July 2008, in my quest to be better in my field and expand my limited knowledge. When I first spoke of the APP, the shop showed very little interest. I felt like I stood alone in my passion. After reading about the APP Conference I knew that I had to attend. I started to try to get myself out of debt and began cutting away luxuries like electricity. By December, it was clear that if I didn't get the Al D.



Scholarship, I would not be able to go.

I took great care in picking out my references. My goal was to show all sides of me. I chose my mum because who could give a better character background than her? I chose a friend that had enough faith in me to be my pin cushion in the beginning and later had a mini-falling out with, which gave her an opportunity to say what she really felt without being biased. I also chose a customer who knew only my professional side, and an ex-boss who could give an accurate description of my work ethic. I wanted to show my flaws as well as strengths in my application. I was very confident that I would get the Scholarship up until the phone interview. On the phone I stumbled on my words and felt I didn't bring anything new to the table compared to my application. So when I received the news that I was awarded the Scholarship, I danced and gloated.

By the time I reached Las Vegas, I had been in contact with several other Al D. Scholars and the first night was meant for me to put faces to the e-mails so that I didn't feel so alone. I had a late dinner with my closest friend among strangers and upon our return to the Tropicana we passed a group of people who surely were there for Conference. They stared at us and we stared back, giving a nod of acknowledgment. It then dawned on me that if I wasn't willing to meet strangers then all the work I did to get there was for naught. We turned around and introduced ourselves. I was surprised to find how oddly familiar they were. My fear of not fitting in diminished and I felt like I was among friends whom I had known for years. I felt that I was where I needed to be. The end of the night brought a new anxiety that I was out of my league after meeting about 20 people who are well established in all my fields of interest. I calmed down when I realized that the major difference between us was location and more importantly time.

The first day blew my mind. The Piercing and Documentation class left me scared (as it should have) and I realized that if I walked away with even a tenth of the information given I would be a better piercer for it. I automatically cut back on my drinking and became more aware of the time (a feat within itself for Vegas) so I could force myself to sleep. I also became aware of my need to feed, although it's amazingly easy to get consumed by Conference and forget one's personal needs.

I spent the week in a constant state of déjà vu, which I took as a good omen. It's said you recognize people who have information

for you, despite them being strangers. The week did not prove that theory wrong. I learned various techniques that I'm hoping to be able to practice sooner than later. I took classes like ritualized modification - that captivated me and made me proud that I am enabling a movement with such rich history. I took various classes on anatomy that made me feel more confident in my practice. I learned techniques that will make my life and my clients' lives easier. And I became increasingly excited when I learned of something I had already adopted on my own accord.

When I had a spare moment, I hit up the session on suspension, since a part of my future lies in it, and took part in the portfolio roundtable that continued long after the meeting time had ended. I went to a class about lifetime careers in piercing that I felt would have been more beneficial as a roundtable. Every class I attended had some information to offer so I didn't regret going to one of them. It renewed my need for knowledge.

I met people I know I will have in my life for years to come, and the possibilities of my future seem much brighter now. I recognize that I need to improve my work to be the best and that my biggest obstacle will be convincing my boss to get my shop up to better working standards.

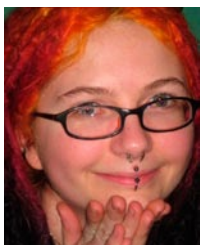
When I left Conference I was extremely happy with the confirmation that body modification is the future I want to be a part of. Upon my arrival home, as I waited for my ride to pick me up I couldn't help but weep. I wept because I was happy to know what I accomplished in a week's time and what I will do in the future. I also wept because after being surrounded by people who love their work as much as I do, I felt once more alone in my passion, fighting an uphill battle with a squeegee instead of a sword. When there is a world of possibilities sometimes it's easy to see that the place you're at is not your destiny but a bridge to get there.

I strongly urge anyone who is thinking about going for the first time to do so. You give so much back to your piercing community by volunteering at Conference. You get to see the community that should be prevalent within our field, but isn't always as open as it should be.

It's been about a week since I left Conference. I did my first freehand piercing using tips I learned at Conference. I've learned even more that I feel silly for not knowing sooner, and have focused on self improvement above all else. **P**



NEW KIND OF FAMILY



NOEL ULLERY

Marvel Tattoo
South Bend, IN

The first night I arrived in Las Vegas I was lonely, anxious, and I really just wanted the week to hurry up and be over so I could get back home to my calm, easy routine of piercing, working out, and eating lots of vegan yum-yums. But I wanted to soak up all the knowledge that I was hoping to gain, and I wanted to meet all my fellow piercers. I thrive on habit, I guess, and when I get picked up and dropped into unfamiliarity, I find myself slipping into a bit of a panic.

My panic subsided quicker than I thought it would. The following morning, I was in a room full of interesting-looking people – people oozing with confidence and excitement. Well, maybe not the other scholars. I think we were all nervous and withdrawn. I curled my legs beneath me, listened to what everyone was saying, and decided that this really was going to be a very, very long week.

I found the days starting to melt together. Sleep time was entirely too short, yum-yums were hard to find, and I was absolutely overwhelmed by what was happening around me.

This is a true community. I've never felt so accepted, and for once,

I wasn't the person that everyone else gawked at for looking different. I didn't know anyone there – except for the other volunteers of course – but that didn't matter. Smiles, waves, and even hugs erupted everywhere. People wanted to know me, and I wanted to know them even more. Conference was an entirely new world, and I felt so lucky to be a part of it.

I went to the APP Conference with two goals. One was to network (specifically, I wanted to meet Steve Haworth and Elayne Angel) and the second was to learn more about freehand piercing. I definitely met both of my goals and even more – blew them out of the water. I met so many amazing people – a lovely vegan troupe, a talented Australian scarification artist, and a traveling piercer brimming with stories to tell – just to name a few. I have acquaintances all over the United States now, and I hope to do some visiting later on this summer.

