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Front Cover: Winning entry in the Body Piercing Archive contest.
Photo by Matte Erickson

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The annual APP Conference is always a mind-expanding experience, but this year—it’s 20th anniversary—was a definite milestone. More people than ever turned out, attending a record number of classes and events presented by a roster of industry all-stars.

The one thing I appreciated most this year was the APP’s commitment to history, not only of the organization, but also of the industry itself. Long standing icons like Paul King, Dave Vidra, Fakir, and myself presented snapshots of the APP’s birth and evolution. The APP Timeline session brought together many of the early founders including some I have not seen in over 20 years. It was a touching reunion.

I was especially impressed with Paul King, Matte Erickson, and Becky Dill, as well as the host of volunteers who brought together the Body Piercing Archive, which opened its doors for the first time on June 10th. Walking through the exhibit was a heartwarming and often bittersweet experience. Seeing reminders of industry champions like Al D., Raelyn Gallina, and Sailor Sid Diller brought a tear to my eye.

Paul has been working tirelessly to preserve the history of our industry. In this process he has started forging an alliance between the APP and the Leather Archive & Museum (LA&M) in Chicago*. The LA&M “is dedicated to the compilation, preservation, and maintenance of leather, kink, and fetish lifestyles,” which often includes body modification. Since the body piercing industry has its roots in the gay and BDSM community, this is an important alliance. The LA&M has financial resources, its own building, and a staff that includes a professional archivist. This is a win/win relationship for everyone involved.

This year in particular, as part of his efforts, Paul organized a special appeal to help finance the preservation of the Sailor Sid collection which had been willed to me and which I had donated to the LA&M many years ago. Some of the materials are particularly fragile and in need of special attention before they deteriorate beyond saving. For the story of this highly successful campaign, see page 40.

We can all be justly proud of our organization. So much has been accomplished in the last 20 years. I cannot praise enough those members, past and present, who have struggled and nurtured the APP to make it such a success, to set such high standards for the industry, and to continue its educational efforts. It does my heart good.

*As a footnote, the LA&M is already the repository of the Fakir Musafar collection, still in the process of being cataloged. I am currently in negotiations to donate my own collection to them as well.

Marina Pecorino

Conference. Words can’t fully describe the experience of that one week a year.

This year marked 20 years of Conference, with a focus on the history of our industry: the first Body Piercing Archives exhibit, history classes lead by pioneers like Jim Ward, David Vidra, Fakir Musafar, and Blake Perlingieri, as well as an APP Timeline class with many of the people involved in making the Association what it is today. Throughout the week, I listened to individuals share their stories of involvement in the Association, the industry, and our community. Numerous times, the intensity of these personal narra-
tives—an individual perspective of our shared history—brought me to tears.

This year also marked the first for many new procedures, technologies, and ideas being implemented to keep up with our growing attendance. Knowing that more than 1,000 people left Conference with new friends, an increased knowledge base, and a renewed sense of self is pretty incredible. This year’s Conference was the largest yet, and there’s every indication that next year will continue this trend.

Now that I’ve been home for nearly two months (most of you will read this closer to the three month mark), the post Vegas depression has faded and I have settled back into the groove of everyday life. But my memories of Conference are still bright and they leave me invigorated. Still, I miss walking through the hotel and being met with welcoming smiles, warm hugs, and genuine camaraderie. Have I mentioned all the beautiful people and beautiful jewelry?! Occasionally, I look through my photos from the late night/early morning walks around the Strip, exploring the all-too-fake, yet mesmerizing “architecture”. I eagerly look through my social media to keep up with all of the amazing people I spent the week with, many of whom I met for the first time. I have received postcards and care packages from members of the volunteer family. I have sent quite a few in return and collected stacks more for future mailing. I’m already yearning for next year.

Alright, I’ll admit that maybe I’m still dealing with some PVD. The environment of that week is a hard thing not to miss, so join me as we take a detailed look at the 20th anniversary APP Conference & Exposition.

**Kendra Jane B**

When I think back to the week of the 20th annual Association of Professional Piercers Conference, I am rendered almost speechless, and if you know me, that is difficult. PVD or post Vegas depression, as a few of us call it, has hit me especially strong this year. I find myself longing for the hugs, smiles, and the mental stimulation that Conference provides. I even miss the hustle and bustle, the over priced everything, and the smoke filled casino. At the same time I am relieved to sleep in my own bed, eat vegetables, and put into practice the learning from this year.

In this issue we will take a look through the photos, the stories, the awards, and the memories that made this year by far the best Conference I have ever been too—I am sure many others share the same sentiments as me. Each attendee will have their own favourite moments from this year. In fact some may have so many moments that picking a favourite is impossible. Personally I have been able to narrow it down to the evening of the Banquet prom. My own prom (or grad as we call it here in the Great White North) was less than perfect and, well, I would rather forget most of it honestly. However, prom at this year’s Banquet will forever be one of my happiest nights, filled with love, laughter, tears, and dancing; oh glorious dancing.

This year’s prom also gave me the chance to recognize someone very close to me, someone who has shaped the person I am and pushes me in the direction of the person I want to be. It was an absolute honour to speak to her hard work and dedication. This will forever be a memory I cherish. We love you, Caitlin. Why do I suddenly have a craving for pie?

The other moment that still makes me giddy like a 16 year old is the fact that you guys—my peers—saw it fitting to honour me with the “best smile in the industry”. I was shocked when I saw my name on the nomination ballot and even more so when my name was announced. You guys made me feel like the belle of the ball. Just thinking of all the smiles and love as we put this issue together has made the PVD a little more tolerable.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart to each attendee. You all contributed to my Conference experience. I will carry these experiences with me over the coming year until I can see you all again.
Some of the most interesting figures in our history have been those who have taken me and others under their wing to share insights and build community. These avuncular aspects I liken to having a peculiar aunt or uncle in the trade. This year, this feeling was shared by many of my colleagues as we celebrated our 20th Conference with memorials to Tía Raelyn Gallina and our self proclaimed Freakunkle Sid Diller, and a reunion of our extended family. Over the years as much as I’ve gleaned from my familiar mentors in technical and business development, it has been paired with conscientiousness and compassion. To my delight, I have discovered I’ve become one of these figures for some of you.

This opportunity is appreciated profoundly in my reflection on the 20 years of experience interacting with the participants of this organization. Over this epoch I’ve started my own family with Sandrine. We met at the 2004 Conference, introduced by a dear mutual friend and colleague whom I knew from previous years at the event. This year, our daughter was delivered shortly after the Conference, requiring more family compromise than usual to uphold my commitments to travel and share my knowledge. Observing similar efforts from so many of my peers who brought their children, including those who work as a family, filled me with hope, and keened my focus.