The knowledge to be gained at Conference is an overwhelming maelstrom. It swept me up, spun me around, and made me

WHAT IS THE AL D. SCHOLARSHIP?

Before he passed away in February of 2001, Al D. Sowers devoted much of his piercing career to the education of piercers. In recognition of his contribution, a scholarship program was established in his name.

The recipients of the scholarship make up the core of the volunteer staff at the APP Conference. Without this core group, the APP would not be able hold Conference. The funds for these Scholarships largely comes from Vendor Sponsorship.

Scholarships are given to 6-8 piercers in need of financial assistance to attend the APP Conference. Accommodations and Conference registration are included in the Scholarship. Applicants must be in a well-established active apprenticeship, or be working as a piercer.

Applications for the scholarship will be accepted starting January 1, 2010. You may request the 2010 application starting in November/December of 2009. Deadline for submission is February 1, 2010. Scholarship recipients will be notified by March 1, 2010. Have questions? Contact Caitlin at info@safepiercing.org or 888-888-1277. **P**

question aspects of piercing that had become second nature to me. I've been trying to perfect my freehand technique, but after talking to Elayne Angel, and hearing Sque3z pipe up with "Don't be sad! I use forceps!" - I began to rethink exactly why I decided to use freehand techniques. I realized that I started freehanding because in my mind, "freehand" was synonymous with "good piercer." But now I'm not so sure. Elayne Angel uses forceps, and she is among the best in the industry. Now I've concluded that it's really not so safe to use freehand techniques on certain piercings. I'll always use forceps on tongues (what if the client decides to try to swallow?), or on any oral piercings for that matter. But I'll continue freehanding the majority of other piercings, so long as it's completely safe for both the client, and myself. Hail to the glass receiving tube! (which I bought about 10 of at Conference).

By mid-week, I surprised myself. I didn't want to talk to anyone back home. I was happy in my new community, and I found myself dreading the day that everything would be over, and I would be heading back home. But by the end of it, my body and mind were completely exhausted; all I wanted to do was sleep. And I was afraid of what all those vegan donuts were doing to my body. I regret that I was too exhausted to say all the goodbyes that I wanted to, but I like to think that everyone understood. Besides, by the end of it, we were all family. Families don't need to act, they simply know - and love. **P**

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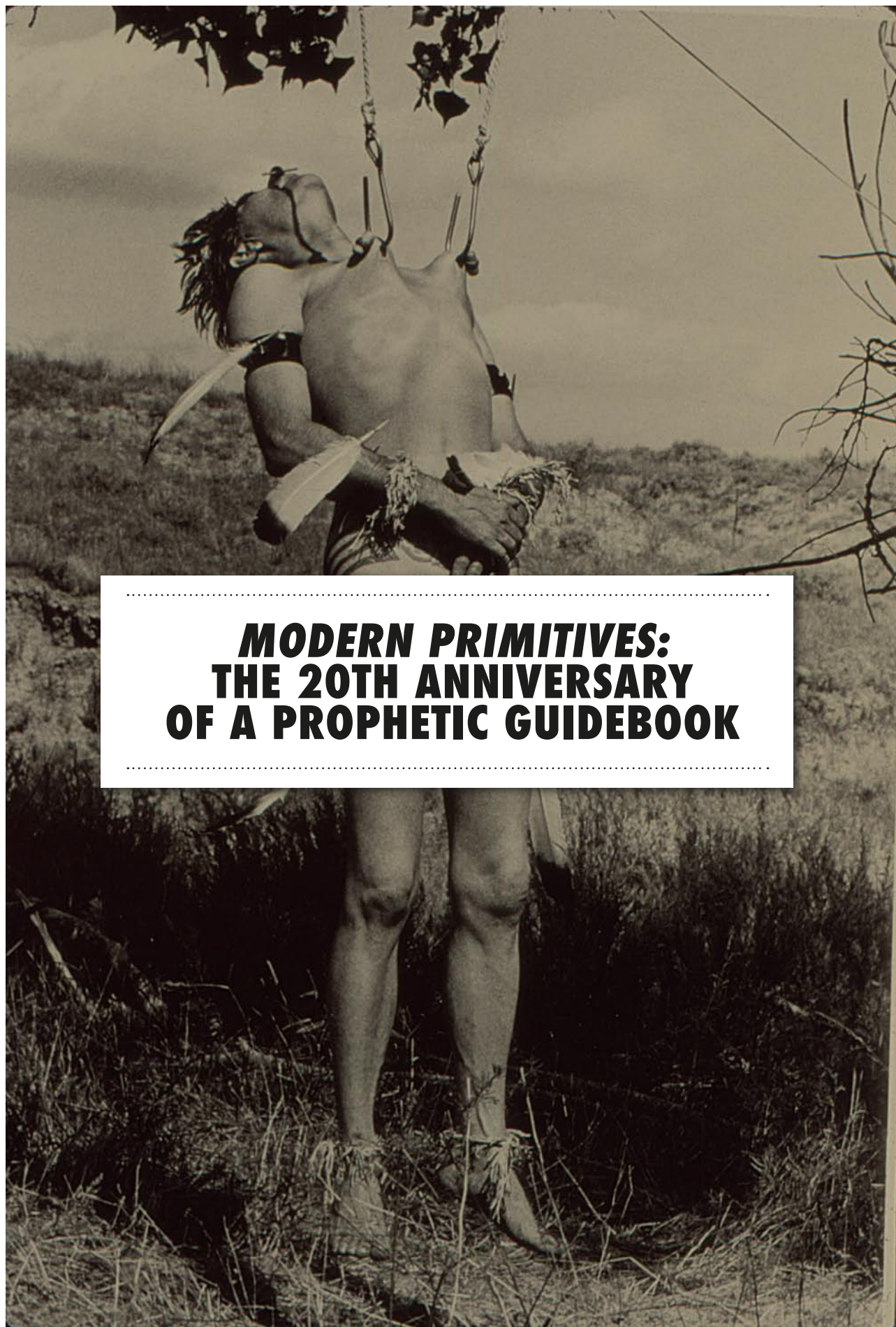
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**MODERN PRIMITIVES:
THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY
OF A PROPHETIC GUIDEBOOK**



V. VALE

ReSearch Publications
researchpubs.com

I was very pleased that the Association of Professional Piercers recognized 2009 as the 20th Anniversary of the RE/Search *Modern Primitives* book, which some believe introduced body piercing to the mainstream (as well as “tribal” and more extreme manifestations of the ancient art of tattoo).