The Body Piercing Archive we, the APP have committed to has shown a promising beginning, exceeding my expectations. My first walk through had me transfixed by the images and left me feeling inspired. I eagerly awaited my chance to be a docent and impart memories and observations of important participants and watershed events in our trade and organization as we followed along with our exhibit materials.
The great responsibility to give the President’s Award for 2015 was a subject which I had the privilege to ruminate upon from the moment Elayne Angel handed one to me in 2014. Over the years, I have had the opportunity to get to know this person, who represents a synthesis of the principles, talents, and open perception that has served to elevate so many others in our profession. I am elated to present to Jef Saunders this award, to confer and recognize the potential of our colleague.

It seemed this was our volunteers’ strongest year yet, showcasing their customer service talents to help their peers. Our scholarship recipients appeared to have given their best efforts alongside veterans as the cogs that keep our event moving forward smoothly.

As a speaker, each invitation to prepare and practice sharing a subject has delighted me. The members’ advanced technique round table and needle theory presentations were highlights for me, and a joy to collaborate with other instructors. All in all this was an absolutely outstanding Conference. I even have my own hashtag: #skelfie

A year full of mementos
The Opening Pool Party in Pictures

all photos by Autumn Swisher & Kerry Tasker

Clockwise from the top right, Adam Richins, Mateo Way, Nick SanGregory, Rick Freuh; Aly Madesh; Ismael Vargas Guerrero; Dannielle Greenwood; Hayley Berndt, Sammi Randy Castillo, April Thomas; Brit Shostak; Chadwick Jackson II
The Opening Pool Party in Pictures

All photos by Autumn Swisher & Kerry Tasker
A CONFERENCE REFLECTION

BRIAN MOELLER
Boston Tattoo Company

How does one really define themselves? What creates their legacy, their influence on others, or determines the impact of their actions, negative or positive? I typed this from my hotel room while sluggishly packing and trying to undo the damage from the last night’s post Conference celebrations. (Thanks for the Gatorade, Dianna!)

I find myself curious as to the direction we, as an industry, are going. To be honest, this is something that I question often but rarely have a definitive answer for, but what I can tell you is that actions will always speak louder than words.

I am in my early thirties and, as of July, have been piercing for 10 years. I feel that myself and my peers in this same category find ourselves in a weird grey area. We are too old to be considered new to the industry, yet too young to be considered a third or fourth generation piercer. We are the “Generation Y”, so to speak. Most of us have shared the struggle of our older colleagues while building our shops up from nothing. We also share the same issues that challenge younger generations, such as the drama in online forums. We’ve all seen it; comment after comment of “help” and the responses providing advice and guidance.

“I am a very passionate and opinionated individual about many things, and I usually prefer to observe from a distance.”

Even if the information presented is extremely useful, it is overshadowed by negativity in the end. I feel that this constant reminder sets a bad example for younger generations of piercers. One quote that often comes to mind is from the Necromancer character from The Venture Brothers. When asked if he was a great magician like Merlin, he rolls his eyes and says, “Merlin wasn’t a great magician, just a more popular one.”

That being said, I’m sure many people are reading this and wondering who I am or making assumptions of who I’m referring to. I’ll be the first to tell you that I’m not here to point fingers. Shining spotlights only encourages problems and does not fix anything. Instead, I propose that everyone looks inward at themselves and really consider what you can offer. What drives you and makes you the person that you are? What can you provide that will help push our industry to the next level?

Some people complain about what needs to be changed. I can say that I work as hard as I possibly can. I get involved. I volunteer my time and contribute to this shared passion called body piercing. Although in reality it is not just me, but all of my fellow volunteers, Conference Committee peers, and Conference sub speaker Committee peers. We have all come together and with our combined efforts and skill sets, made this week happen for everyone. It was hard physically and mentally, but we made it count. We made it work, and we offered our best for all of you.

Now if you’re reading this and it creates a spark in you, then let me challenge you. When you are home, back at your studio, with all of your Conference knowledge improving your studio, look at your other skill sets. We are all involved at different levels with many different positions within the piercing industry, but what is it that REALLY makes you stand out and makes you an individual? Ask yourself how can you apply these skills to this beloved shared passion and help to make it even better than what has already evolved into. I chose to put down the keyboard and step away from the internet soapbox to start getting involved. What will you choose to do?
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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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The APP—Celebrating 20 Years

photos by Autumn Swisher, Kerry Tasker & attendees

Clockwise from the top right, The 20-year timeline presentation in session; Tod Almighty and Shelby Nicole Smith; the Blessing to You booth, best single booth winner; class in session; Betsy Reynolds and Alicia Cardenas; the 20-year timeline presenters; JD Lorenz and Kim Bumpus from Lemoore Tattoos
The APP—Celebrating 20 Years

photos by Autumn Swisher, Kerry Tasker & attendees
We never get tired of hearing “this was the best Conference yet.” We were even more proud to hear it for this, our 20th anniversary! Thank you to all the participants of this year’s events. Having members of our history at Conference combined with the premiere exhibit of the Body Piercing Archive made it even more special. We’ve never heard such positive comments about our Banquet and the dance floor filled for the first time ever. Our numbers are up with a 10.05% increase in participants! Our Vendors were even more supportive than ever – with more sponsorships and more donations to the Raffle than we ever expected. Our attendees opened their pockets and hearts with generous donations to the Sailor Sid Campaign and the purchase of APP merchandise. Class attendance stayed steady and all our new technology performed well.

HERE’S CONFERENCE BY THE NUMBERS…

- Overall attendance at Conference this year: 1040
- Full Conference Attendees: 567
- Partial Conference Attendees: 279
- Speakers: 58
- Vending Companies: 53
- Number of Volunteers: 70
- Number of Class Topics: 40
- Number of Workshop Topics: 4
- Number of Round Table Discussions: 5
- Class Hours: 95
- Round Tables & Meetings (Hours): 19
- Individual Class Attendances: 4607
- APP Donations via Conference: $4,139.30—Thanks each and everyone of you for your support!
Writing about receiving the APP President’s Award has proved to be a daunting task. I am still in a bit of shock and still very flattered to have received the award, but I’m a little uncomfortable discussing how I found myself to be the recipient. Do I list things I’ve done that I think Brian liked? Ugh, the dreaded “humblebrag!” No thank you, I’m not jumping into that minefield.

What I’d rather do is take this opportunity to say thanks to some of the people that have helped me, taught me, and supported me along the way. Brian Skellie presented me with the award, which made a very special thing even more so. Brian has had such a tremendous impact, not only on my career, but on my life and the way I see the world. His commitment to safety and high professional standards, as well as his seemingly neverending patience and willingness to share with others has been an inspiration to me for years. If I have been helpful to other piercers, I am thrilled, but I learned it from watching Brian.

I initially began my involvement in the APP by volunteering for the Membership Committee. I owe a tremendous amount of thanks to them for letting me be a part of the committee. The work that goes into processing new members is substantial, to say the least. It’s hard to believe there was an APP without a Membership Committee at one time, and all the work was assigned to one Board Member. Eduardo Chavarria developed the idea of delegating that work to a full committee, and was a part of it from day one. He stepped down from the Membership Committee at Conference this year. I didn’t really grasp how much Ed has given of himself to our community over the years until I worked hands on with him. Ed is truly one of those unsung heroes, quietly working hard to make sure this organization works and progresses. I want to say thank you to him personally, and on behalf of the APP.

As I mentioned during the Banquet, the Fakir Intensives have been so near and dear to me. I genuinely can’t imagine being a piercer without them. So thank you Fakir, Chleo, Ken, Eve, Tod, Ian, Grin, Natalie, Cody, Jori, Dustin, Seth, Brent, Neo, Idexa, Bettyann, Laura Jane, and all of the other instructors, students, and contributors to the Fakir Intensives. Being a part of the Fakir Intensives is one of the greatest joys in my life, and I am so thankful to all involved. Ken Coyote, in particular, has played the part of mentor, editor, critic and most importantly friend. Thank you to everyone who has done “the skirt dance”.

The APP is in a period of unprecedented growth. I really believe in this organization and its mission. I am so thankful to everyone who participates. The people who spend hours every day making sure this thing keeps moving forward, but also the members quietly providing safe piercing to their community. We are in the midst of an extraordinary and special time; we are beginning to see the fruits of our organization’s labors. My hope is that we all take a moment to really appreciate where we are, right this very moment. We are imperfect, yes, but we are improving, too. And our harshest critics are also our biggest allies, not only demanding more of the organization, but being the boots on the ground to make those improvements happen. Very few of us get to say we were there at the first Conference, but we will have the chance to say we were at the first Member’s Retreat! We can all say “this policy needs work or this pamphlet needs an update,” but we can also say “let me help improve this organization”. That’s a great place to be and an exciting time for everyone. Thanks to everyone who has worked on this organization over the past 20 years to make it what it is!

So in closing, thank you. Even if you are just reading The Point, you are participating and you are helping to make piercing safer.
When I was first told about the Al D. Scholarship, I almost didn't apply. The idea of going was quite scary. I feel I come from a fairly humble background; I didn’t receive a good apprenticeship, I don’t stock any high end jewellery, and I felt very intimidated by the people that I knew would be there. I can honestly say that taking that step outside my comfort zone and filling out the application was one of the best decisions of my life.

Coming to the APP Conference this year was a truly mind blowing introduction to a part of my industry I had always felt was out of reach. I’ve never felt so at home so quickly with a group of strangers (although Facebook for all its trouble, has definitely made that easier). The friendliness and warmth of the volunteers, members, and attendees took me by surprise in the best of ways.

Working with the other volunteers was made incredibly easy, with the meetings we had and the good nature of everybody I spoke to. I never felt stupid for asking a question or for reaching out for help; this is something I usually struggle with. I am very independent and that has been a problem for me in situations, in the past, where I really could have used help. The volunteers (especially Caitlin and Kendra) were welcoming and helpful, even when they were stressed out and they probably wanted to be focused on other things!

It wasn’t until I met Jim Ward that I felt completely and utterly overwhelmed. I sat in a large room, filled with people from all walks of life, and before us stood the man
who made it all possible. His talk was funny and mesmerizing and I could’ve listened to him speak for days on end. I eventually mustered enough courage to go up and speak with him. I’m pretty sure I must have sounded like a gibbering idiot, but he was so friendly, smiling and talking. He even let me act like a fan girl, taking a photo with him—which is getting printed, framed and hung in my piercing room back home.

There were, of course, a couple of down points; missing out on a lecture or two, not having enough time for certain talks to be completed and at points feeling a little too shy to speak out or ask questions, but they are so outnumbered by the good times, I can barely remember them.

I’m sure I’m not the first, and I certainly won’t be the last, to say that because of the generosity of the scholarship that I received, I know I have become part of this big, weird family. One where learning never stops and, although there may be oceans between us, it is as if we are right next door.

This experience has changed my life for the better and I will fight tooth and nail to make it back next year to volunteer again.

Thank you, for everything.  

—Charlie LeBeau

#Ducklingforlife

• Aiden Johnson

For me, Conference was a week long riot of love, laughter, and learning all culminating in a new outlook on life. Whether it was the time spent in meetings with the volunteer team, in class with fellow piercers, or trying to build the courage to talk to industry greats at the bar, I have built long lasting relationships with people that I will go to the ends of the Earth (literally with the flights I’d need to take) to help out.

I first arrived at Conference nervous and feeling very lonely. However, within minutes of meeting my fellow scholars and volunteers I was put at ease. These were people that all had the same passion for piercing and our industry. These people were also willing to accept me and take me as one of their own before knowing anything about me. Before the week came to an end, though I knew these people in detail, sometimes details I never would have expected. I can’t wait to learn and work alongside them again.

In our volunteer group we are told that self care is very important throughout the hectic week. However, this wonderful family will also take care of you when you forget to do it yourself. That is one memory that remains the strongest for me; after forgetting to care for myself I needed to retire to my room. I awoke to find 3 of my new friends tickling my feet, smiles surrounding me, and a cupcake on my night stand. This was an induction into a new family I knew that I would never forget.

In between attending classes, carrying out my volunteer duties, and having fun, I changed. My outlook on life became broader. A focus on self-care and quality of life crept in. A new level of love for what I do came to me and I never want to let that go. I can’t wait to attend APP 2016 and volunteer my time. Conference is a life changing experience and is so difficult to put into words. To everyone who has anything to do with Conference, all I can say is thank you from the bottom of my heart. To those of you who have never attended, I urge you to go; you won’t be disappointed.

See you next year!

Best Wishes

—Aiden Johnson, Business Manager

Adorn, Shrewsbury

• Jose Carlos (English Translation)

When I was informed that I had been awarded the Al D. Scholarship to attend the 2015 APP Conference I was overrun by many emotions. Joy, a great sense of joy. It felt as if all the hard work and effort I had put into this for months and years prior was being rewarded. Fear, the fear of not being “up to par” and disappointing those who had put their trust in my abilities, and my maturity to not waste the opportunity that had been given to me. Excitement, the excitement for the great adventure that was to come; the adventure of sharing and learning, surrounded by friends old and new. Peers and colleagues, great professionals who all share the same connection and love for body piercing regardless of city, country, or continent of origin.

With all this in mind, the weeks went by. Each week brought detailed emails more frequently, all with a ton of information to help with the work that was to come. This made me even more anxious to arrive in Las Vegas. At last the day had come and there was no turning back. From the very first moment I arrived, all my fears, nerves, and
anxiousness that had me worried vanished, like a magic trick. From the first encounters and meetings with the volunteer group I realized that apart from working and attending classes, Conference was going to be something special and even more beautiful than I had imagined. As those first hours passed, I felt welcomed into a new family. A family that loves and supports one another. A family that works together so that this great event can grow and be an integral part of many piercers’ year.