The 2009 APP Conference in Las Vegas was certainly one of the most rewarding events I’ve ever attended, what with the exceptionally “colorful” spectrum of visiting artists from all over the planet. “Imagine... a whole world of weirdos,” read a 1977 punk rock cartoon on a 45 record sleeve. There is definitely a kind of collective strength in numbers, especially when a thousand body artists are congregated in one large hotel, meeting and communicating in mutual aid and support. I was very impressed by the professional way Conference was run and managed, down to the nth detail - details matter.

Now, I owe the initial catalytic spark for the *Modern Primitives* book to Charles Gatewood, who back in 1982 introduced me to Fakir Musafar at a local Chinese restaurant - a meeting I tape-recorded, fortunately. Fakir was the iconic archetype of a seeker who experiments with virtually every possible way to beautify, adorn, and modify the human body without surgery, medical doctors, or a hospital being involved. However, a larger goal of Fakir’s involved seeking enlightenment, revelation, and transcendence over the normal limits and boundaries of conventional human consciousness.

I immediately got the idea to do an encyclopedic book at least mentioning every known and possible historical body modification toward beautification and pleasure. As Fakir was an advertising executive whose memes and images influence future behaviors, I immediately thought of calling the project *Modern Primitives* - and, being a fan of native and outsider art, I already owned two different art books titled *Modern Primitives*. So the title seemed appropriate for a new (or rather, revived) artistic territory and canvas: the human body.

When doing a quasi-anthropological interview project such as *Modern Primitives*, one person leads you to another, and so on. Fakir introduced me to pioneer piercer Jim Ward, and I already knew the tattoo artists Leo Zulueta and Ed Hardy. Those were the days when I could take my time doing a project, and it took years to accumulate a 6-foot shelf of books and magazines containing body modification photos and texts.

Finally, eight years later in 1989, *Modern Primitives* was ready to be published. If a concept or idea or technique hadn’t been mentioned by an interviewee in the book, I could usually find it in a book and distill a tiny representational excerpt to be put in the Quotations section in the back. Charles Gatewood supplied many key photographs, and then the book began traveling around the world, finding its readers. A big push came from the traveling 1991 Lollapalooza Festival, which brought *Modern Primitives* to the hinterlands and smaller cities. It didn’t hurt that the Red Hot Chili Peppers’ Anthony Kiedis displayed large, outstanding tattoos onstage.

Probably what makes *Modern Primitives* exceptional is the fact

that the interviews deliberately aimed at uncovering deeper philosophical and aesthetic imperatives behind a rainbow gamut of surface body decorations. A large emphasis was placed on not imitating somebody else, but striving to manifest one’s unique identity through piercings and tattoos and other modifications. Often there was a ritual or tribal or familial (or all three) aspect to the application of the bodily enhancement. Almost always there was the recognition of a larger, more universal context that transcends the culture-of-the-moment with an aim toward a grander alignment with ancient aesthetic illuminations and practices. And most definitely there was resistance to the old idea of the “man in the gray flannel suit” - the conformist, the working drone, the yuppie/preppie/jock/fratboy/fratgirl fashion follower.

Modern Primitives offers an expanded “anything goes” aesthetic to combat conformity and conservatism,

and in the process of more fully expressing their hidden libidinal desires, many have found a greater sense of personal fulfillment and achievement. Imagine, 20 years ago there was probably not a single body piercing entry in the Yellow Pages anywhere in the world; now, there are body piercing shops in almost every town and mall across America (and major cities over the planet). If this does not signal social and personal change, then what does? And associations of professional piercers all over the world have performed valuable, necessary duties in rigorously sharing technology and knowledge while vigilantly guarding personal and professional freedoms in the legislative and ethical arenas.

A good standard for life in general is “measurable progress,” and the worldwide brotherhood/sisterhood of professional piercers are exploring and extending known aesthetic boundaries and frontiers.



So in conclusion, what could be better than being an aesthetic pioneer employing both art and science in the service of making the world a more beautiful place? If body art is still considered "avant-garde" - well, is it better to be considered "ahead of your time" or "behind the times"? As Buckminster Fuller once remarked, "I'm interested in the future, because I'm going to spend the rest of my life there." And the future is: more body decoration practices, not less. "The future belongs to the bold," Buck Rogers once said, and hopefully, *Modern Primitives* will function as a handbook and vital historical marker, as well as a source of inspiration for artists, far into the years ahead.

A limited quantity of *Modern Primitives* books autographed by Editor/ Author V. Vale and Photographer Charles Gatewood are available from www.researchpubs.com (also, *Modern Primitives* T-shirts, size XL only, are available). Or write:

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PROUD MEMBERS



V. VALE, THE MAN BEHIND *MODERN PRIMITIVES*



DANNY YERNA
International Outreach Coordinator
Wakantanka
Mexico City, Mexico

During the last couple of years, the APP Conference in Las Vegas has had a number of special guests—some real innovators in our industry. Sometimes these were historians, others were anthropologists. The point is that every year there are some extra highlights at the event and this year, without a doubt, it was the participation of Charles Gatewood and V. Vale who are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the world-famous book, *Modern Primitives*.

I had a little chat with V. Vale about his work, life, and projects...

Tell us a little bit about the *Search & Destroy* years - when you got involved, why you got involved, what the goal of the publication was, and how the general public responded?