So many people work so many hours, yet do it with a smile and kind words. They also bring so many hugs! Hugs that can make the stress melt away in seconds. And so the days passed. The lack of sleep and fatigue were noticeable, but it didn’t matter. It was all worth it. It is very difficult to describe in writing the great experience that was my week and volunteer work, how it has changed my view towards Conference and the effort involved in making it happen. People don’t realize how much work is involved until they are part of it. The experience and hard work was all worth it. Watching the large group of volunteers work together with Caitlin was wonderful. Without her this whole event would be impossible. Watching her work was incredible, inspiring and admirable. I know for sure that I’ll be back as a volunteer next year. I am sure that each year will be better than the previous year. There is only one thing left to say, and that is thank you from the bottom of my heart. In my heart I hold you all.

Thank you very very much.

Sending you all my love,

—Jose Carlos

**Jose Carlos (Spanish Original)**

Cuando me informaron que había sido seleccionado para poder ir a la conferencia de la APP 2015 con una beca me sentí invadido por muchas y diferentes sensaciones. Una gran alegría que el trabajo y esfuerzo de meses y años ahora se viera recompensado de una manera que nunca habría imaginado. Miedo, miedo de no estar a la altura y decepcionar a quien había puesto en mi toda su confianza. Confianza en mi capacidad para trabajar y para no desperdiciar la oportunidad que me estaban dando. Emoción, la emoción del que va a vivir una gran aventura, una aventura de compartir y aprender rodeado de viejos y nuevos amigos. Amigos que son grandes profesionales y que todos tienen el mismo nexo en común independientemente de su ciudad, país o continente de origen, el amor y el respeto por su profesión el body piercing.

Con todo esto en la cabeza pasaban las semanas, la fecha se acercaba, los mails explicativos llegaban cada vez con más asiduidad con una cantidad de información para facilitarme el trabajo. Y yo cada vez más nervioso deseando llegar a Las Vegas. Por fin llegué, ya estaba allí, ya no había marcha atrás. Desde el primer momento mis miedos, mis nervios, todo lo que me tenía preocupado desapareció como por arte de magia. Con los primeros encuentros y reuniones comprendí que aparte de trabajar y asistir a conferencias, iba a ser algo más, algo más importante y bonito de lo que yo podía imaginar. Según pasaban las horas sentí formar parte de una nueva familia, una familia en la que se apoyan y se quieren, en la que trabajan todos juntos para que el gran evento salga adelante sin fallos. Muchas horas de trabajo y siempre con una sonrisa y una palabra amable.

Abrazos, muchos abrazos que hacían que el stress desapareciese en cuestión de segundos. Así transcurrieron los días, la falta de sueño y el cansancio se notaban, pero no importaba valía la pena. Es muy difícil describir con palabras la gran experiencia que ha sido trabajar y como ha hecho que cambie mi visión de la conferencia y todo el esfuerzo que implica llevarla a cabo. Uno no se da cuenta hasta que no está dentro formando parte de la organización, solo por haber vivido esa experiencia todo el esfuerzo valió la pena. El maravilloso trabajo de los voluntarios y el gran grupo que forman con Caitlin al mando—sin ella sería imposible—Ver cómo trabaja ha sido algo increíble e inspirador, es admirable. El gran esfuerzo que hace la APP para llevar a cabo la conferencia, usando todos sus recursos tanto humanos como materiales. Ha sido genial formar parte de algo así. La única idea que tengo fija en mi cabeza es volver el año próximo como voluntario. Porque estoy seguro que la experiencia siempre será mil veces mejor que el año anterior y ahora que he entrado en la familia no quiero dejar de verla. Solo me queda dar las gracias de todo corazón, y en el corazón los llevo a todos.

Muchas, muchas gracias.

Os mando todo mi amor,

—Jose Carlos

**Gladix Porca Miseria (English Translation)**

This was the first time I have seen so many people come together and become emotionally united. It left such an impression on me! Since it was my first year, I don’t have anything to compare those connections to, but from the outside, one can witness the strong connection amongst the attendees and the bonds being built between one
there were a thousand emotions in the air. That last night all the volunteers went out to dinner together. We got on a bus where everyone was singing like crazy and laughing; dinner was hilarious. When we got back we made speeches for each other, which I hate. I find expressing my feelings on paper much easier than in front of everyone, especially when everyone else who did it before you was moved and emotions were high. I got emotional. I didn't say everything I wanted to say, but I am not sure I could ever find the right words. After a full week it is clear that there are a lot of people who work hard all year long so that everything runs smoothly and so that everyone can enjoy Conference.

I was astounded by Caitlin “Mama Duck”, she is efficiency personified; someone who can carry so much work load effortlessly. Her organization is more than admirable. Thank you for letting me be one more “duck.” I also find it admirable seeing people who have been volunteers for more than 17 years all working toward a common goal, knowing that they won’t get anything in return.

In Europe many believe that the APP is an elitist piercing association that has been dedicated to demonizing anyone who did not meet their standards. Now I know the importance it really has, since going behind the scenes at Conference and seeing there is so much more to the abbreviation. There are people who are so involved for the greater good of the industry, because of us. That is the real APP; the people who really help the industry and do everything possible to teach and nurture those who need it, all to help us progress. Thank you so much for choosing me to share this experience with all of you, I hope I can be a part of it for many years to come.

—Gladix Porca Miseria

**Lucina Ugarte (English Translation)**

The moment I received the call from Caitlin informing me that I had been granted the Al D. Scholarship will be one I never forget. Honestly, I never thought it would be awarded to me. From that day forward everything that occurred was and has been indescribable. I began to realize that there was a considerable amount of work
Cuando me llamó Caitlin para contarme que me habían otorgado la beca fue un momento que nunca olvidaré. Honestamente nunca pensé que me la darían. Y desde ese día en adelante fue indescriptible todo lo que fue sucediendo.

En seguida me di cuenta de que había mucho trabajo que hacer aun mucho antes del evento, charlas, videos, entrenamiento y conocer aunque sea de manera virtual a los que serían mis compañeros en ésta aventura. No tenía idea de la gran familia que habían estado formando durante años y años de trabajo voluntario en cada conferencia. Mucha gente linda empujando todos para el mismo lado. Me sentí abrumada al principio, sabiendo que la mayoría ya se conocían hace tiempo y yo era una completa extraña que ni siquiera hablaba el mismo idioma que ellos. No tardé mucho en darme cuenta de que todos mis prejuicios no tenían lugar en ésa gran y hermosa familia de voluntarios que no solo me integraron desde el principio, sino que se preocuparon por mi sabiendo de lo lejos que yo iba a viajar para participar de esta tan honorable tarea.

Y llegó el día del viaje. No fue un viaje fácil, ya en la primer escala me empecé a sentir enferma y pensé que no iba a lograr llegar al destino; a pesar de eso me autoconvencí de que debía estar bien, y no me podía dar el lujo de perder esta oportunidad. Compré una tableta de analgesicos y seguí mi camino. No fue fácil pero al llegar a Las Vegas todo se tornó mas real, ya estaba ahí!!!