Search & Destroy aimed to both document and catalyze the revolutionary way of life known as punk rock. I called punk the “International Punk Rock Cultural Revolution” as indeed a few thousand people from all over the planet created music, style, graphic art, posters, films, clothing - anything that might be called culture. I got involved because I wanted to give the most inspiration possible to others. I wanted to be as thorough and detailed as possible, but also expand the intelligence and concepts for readers to ponder and then act upon. Just because something is labeled “punk” doesn’t mean it can’t be of the highest quality prophetic intelligence.

How was your reaction to all those “other” people that were really modified, as punks had their ways to show their discomfort (hair, clothes, thoughts, actions) as these “others” had more radical, physical mods?

Remember when British punk rockers were described as putting safety pins through their cheeks and other facial areas? Punk rock also put S&M fashion on the street. All this may have planted a seed (or seeds) that slowly grew on an international level.

Why the change from *Search & Destroy* to *RE/Search*?



The first wave of punk rock people dispersed, like a kind of diaspora. *RE/Search* was chosen as a new name because we felt the need to RE-do and RE-think everything in our lives and the world. In fact, RE seems the most important prefix in the English language now. And even we, right now, are participating in a kind of REnewal. REevaluation. REappraising. REconceptualizing. REinvigorating ourselves. REnewing our world.

Any memorable interviews or anecdotes?

The interviews I had to do the least amount of editing on were with William S. Burroughs and J.G. Ballard. The most poetic interviews I did were with James Blood Ulmer and Sun Ra, in the early *RE/Search* tabloids.

How and why did you get involved with *Modern Primitives*?

I was introduced to Fakir Musafar by the great photographer of the underground, Charles Gatewood. Our conversations sparked the idea of REmapping the body as an artistic canvas, which resulted in the publication of *Modern Primitives*.

When and how did you meet Charles Gatewood?

We got in touch through early punk rock underground connections. Charles had published *Sidetripping*, which was and is my favorite photography book of all time (text by William S. Burroughs), and he photographed Helen Wheels, a New York punk singer, and I put his photo on the cover of *Search & Destroy* #4. Charles and I have worked together ever since—32 years to date.

How did you meet all those other interesting people that are published in the book such as Ed Hardy, Raelyn Gallina, Lyle Tuttle, Leo Zulueta, and Psychic TV, among others?

Whenever you start a project, just one person leads you to another, and the chain continues seemingly effortlessly. Actually, just pure luck has a lot to do with everything in your life. I gravitate toward creative, unusual people who aren’t afraid to get more “extreme.”

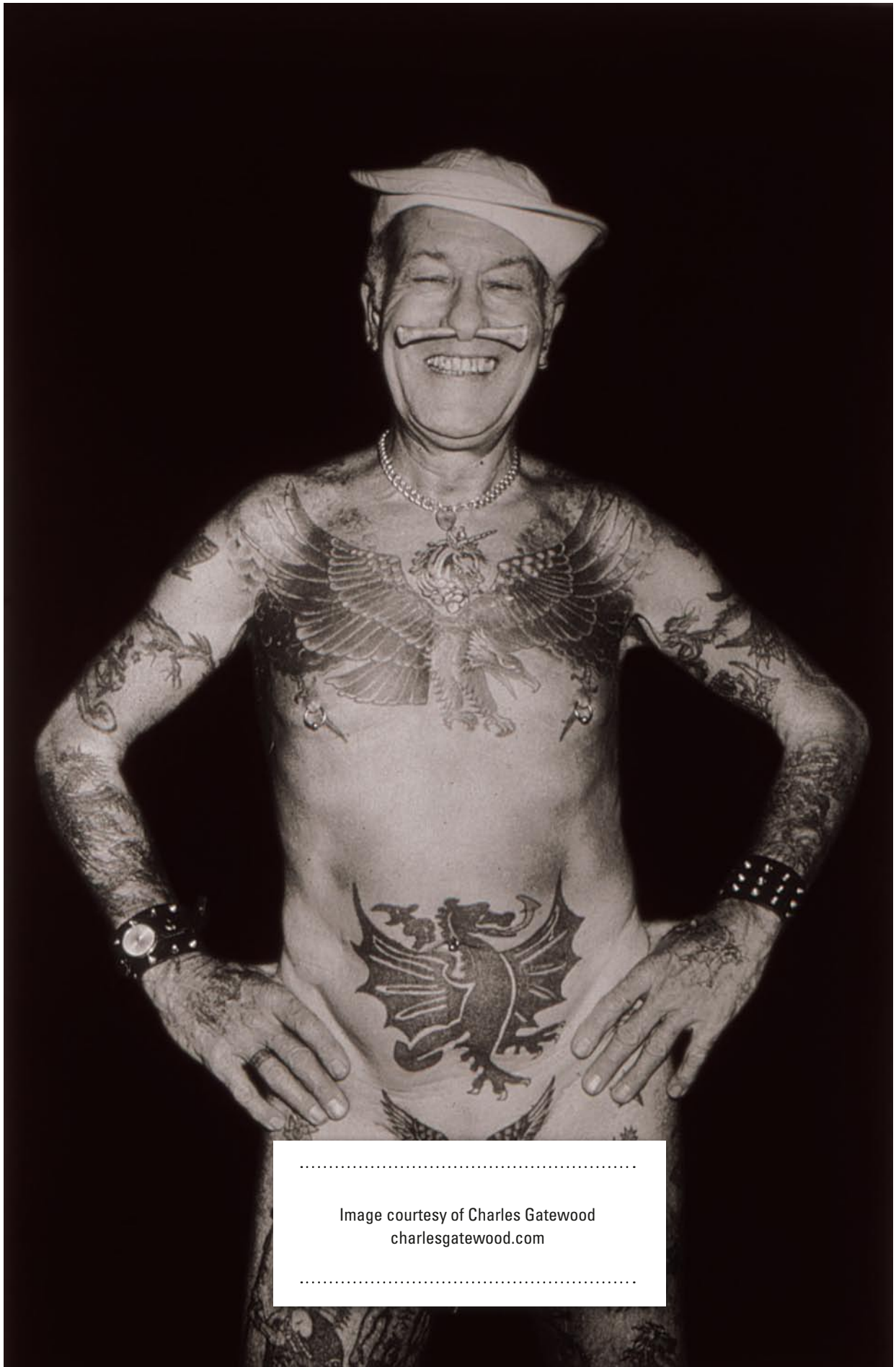


Image courtesy of Charles Gatewood
charlesgatewood.com

Maybe it can't get better than this. APP Conference seemed like a little bit of heaven right here on earth—sounds corny, but 1,000 “outsiders” all in one place, having fun just talking and meeting each other—what a paradise.

Why do you think the publication quickly became the “bible of body modification,” and what do you think about that?

Being an amateur anthropologist and book lover, I spent seven years “perfecting” the book. If an idea wasn't in an interview, I made sure it was at least mentioned in the quotations section in the back of the book. I think that all the work put into making *Modern Primitives* as high-quality as possible was worth it. It took many edits to make the text concise, readable, and hopefully, inspiring as well. We tried to show as many BodyMod possibilities as were possible without a hospital or surgeon being required.

How many copies of *Modern Primitives* have been printed?

Can't remember, but it's in its 16th or 17th printing now, and absolutely no change was ever made!

Any special anecdote that you remember and why?

Sometimes people change. The 1988 version of a person may want to completely censor and almost obliterate the 1982 version as captured on cassette tapes. This was attempted in *Modern Primitives*, but failed. You can guess who tried to bowdlerize himself!

How many different publications have you worked on; which one is your favorite “baby,” and why?

I've done a whole spectrum of publications involving the mind-body relationship to art, imagination, creativity, and fulfilling the potential one is born with, but I have a special love for my two *Pranks* books (*Pranks!*, and *Pranks 2*) as well as my *Freaks: We Who Are Not As Others* book.

Tell us a little about the *Pranks* books.

Ideally, after reading the *Pranks* books, then: Everywhere you go in the world, your outlook and attitude is: “What prank could be done here? How could this billboard be ‘improved’?! How can we subvert the meaning of this advertisement, sign, or situation?” There are so many opportunities to have free fun and make the world a more tolerable place, more to your liking. However, we are against pranks that just victimize other humans. Our favorite prank is really a performance art piece, or a surrealist installation that makes people go, “Huh?! What does this mean?”

What is next?

I need to work on something of a more personal nature, like a kind of autobiography or two. I'm hoping my obsessions will coalesce and bear some strange fruit.

How did you feel about the APP Conference, how was the response of the attendees?

I loved the APP Conference and all the attendees I met: everybody doing creative work, trying to improve their art and technique, really trying to make the world a more beautiful place, and getting paid for doing this “missionary work” all over the world. Maybe it can't get better than this. APP Conference seemed like a little bit of heaven right here on earth—sounds corny, but 1,000 “outsiders” all in one place, having fun just talking and meeting each other—what a paradise. The only way APP could have been improved is to skip the live music at the closing party - just play quiet, quiet music, because really everybody just wants to meet and talk to each other, not shout over loud broadcasts. And everybody wants to look at each other and admire each other. The loud music gets in the way of this. Everything else at APP seemed perfect! And, of course, thoroughly professional attention to details, and very considerate treatment of all who attended. This was my impression.

Anything you would like to add?

Obsession is the key to everything in life. Imagination is more important than mere knowledge. I have a deep distrust of logic and rationality, and feel that everyone is, at least potentially, a psychopath, and a sex maniac. Given that, it's utterly important to have as many creative outlets as possible, and be working on refining one's creative techniques and skills - this keeps us from descending into madness, boredom and criminality. I also think that we live on a criminal planet, and that criminals are running the major countries and corporations. It's time for a clean sweep - get rid of everybody who caused the big mess the world is in - and start all over again on a platform of rigorous, black-humorous, skeptical empiricism. As Albert Einstein said, it's madness to do the same things over and over and expect different results. Likewise, you can't use the same people (like Ben Bernanke) and expect different results like an economic improvement. No, you need all new people - people with fresh ideas and untainted ethics. I think we're in for a long, dark century. So put your money into body modifications - when real economic collapse happens, they can't take that away from you! **P**

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SURFACE ANCHOR LEGISLATION ISSUES



LUIS GARCIA

NoKaOi Tiki Tattoo
Philadelphia, PA

In the beginning of May 2009, the New Jersey Board of Health classified surface anchors as implants, making them illegal to perform in the state. This occurred because the state of Nevada was trying to figure out how to classify them, so they Googled “microdermals.” Search results led them to videos by a South Jersey piercer who teaches classes on how to perform them, and had posted procedural videos online. The Nevada legislators contacted their counterparts in New Jersey.

The New Jersey legislators had been unaware of this development in the body art world. The state already had legislation in place on body piercing, and it has been illegal for piercers to perform implants in New Jersey since 2001. This is due to the “surgical nature” of the procedure because scalpels, dermal punches, and sutures are used. Once they discovered surface anchors they felt the need to incorporate them into their existing regulations. They sent the videos of the South Jersey piercer and others they found online to their consulting doctors and lead inspectors. Unfortunately, many of the videos showed piercers using those same medical tools to perform surface anchors, which caused the doctors to classify the anchors as implants.

Johnny Needles, the piercer who posted the original videos, contacted the APP asking for input on how to deal with the situation. APP President James Weber coached him on how to go about fighting the ban, and put him in touch with me, David Vidra of Health Educators, Inc., and APP Vice President Didier Suarez. Together, we formulated a game plan: I would accompany Johnny as a consultant on behalf of the APP when he met with the officials from the New Jersey Board of Health.