Concerté con un colega para compartir viaje desde el aeropuerto al hotel y así fue. Cuando llegamos me estaba esperando mi compañera de cuarto, ella también había recibido la beca Al D.

El día siguiente comenzó temprano con una reunión para conocernos en persona todos los voluntarios. Woow! Eramos muchos mas de los que me había imaginado, y algunos eran voluntarios desde hacía más de 15 años. Luego siguió un pequeño tour por los distintos puestos que debíamos ocupar los siguientes cinco días. Llegó el momento de empezar a trabajar, durante toda la semana además de tomar las clases que habíamos elegido, nos rotábamos en distintas tareas, y así se pasó la semana. Con muchas cosas nuevas aprendidas y lo mejor de todo, la hermosa gente con la que compartimos una semana intensa pero que sin dudas volvería a repetir cada año. Los mejores recuerdos? El trayecto en bus hasta el restaurante en el que compartimos la última cena al final del congreso fue impagable, disfruté cada minuto a la ida y a la vuelta. El discurso final de Caitlin fue el broche que cerró tan maravillosa experiencia.

Lo volvería a repetir? Sin absolutamente ninguna duda!!! Espero verlos a todos el próximo año.

—Lucina Ugarte
Clockwise from the top: Hika k., Former Scholar with Kristen Young, Super Volunteer and Monica Sabin, Former Scholar; Zane Nichols, Super Volunteer with Andru Rogge, Former Scholar; Mandy Thiel, Scholar this year with Chadwick Jackson II, Super Volunteer; Jezebel Voulé with Monica Sabin, Former Scholar

CURRENT & FORMER AL D SCHOLARS
I was happy to participate in and read the article about Josh in Issue 71 of The Point. While writing my part of the article I cried buckets. Grief is a complicated thing. I thought I had gotten it out of my system and then saw the cover, and broke down again. Grief is such an ongoing thing.

Ryan Ouellette mentioned in his article (Issue 71) that I seem to select people to receive the award who I am close to both professionally and personally. I know that I am close to those who serve alongside of me in the trenches – who always help out just a little more and offer themselves when others have not.

Service has built our volunteer family. If you have not yet experienced the joys of volunteering – of sacrificing your time for others – I urge you to do so. Whether it’s in your community or in your industry, someone will be affected positively by your service, and the world will be better for it.

I was more than thrilled to present this year’s Josh A. Prentice Award to Jezebel Voulé, a good friend of mine; in fact I consider her family.

She came to us as an Al D. Sowers Scholarship applicant. She made it clear that no matter what we thought she WAS getting the scholarship. She was so persistent and genuine; so driven and focused. And so, she did get the scholarship.

Later I found out how much she had sacrificed to come to Conference. How she had raised the money to get there (going without electricity) and how hard she had worked to learn everything she could before coming to Conference.

Jezebel came back the following year to volunteer and has returned 7 years in a row. She’s a rule follower. While she continues to find balance between when to bend or break the rules, she is one of the most reliable volunteers. She consistently is reported as one of the most helpful people by volunteers and attendees alike.

She moved from a studio where they didn’t have any air-conditioning in Texas to an APP studio in Iowa; and eventually to her dream studio – finding a home at TRX in St. Louis. However the shop is not the only place she works hard. Recently she has also taken on the unpleasant task of collecting documents from our members and has made real progress with the project.

A few years back she spent Christmas with my family in Lawrence. By the end of that visit my whole family loved her as much as I do. She’s a member of my St. Louis family, who continues to support me while doing follow up medical appointments there. She is the only person who has gone to my dance class with me.

I will never not need her and the organization will never not need her to volunteer. She is a critical member of our team, is an innovator, an initiator, a team player, and a positive and friendly face to all strangers. And while it may not matter, I’m pretty sure Josh would’ve really liked her.
It's easy for me to sound like I have found religion when I talk about volunteering. For me it has easily saved me. It gives me a focal point in which I can see the immediate return of my investment (time) and makes me feel like I have a reason for being. I've always been a volunteer. However, volunteering for the APP has been different for me. It is the first time that I have felt, not only like I was a part of the greater good—a community—but also a family. Every year I get introduced to new family members I did not know existed, just like distant cousins at a family reunion. Some of them end up becoming so close to me that they become siblings. The APP and what it stands for is the first thing I have experienced that I don't mind testing my boundaries for. Sometimes to a fault. That's okay because that is what families do for each other; they support your aim to test your own limits and are willing to catch you when you fall.

The behind the scenes of the APP Conference is very much like that. Each volunteer tends to reach so far that they can overextend themselves and fall. Not because they were asked to but because they want to help so much that it doesn't seem like that big of a deal. As years have gone by, I have seen myself and those around me grow exponentially. I have seen the control freaks loosen their grips, the multi-taskers admit to their limits, and a plethora of other character strengths find out that sometimes there is too much of a good thing. Most of the volunteers do not just volunteer one week out of the year for APP, but rather for several months. Some even work on a weekly basis. The reason could be because we are either addicts or mad. However, I think it's because we love it. That love makes us want to be as close to it as possible and so we devote our time and energy throughout the year. Just so we can be a little bit closer to all the things we love about volunteering for the APP.

This year I won the Josh Prentice Award as a recognition of all the time I have put into the APP. It made me think about my journey. Not just as a piercer but as a person. Just like many, my first few Conferences were filled with doubt. I started by being overwhelmed by the thought that I would do everything wrong. That was a feeling I got from the moment my feet touched the Las Vegas soil my first time. A scholarship had gotten me there. During that week, I felt inept in my classes and I was intimidated on a career level by everyone I met. I was thankful to work because it was nice to be useful to the industry in at least one way.

My following year, at the Tropicana, I was excited because during this year—my second—I began to make bonds with people. I had really grown over the year but still knew that I was not who I wanted to be as a piercer. This was also the year I found out what I liked doing the best; I loved having to talk to people that I didn't know and forcing myself out of my personal bubble.

The years following had many little adventures. One year I unloaded the entire Conference by myself. Not because I had to, but because it was something I could do. I knew that when help arrived the help would be willing and able. Back then the Conference was smaller, and by the time everyone else showed up, when they were expected, I was already done unloading. That memory is one of my favorites because it makes me remember how bull-headed I can be, but also how determined. There are also memories of first meetings with those whom I consider family today; becoming not just a Conference family, but real family. I am now fortunate enough to spend Christmas and other holidays with those who hold a valuable place in my heart that have transcended the Association of Professional Piercers. At some point, I realized I was no longer the intimidated girl that arrived at my first Conference, but was now someone that people could look up to. Most importantly when I look back on my life as a volunteer I can look up to myself. I have become my very own role model.