That meeting, which took place on June 16, went very well. Fortunately, the officials we met with were very receptive to everything we had to show them. I feel fairly confident that we are on track for having surface anchors reclassified as piercings, and anticipate that this will take place in the next three to six months.

As mentioned earlier, one of the main reasons the ban took place was because most of the videos they found showed piercers performing the procedure with dermal punches, which are technically illegal to use if a practitioner is not a licensed medical professional—just like scalpels and sutures. It is also illegal to sell or buy these implements if the purchaser is not a licensed medical professional. Clearly, it is a poor idea to openly use such tools, let alone post a video showing their use on a Web site like YouTube.

Another concern was that most of the videos they found showed the piercer taking more than a minute or longer just to insert the jewelry. In two of the videos it took more than three minutes to insert the jewelry—not for the whole procedure—just the jewelry insertion. I have watched the videos, and can clarify most of the issues that caused the procedure to take so long. The pockets weren’t made big enough on a few of them, and the uplifts on the anchors were too short in some others. These are things that could have been remedied

if the piercers had done some research beforehand.

I believe it is possible that we will get the ban lifted in the next year, but there will probably be several stipulations for piercers to be able to perform surface anchors. Piercers will most likely be required to have insurance for the procedures—not slip-and-fall liability coverage for the shop, but specific malpractice liability insurance. Most standard policies do not cover surface piercings and anchors, so the coverage will need to be added at an extra cost. Insurance is something every professional piercer should already have.

This situation isn’t limited to New Jersey; Florida just recently began movements to ban the procedure. If the health officials are approached properly, and shown that this procedure is insurable, and as safe as most other piercings, these bans can be avoided. I encourage any piercing professional in an area facing these bans to speak up respectfully and show the health officials just how knowledgeable and safe we can be.

Editor’s Note: Over the years, the APP has provided statements outlining our perspectives and policies on a variety of subjects ranging from ear stud guns and genital piercings to the piercing of minors. We’ve been asked for these statements by the legislators, consumers, and piercers we serve in the course of our mission to disseminate information. These can be found on the FAQ page of the APP Web site under the navigation heading “Piercing” at www.safepiercing.org.

Below is the newest APP Position Statement. It addresses “Surface Anchors” (also referred to as Single-Point Piercings, Dermal Anchors, Microdermals, and by other names):

In a surface anchor piercing procedure, a tiny ornament is inserted into a single opening that is formed in the tissue with the same tools that are used for body piercing. This opening is the entrance as well as the exit. When properly performed by a skilled practitioner, surface anchor piercing is no more risky than an ordinary body piercing and takes no longer to perform or to heal. They are considered to be body piercings by the Association of Professional Piercers.

Surface anchor piercings are similar to “surface piercings,” which are done on flat areas of the body, but successful placement options are greatly expanded. Surface anchor piercings are a viable alternative to standard surface piercings as they appear to be easier to heal and not as subject to extensive scarring. Any residual scarring is apt to be limited due to the tiny size of the jewelry.

Surface Anchor piercings are much less invasive to insert and remove, and should not be confused with subdermal or transdermal implants, which are more extreme forms of body art that do not fall within the scope of the Association of Professional Piercers. **P**

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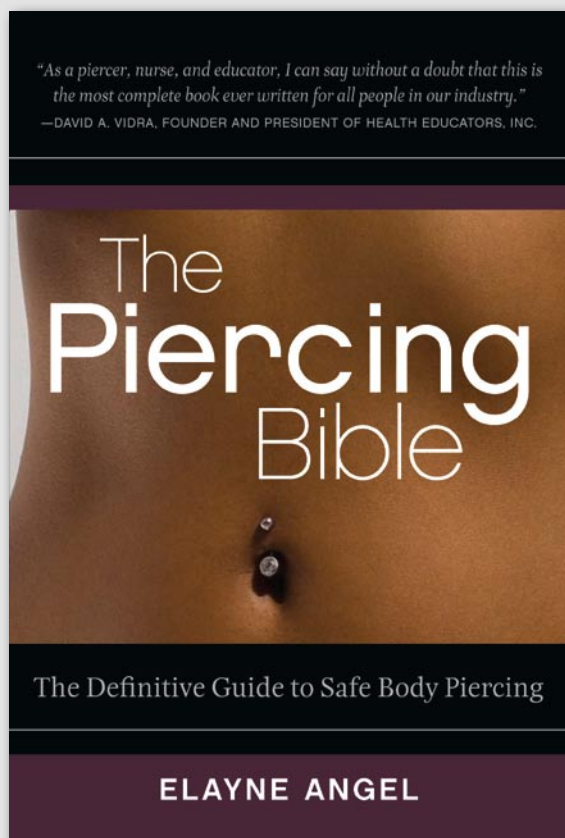
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR - ELAYNE ANGEL has been a professional piercer for more than 20 years and has performed over 40,000 piercings. She was awarded the President's Lifetime Achievement Award by the Association of Professional Piercers in 2006 and is a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

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Paul King, Eric "Sque3z" Anderson, and former ACHA President, the pierced-and-proud Dr. Reginald Fennell

APP AT ACHA



PAUL KING
APP Treasurer
Cold Steel America
San Francisco, CA

We were so slammed the first day it was nearly an hour before we could grab a cup of coffee. Who knew there would be crowds of health care professionals waiting to talk to us at seven in the morning?

The doctors and nurses weren't exclusively interested in the APP. But among the 90 exhibitors, we were in the the top favorites of the estimated 1,700 attendees at the American College Health Association's Annual Meeting. This year's conference took place at the San Francisco Marriott in the heart of San Francisco's SOMA district (South Of Market Street). Years have passed since I last represented the APP at ACHA when the event was previously held in San Francisco. This allowed me the unique perspective to reflect and compare the difference in reception.

At my first conference we were met with raised eyebrows and spent a great deal of time convincing attendees of the importance of our health and safety information for their college student populations.

Those who took the time to listen were always impressed, walking away with stacks of information and a smile.

This year, Sque3z and I didn't have to "sell" anyone. More than 25 percent of the attendees we talked with had already heard of the APP. Professionals brought their new colleagues by our booth for introductions and to explain our mission. They were now selling for us!

Time and again we were asked, "So what do you have that's new?"

We tore through boxes of newly updated brochures in English and Spanish, business cards, posters, and issues of *The Point*. Halfway through the first day we ran out of the troubleshooting brochure. By the end of the ACHA conference, we had 45 new subscriptions to *The Point* and almost nothing to carry home!

It was such a high to hear how much these medical professionals now utilize and value our resources. **P**

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION UPDATE



**PAUL STOLL
& STEVE JOYNER**

Body Manipulations
San Francisco, CA

On Tuesday, April 14 in Sacramento, California, the Assembly Committee on Health heard proposed state law, Assembly Bill 517. The law was authored by California State Assemblywoman Fiona Ma with the close collaboration of Justin Malan of the California Conference of Directors of Environmental Health (CCDEH). Steve Joyner spoke as a representative of the APP, and Paul Stoll, owner of Body Manipulations, spoke as a representative of practitioners statewide.

We grew increasingly nervous as we waited to speak, because everything on the agenda before us had been voted down. It seemed like a bad day to be heard by the committee. But we said our peace, and were very relieved and surprised when all 13 committee members present voted in our favor.

AB 517 establishes the Safe Body Art Act to provide minimum statewide standards for the regulation of practitioners engaged in the business of tattooing, body piercing, and permanent cosmetics in California.

The Bill establishes authority to local health agencies at the county level to enforce these statewide standards. All practitioners must be registered with their local health department. Requirements of this registration include many APP member requirements. Practitioners must complete training in bloodborne pathogens, first aid, and CPR, and be at least 18 years old. All facilities must also be registered and inspected annually.

Hearing a unanimous vote in our favor without opposition on the legislation floor of California is a huge step forward for the professional piercing industry. It is a heartwarming pleasure to be included in the lawmaking process to further our mission in providing service of the highest quality possible. We encourage all practitioners, wherever you work, to read further on AB 517 and to follow these California standards. An updated summary of AB 517 can be viewed at <http://bodym.com/Documents/AB517.pdf>. The implementation of these standards in California will catch the eye of lawmakers throughout the world, and thus has the potential to benefit our industry worldwide.

Eleven amendments have to be sorted out by both sides, and we will reconvene at the next committee hearing, scheduled for July 8. We will continue working for the highest standards possible and will report back with updates as things progress. **P**



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JOSH A. PRENTICE VOLUNTEER AWARD



CAITLIN McDIARMID
APP Administrator

At this year's Conference it was my honor to present the first award given under the name of Josh A. Prentice, a friend and volunteer that we will always miss. Josh lost his life in a tragic event in February 2007, and I hope this award will serve as a reminder to give back, love, and have fun during each Conference, and every day of our lives.

The Josh A. Prentice award will be given annually to individuals who are outstanding volunteers at the APP Conference.

When I went to get the actual award all I could think of was Josh laughing at me for giving a big obelisk in his name. So instead, I acquired handmade wooden puzzle boxes; they are beautiful, artistic, complicated, and a little puzzling--just like he was. I think the award might change every year based on the person receiving it.

I took the liberty of giving two this year, as I had wanted to start in 2008 but didn't. I was delighted to present the Josh A. Prentice Award to the two most outstanding volunteers I have had the pleasure to work with for seven and five years respectively: Ed Chavarria and Tiana McGuire.

Ed can be found traveling the country working at some of the finest APP studios around. As the Members' Liaison on the APP Board of Directors he still manages to get the members' applications processed in a timely fashion and call in to the office with remarkable frequency. Tiana works at Blue Star Tattoo in Concord, California.

And now a brief interview with the winners:

APP: Who was the biggest influence in your decision to become a piercer?

ED: It's hard to give a single-person answer 'cause I believe that I have had several influences as a piercer. It could begin with the very first person I was pierced by: thank you Didier, for understanding where I was coming from and showing me some light. I could thank Steve Joyner for showing me about suspension and then bringing me into both the suspension community as well as the piercing industry. Lastly, I can thank Byriah Daily for giving a punk kid a chance to learn to pierce and later teach to pierce.

TIANA: The better way for me to answer this question would be who had the biggest influence on me deciding the kind of piercer that I wanted to become? That would be David Potter (aka Dav1d)

at Slave to the Needle in Seattle. I feel all awkward talking about how other people have influenced me. Basically since I was working many shifts with him while I was counter person at STTN, I saw him doing all the things that I wanted to do, and doing them well. He's a super quiet, stoic, introverted type yet I'd always hear clients laughing from his piercing room and leaving with smiles.



APP: What drove you to become a member of the APP?

ED: Mainly learning to pierce in an APP shop as well as learning under APP piercers. I don't really know any other way.

TIANA: Darrin Walters, my boss at Blue Star Tattoos in Concord, California said, "Fill out your application!" I didn't really have a choice at that point.

APP: Why do you think it's important to volunteer?

ED: It allows you to meet and network with everyone who attends Conference. It makes the week a little more fun, and it has allowed me to make some of my best friends.

TIANA: Volunteering is a great way to stay involved in what's going on with the organization. For me personally, it's easier to interact with people I don't know in a working environment than in a social one. Volunteering was a great way for me to meet my peers in the industry and network.

APP: What was your favorite moment from the 2009 Conference?

ED: Leaving Vegas. Ha ha. Honestly, I think it was you surprising me with the Josh A. Prentice Award. Especially since I already knew that Tiana was going to get it.

TIANA: Day one, meeting the new volunteers, rolling shirts, and the first round of registration seeing all the attendees arriving.