I have become a better piercer because of Conference, but I know even more that I am a better person because I am a volunteer. I am thankful for that privilege. I am thankful to all those that volunteer around me. Not just those that take shifts to help Conference run smoothly, but those that volunteer information; those that are willing to ask questions that at least one other person was trying to get the nerve to ask; those that are willing to escort someone to their room that has exceeded their limits. To all those that make an impact on another either directly or indirectly I am thankful for you.
I have been trying to find the words to put on paper, to describe the evening of the 20th annual Banquet. This night was 20 years in the making; 20 years of history, progression, growth, and love. So much love that I do not think I will ever be able to adequately put into words, but I’ll try.

For many adolescents in North America, prom is one of the highlights of high school. When I think back 20 years to my own high school prom it is definitely a strong memory, but not necessarily a happy one. My own awards ceremony saw me accepting an award. As I graciously turned around to walk down the stairs, my heel caught the stairs and with a fumbling tumbling crash I laid in a heap at the bottom of the stairs, skirt over my head in front of 900 people. So when I found out this year’s Banquet theme was prom it was like I was given a do-over.

In celebration of the 20th anniversary of Conference, it seemed fitting to have its own prom awards. Brett Perkins was the captain of the ship for an evening under the sea. He had the job of loosening the crowd up with his charm and good looks. He also had the pleasure of handing out our prom awards which were voted on by all our attendees. (During the online registration process all attendees were asked to complete a survey in which they nominated the person they felt best exemplified the category in question. These results were compiled and the top three in each category were put forth to all registered attendees at Conference for the final vote. The votes were submitted through the Conference app or paper ballots.)

Well, needless to say I was speechless that my peers voted for me, and even happier that I made it up and down the stairs with more grace than in 1996.

Although the prom awards were a new addition to this year’s Banquet dinner, tradition was maintained with the dedication of long-standing awards. This year’s recipient of the President’s Award was Jef Saunders. You can read his response to winning in this issue. We also took time to say thank you to our volunteers and this year’s Josh.
Prom Queen Tod Almighty—photo by Matt Reyes

Prentice Volunteer Award, given to Jezebel Voulé. She is a long time volunteer and we are lucky to have her as part of our volunteer family. Her response to winning can also be found in this issue.

This year, some very special awards—fitting of a 20th anniversary—were also handed out. Conference would not be what it is today without some very important and long term supporters. This year’s Banquet took the opportunity to recognize two of those very important people and their companies.

Barry Blanchard is someone that inspires me both personally and professionally. In fact, I have a tattoo as a memento of a life changing day spent with him. I also know he has had that impact on many people within our community. It is only natural that celebrating 20 years also meant celebrating Barry and the Anatometal team. This award was to thank them for their support and inspiration over the past two decades, helping make this Conference what it is. From their raffle donations year after year, to the small details like the lanyards our attendees received and the lounge in the Grand Salon this year, Anatometal finds every way possible to support the APP and its mission. Anatometal was the APP’s first Corporate Sponsor and proudly adheres to the specifications and standards set forth by the APP. They want the best for both their customers and our industry.

PROM AWARDS
(WINNERS LISTED IN BOLD)

• Who in our Industry has the Most Positive Internet Presence?
  JEF SAUNDERS, LUIS GARCIA, BRIAN SKELLIE

• Who is the “Golden” Piercer? (Known for use of gold personally/professionally)
  MIRO HERNANDEZ, PERRY DOIG, NATE JANKE

• Who has the Best Facial Hair or Hair in General?
  CODY VAUGHN, RICHARD IVEY, WILL VONDOOME

• Who is the Best Photographer/Best Poster of Piercings on the Internet?
  ROB HILL, APRIL THOMAS, DAN STEINBACHER

• Who is the Most Fashionable Piercer/Snappiest Dresser?
  MIRO HERNANDEZ, TYLER MCCLURE, NATE JANKE

• Who is the Piercer or other Industry Worker with the Best Smile?
  KENDRA JANE, TYLER MCCLURE, MATEO WAY, JEF SAUNDERS

• Who is the Piercer Most Willing to Share Information?
  BRIAN SKELLIE, LUIS GARCIA, JEF SAUNDERS, RYAN OUELLETTE (TIE PUSHED TO FOUR)

• Who is the Friendliest Piercer?
  JEF SAUNDERS, WILL VONDOOME, LUIS GARCIA

• Who is the Most Inspiring Piercer in the Industry?
  JIM WARD, LUIS GARCIA, ELAYNE ANGEL

• Which is the Most Beautiful Studio?
  ST. SABRINA’S, BORN THIS WAY, SOL TRIBE

• Who should be our Prom King?
  PAUL KING, LUIS GARCIA, JEF SAUNDERS

• Who should be our Prom Queen?
  TOD ALMIGHTY, LAURA JANE LEONARD, COURTNEY MAXWELL
This year, Anatometal also received the Multiple Booth Award for their display within the Exposition. **JD Lorenz** also received special recognition for the constant and consistent support of Conference provided by Industrial Strength Body Jewelry. JD started out as a body piercer in the early 1990’s. At that time he realized there was a calling for a special type of jewelry and that it was his calling to produce it. Through perseverance and hard-work, Lorenz has taken his small one-room machine shop and has grown it into one of the largest manufacturers of fine quality body jewelry in the world. Industrial Strength has been a Corporate Member since 2002 and our Conference would not be what it is without them. I am fortunate enough to say that he also had a hand in changing my life, as his generosity has allowed many Al D. Scholars to come to Conference. I was one of those scholars in 2011. Between his generosity through raffle donations and scholar sponsorship, he has changed the lives of many piercers and is truly deserving of this award.

We also had the opportunity to recognize two women that have made a lasting impact not only on this Conference, but on our industry as a whole.

The first is an amazing lady. She is a powerhouse that has always pushed the organization to grow and evolve, **Bethrah Szumski**. The Banquet was the perfect place to honor her with an extra special thank you for her hard work and dedication. Through her years as either a Board Member or an Officer, she brought about numerous changes that have shaped the APP as we know it today. She has recently stepped down from the majority of her formal responsibilities, but she is still organizing our Members Retreat. To show our appreciation, Bethrah was presented with more than a few baths full of LUSH, one of her personal favorites. To read about everything she has done for the APP, please see the article in Issue 71 dedicated to her years of service.

The second woman that was recognized is a lady I hold very dear to my heart. I felt absolutely honored to present a special award to **Caitlin McDermid** for her hard work and unwavering dedication to the APP. Instead of trying to think of more to say about her, I will simply give you some familiar words about pie, a special adaptation to a piece by her favorite diner.

“...So why bother? Pie is never going to be as pretty as its more postured peers Cake or Tart. When roused from its nap on the cooling rack, a piece of pie will likely slump, undignified and oozing its filling while its once perfect crust slips out of alignment in rebellion at having been manhandled by a spatula. Pie is testy, it’s dough cantankerous (sometimes downright mean) in the hands of anyone who overlooks either the precise chemistry or the matronly patience to yield a pastry neither too flaky nor too firm. ‘Touch me,’ says the dough, ‘but not too much, and not there, now back away, don’t even look at me!’

... soon there would be the smell of warm butter and cinnamon... and then the most perfectly imperfect dessert would emerge from the oven, bubbling fruit through vented pastry, custard cooling and waiting to be topped with cream. It’s the tremendous effort involved in creating something so ordinary that makes pie my favorite dessert to make and to eat.

And so the answer to the question: Why Pie? is: Because Pie.”

Every Conference, every attendee, this lady knows it won’t be easy. She knows it will be temperamental. She knows there will be good days and bad, but it is worth the tremendous...
effort. She crafts the pie that is Conference. From everyone of us, volunteers, attendees, members: Mama Duck we love you. So why Caitlin? Because Caitlin.

I would like to extend a very special thanks to Prince Cyrus and Blessings To You, who were responsible for creating the weights and necklace that Caitlin was given.

Cyrus and Blessings To You also won the Single Booth Award for the second year running. Blessings To You, as Cyrus explained in his interview with Kimberly Zapata in Issue 68, is something that comes directly from his process of creating something for someone as a talisman, an object to carry and direct intention. This year the Amazonian collection was released—pythons, sloths, and, orchids oh my—all helping to raise awareness of the Amazon rainforest and the endangered species within it. This collection was so great I couldn't help but get a pair of sloths for myself.

As we finished our dessert and got our dancing shoes ready, the Creative Innovator Award was handed out, seeing Jimmy Buddha

and Diablo Organics winning for the sixth year in a row. You can read a full interview and photos of this year’s winning entry in this issue. This year, a first time exhibitor and entrant into the innovators competition, Dustin Allor of Phoenix Designs, won the Technical Innovator Award for her double daith spiral design. Learn a bit more about Dustin and how she has always been a trendsetter within our industry in this issue.

I am sure that many of us could have danced until the wee hours of Friday morning. This year’s Banquet and prom was a night filled with celebration, great memories, streakers, and a special feeling of community and family. In fact, the entire room even sang “happy birthday” to a little girl in Germany! To me all of this adds up to the perfect culmination of the events of the week. This year’s Banquet acted as the perfect night to capture the emotions that charged the week, celebrate the people that have contributed to our Conference and industry and without whom all of this would look very different.
PROM
photos by Autumn Swisher & Kerry Tasker

Top to bottom, Allen Falkner and Misty Forsberg; Danny Petersdorf and Flicka Accard; Laura Hayward; streakers
Clockwise from the top, Jeremiah Currier and Aaron Macabre; Brit Shostak and Desta Spence; Ismael Vargas and Alicia Cardenas; Tiana McGuire, Ryan Ouellette, and Gus Diamond; Paul King with heartthrob Aaron Foster.
**Brianna Sheehan**: Congratulations on winning the Creative Innovator award. How many times have you won the innovators award?

**Jimmy Buddha**: Thank you. I believe this will be the sixth one. I like the challenge it presents and the fact that it encourages innovation in our industry.

**Brianna**: To start, can you tell us about these labradorite saucers in detail? What went into designing them and making them a reality? What do you think makes these innovative?

**Jimmy**: My saddle spreader allows me to get more creative with material selection. Without the spreader, the flying saucers would be too heavy and impractical. Design wise, I have been playing around with different techniques to achieve unique textures in the body jewelry world. I feel the distressed metal juxtaposed with the clean lines of the highly polished labradorite give the piece a modern and rustic feel. It’s a fresh take on what we are used to in the body jewelry scene.

**Brianna**: One thing that I personally love about your work is that you have found a way to really showcase the stones you choose. It has definitely created a greater appreciation for natural stone among industry folk and clients alike. Which stones or materials are some of your favorites to work with?

**Jimmy**: I can appreciate all types of stones really; it’s part of why Diablo Organics has such a broad range of jewelry. Picking a favorite limits what I can do with design. If I had to pick some favorites, they would be amber, jade, and rutile materials. Keep your eyes open for more crazy stones!

**Brianna**: What are some characteristics you look for in the stones you choose?

**Jimmy**: I look for that small percentage of material that pops! Not all stones are created equal. For example, when I use labradorite, I’m not picking the cheap material that just has a tiny hint of flash, letting the name “labradorite” sell the jewelry. I want it to grab the customer with its super flash, which is what that material is all about.

**Brianna**: Anyone that follows your social media can see that you’re always on the hunt for material. How much of the raw material are you personally responsible for?

**Jimmy**: I personally select all of our material. But there are different degrees of discovery. My goal is to get as close as possible to the source. Sometimes this means I’m in the dirt. It gives me first crack at quality pieces, and the ability to cut out the middle man. This keeps things affordable and I learn tons about the material, how it is sourced, processed, etc. At the moment I am in Alaska on the hunt for fossil ivories and jade. Mixing travel, adventure, hard work and jewelry is what it is all about for me.

**Brianna**: You have a lot of people going crazy about the re-release of some Zoomorphic nephrite jade designs. Can you give us a brief history on Zoomorphic and what has made it so special?

**Jimmy**: Zoomorphic is the brain child of Cheyenne Sunhill, a close friend of mine, and one of the first modern day body jewelry designers to really push the limits. He is ahead of his time, and is always coming up with some far out concept. Jade is not just a pretty green stone. It’s intertwined with human history, our cultural and technological evolution as a species. The cultural impact of what this “tool stone” did still has influence today, even over ten thousand years later! Cheyenne understands this and brings it to his designs using jade as the medium.

**Brianna**: What made you decide to re-release these designs?

**Jimmy**: Cheyenne and I are on the same page when it comes to jade, so it just made sense that I do a little project with him in conjunction with launching Diablo Organics’ new jade line. I wanted to pay homage to his pieces, using Zoomorphic and the historical context of jade as my inspiration.

**Brianna**: Was this a one-time thing or can we expect to see more of it?

**Jimmy**: Haha! Yes, there will be more. I already have my calendar full with trips to source more jade!
Brianna: I really want to bring attention to the antique silver collection as well. To some, Diablo Organics is categorized as an organic jewelry company. Items like this, and others you’ve released, have completely stepped up the jewelry game.

Jimmy: Thank you. I started this jewelry “nonsense” out of curiosity and respect for modern and ancient body modification and the innate need to decorate our bodies. Over the years—coming up on 20 of them now—I’ve been lucky enough to travel the world and experience first-hand these practices in present day cultures, and study ancient cultures through artifacts and history.

Brianna: Can you tell us what lead to the production of it? What was your goal with this line?

Jimmy: I figured it was time. We are maturing as an industry and there is no reason why we shouldn’t be rocking real jewelry!

Brianna: Do you plan on releasing more “high end” items like these?

Jimmy: If we can sell it… You betcha!

Brianna: A lot of your jewelry is limited or “one off”. Can you explain the reasoning behind this?