APP: What should you never do as a volunteer at Conference?

ED: Never fail to show up to your shift, and don't get arrested.

TIANA: (shrugs) Never forget that you're in a position to be observed by the entire industry.

If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering at the 2010 APP Conference, please send an email to info@safepiercing.org or call 888-888-1277. P

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REFLECTIONS ON THE 2009 APP CONFERENCE



JAYME L. CALAVERA REHS/RS
Environmental Health Division
First District Health Unit
Minot, ND

As I looked at my calendar today, I realized it's already been two months since I got back from the APP 14th Annual Conference and Exposition. It seems I was just there as Sky Renfro and Steve Joyner covered three hours of information about autoclaves and StatIMs in just two hours, or as Pat Tidwell, Eric Anderson, and Luis Garcia gave their presentation about three different (and yet three acceptable) ways to approach navel, nostril, and lip piercings. The week was a whirlwind of information that I am still sorting out.

As a health inspector who works in the field, I appreciate the importance of education. I inspect a wide variety of facilities—everything from food establishments to lodging establishments to body art studios. No matter what type of facility I'm in, I can only be there once or twice a year. I do my best to pass along the knowledge I have to the employees who are present, but I realize this makes a minor impact. What makes a far larger and longer lasting impact on day-to-day operations is education. When employees are motivated and provided with the opportunity to learn how to do their job safely, it makes all the difference. While there is not anything that can be done with a lack of motivation, organizations like the APP help immeasurably when it comes to providing the opportunity to learn.

I was impressed with every aspect of Conference. I would like to thank the APP for allowing health inspectors to attend free of charge. When you are working with a budget as tight as those of most health jurisdictions, "free" is about the most wonderful word that you can hear when talking about training and educational opportunities.

I arrived a little after 1 p.m. on the first day, so I missed a few of the earliest presentations. (Of course these were sessions that sounded most interesting, and they were also sessions that I heard nothing but good comments about later.) I met APP Administrator Caitlin McDiarmid at the sign-in counter, and she immediately made me feel welcome both as a health inspector and a first-time attendee. I attended a class that afternoon and then made my way to the health inspectors meeting that evening. There I had the opportunity to meet and speak with several people who, again, made me feel very welcome. We talked about a large number of topics involving inspection and regulation. I then had the opportunity to meet someone who was famous for her pioneering work in the field of body piercing and whose name I had heard before, even though I do not usually travel in body art circles. (In case you hadn't guessed, I am talking about Elayne Angel.) The next several days were a blur of presentations and information.

There are two aspects of the Conference that I really appreciated; I was impressed by both the quality of the speakers and the quality of the topics presented. First, the quality of the speakers was exceptional, and the information they presented was conveyed to attendees in the best possible manner. I regularly attend a wide variety of educational meetings, trainings and conferences. Usually you get a mixed bag of presenters and presentations. If a presenter uses a PowerPoint or slide presentation, the slides should be interesting, but should serve only as a basis for the information given by the presenter. Their spoken words should expand on and enhance the content of the slides, not merely be a word-for-word reading of the slides. It surprises me how often the presentations I see are just that: a person reading slides to an audience. This was not the case

at the APP Conference. Without fail, the presentations that I attended were of the highest caliber—good slides, expounded upon by speakers who were obviously familiar with the material, and knew what they were talking about. Second, I was impressed by the quality and variety of topics that were presented to attendees. There were topics covering every facet of the piercing profession, from the appropriateness of various materials for body jewelry, to day-to-day health and sanitation concerns, to whether it was appropriate or ethical to do certain piercings.

In addition to the quality of the Conference, I commend the APP for the quality of the attendees. I was pleasantly surprised by the sharp focus of the attendees and by their desire for knowledge. During each of the classes I attended, the audience was quiet, respectful, and attentive. It was not uncommon for insightful questions to be asked that opened new avenues of discussion. Audience members were encouraged to share their experiences, and they did so regularly. Since attendees were free to go to the sessions that were of interest to them, they seemed to have a high degree of interest in the topics presented.

On a professional level, I found the sessions I attended were very interesting and full of useful information. As a health inspector, it is my job to ensure that health and sanitation standards are being met and maintained in the body art facilities licensed by my department. I deal with these issues every day, and yet I still learned things I did not know about these topics in the context of a body art studio. I was not very familiar with autoclave and StatIM operation, so I was glad to see these classes offered, and I found them to be thorough and informative. The classes on medical risk assessment, aftercare, wound healing, and troubleshooting were timely and useful, as the regulations we use for body art facilities in our health district are in need of updating on these very topics.

I found the sessions about technique to be the most useful. In my line of work, we deal with safety and sanitation practices, and these aspects of piercing are relatively straightforward. It is fairly simple to evaluate a body art facility and determine if they are meeting our health and hygiene regulations. Unfortunately, this does not tell the whole story about whether or not a piercing studio is safe; it is not as easy to evaluate whether a piercer is doing a good job. A piercer who is doing a good job is declining to pierce body parts that are not good candidates; doing piercings in such a way so as to minimize damage to the tissues (and prevent damage to other structures), and educating clients about aftercare in a way that will maximize the chances for a piercing to heal. I have not always had the depth of knowledge that is required to make these kinds of evaluations. Can it be said that we are really doing our jobs if we do not look at these kinds of things? Health officials need to become more involved with the concepts of piercing technique, and more knowledgeable about what is acceptable and what is not. We need to understand body anatomy, wound healing dynamics, and piercing technique, so that when we inspect a body art studio, we can evaluate every aspect of that facility.

The main goal I had in attending the Conference was to gain a greater level of knowledge about the many aspects of the piercing field. Looking back, I believe that I reached that goal. Thanks for allowing me to attend the Conference, and I hope to see everyone again next year. **P**

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The Exposition floor at the 2009 APP Conference. Photo by Sean Hartgrove.

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► **BMXNET CONFERENCE**
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Essen, Germany

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