Jimmy: Diablo Organics definitely has its catalog essentials lines, but I source crazy materials that need special attention sometimes. It keeps me on the hunt for new ideas, and challenges my creative abilities as well as my craftsmanship. Many times these ideas then trickle down into the catalog essentials.

Brianna: For those who are unfamiliar, what are some other things Diablo Organics offer aside from bad ass, rare, limited, fancy hanging designs?

Jimmy: You know that’s a good question, because so much attention is given to all of our crazy limited and fancy collections. Many times, the essentials are overlooked. We always have readily available, quality, economical lines in brass, both yellow and white, stone, wood, and other organics. Austin HQ is open 10-6, Texas time, 5 days a week and the ladies are there to sort everything out. From the get go, as a piercer and shop owner myself, I wanted to give the industry the bread and butter jewelry at affordable prices. We have stuck to that, staying wholesale only, with unbeatable prices and quality.

Brianna: What separates Diablo Organics from competitors offering some similar designs?

Jimmy: What competition? Haha, just kidding. Seriously though, we are doing our own thing. There is crossover here and there, because our lines encompass a lot, but we stick to customer service and functional, well-designed, quality jewelry for the budget beginner all the way up to the high end collector.

Brianna: What are your plans for Diablo Organics in the future?

Jimmy: We are always evolving so it’s hard to say, but we are moving in many different directions simultaneously. My crew makes this possible. If it wasn’t for Shanna and Kayleigh in the office, and Lauren on the road, we wouldn’t be able to make this happen. All I can say right now is we are just starting to pick up momentum!
From remote tribes to the rich and famous, jewelry has always played a significant role in personal adornment. While jewelry has been hand-crafted for thousands of years, it is an art that continues to evolve. The desire for unique modern body jewelry has inspired artists to create stunning pieces, these one off productions are sought after by collectors and take body jewelry to the next level. A truly unique piece was recognized at Conference this year. The 'Double Daith Spiral' designed and fabricated by Dustin Allor, brought attention to this first time vendor by winning the Innovator's Award.

**Tiffany Diamond:** Congratulations, Dustin! Looks like your company's debut at the 2015 conference was a success! Not only did you win an award for your unique daith spiral design, but I noticed quite a few of your pieces swinging from the lobes of my colleagues!

**Dustin Allor:** Thank you! I'm still feeling a whirlwind of emotions about it all! Shock, awe, floored by the recognition for my design and honored that people felt my work was winning material. I was speechless when it was announced at the APP Banquet! Had I had my wits about me I would have said thank you to a few people who have helped me recently, such as my super supportive husband, Gabriel who has been picking up my slack so I could focus on conference prep, my friend Philip Montoya for his guidance and help on outsourcing production, and my jewelry instructor Carianne Schulte who took extra time to help make sure I had everything together in a timely manner for the Expo. Seeing people wear my designs is thrilling and the best compliment ever! I have been designing in a vacuum for quite some time, so going to Conference and getting such a great response validates the path I'm on.

**Tiffany:** How long have you been designing jewelry?

**Dustin:** I have been designing jewelry since I was a kid. I worked at a bead store for a couple years as a teen and, really, I don't remember a time in my life where I wasn't making some form of jewelry. At one point I worked at Dakota Steel which gave me insight into the manufacturing process for body jewelry. Five years ago I entered into the jewelry program at Austin Community College and my skills have advanced significantly because of it. I find that making jewelry is a way for me to fit many passions and things in my life together, in a way that really makes sense.

**Tiffany:** Can you tell me about the process you used to fabricate the 'Double Daith Spiral'?

**Dustin:** It was absolutely grueling! The gold was a 24k pamp (a flat rectangle shape used by the Swiss when minting pure gold) that I melted down, alloyed to 18k and then poured into an ingot. From there I forged it until it was small enough to put it through the rolling mill, gradually reducing the size until it could be pulled through a series of holes in a drawplate, making it round and reducing it to the gauge desired, all while annealing it numerous times through each step. After I had the wire made, I hammered some out to make the bezel setting in the middle, bent all the pieces, soldered them together...
and set in an opal. The opal, I bought while visiting Australia ages ago, which goes back to jewelry-making giving purpose to things that I’ve had around forever. It was a lengthy process that was a HUGE pain in the ass, with numerous mistakes made, and although I’m glad to have learned to how do it and had that experience, I will be buying my wire premade from now on!

**Tiffany:** What inspired you to create this piece?

**Dustin:** I needed to create a piece of jewelry in gold for one of my classes and wanted something I could wear and would keep. I have had double daith piercings for ages and years ago had John Pecoraro of Pierced Out make a custom steel spiral for me to go through both piercings. It was a spiral made out of one wire, not two like my design, and I never quite got it to fit correctly before I lost it. After sorting through other design possibilities for those piercings I decided to revisit the spiral idea with a different take and a little more decoration.

**Tiffany:** This isn’t your first innovation, Dustin. I remember seeing your picture on the cover of a 1997 *Body Play* magazine showing off your split tongue! What gave you the idea and how did you execute the bifurcation of your own tongue?

**Dustin:** Body modifications have always resonated with me and I was a crazy teenager who started piercing at a studio after finishing an apprenticeship. I was living in my VW van in Santa Cruz, I was curious about how my body works, and how far I could push it and myself. Tongue spitting was totally uncharted territory, a leap into the unknown, and I was curious as hell. No one had any answers or experience with it so I had to sort it out on my own. What gave me the idea was the line of thought that if lizards could have forked tongues, why couldn’t I, why couldn’t I split my tongue? When you think about the logic there, it’s about as ridiculous as thinking if I cut holes into my lungs I should be able to breathe underwater like a fish! After watching how tongue piercings healed and going over possible scenarios on how to get a freshly cut tongue to heal, I decided that with my limited resources, cutting it slowly and letting it heal as it cut was the way to go. Monofilament looped tightly through an established tongue piercing was what I came up with. It hurt and when the pain died down I knew it was time to put a tighter line in. It sucked, but I was in control, it was totally manageable and was the challenge that I needed. I felt like a stronger person on the other side and I got an awesome modification out of it too. It is hard to wrap my head around having been the initial drop of water creating ripples that have turned into such a popular modification! It is a bit surreal!

**Tiffany:** You were an instructor for Fakir Musafar’s Piercing Intensives for fifteen years! Please share a little about that experience.

**Dustin:** It’s the longest I have ever held a job and I really enjoyed teaching there. The instructors I worked with are family and have held me up numerous times in life when I was sinking. Working with Fakir was fantastic too. Just when I’d think I had heard all his stories twice, he’d bust out with a new one that left my jaw on the floor! Did you know when he was in the Army he was close to an explosive when it went off and still has shrapnel in his knee?! The man has lived a hundred different lives! Teaching at the Intensives opened doors in my life giving me the opportunity to meet and network with many people in the industry, including you, Tiffany! I have had awesome mentors and coworkers, great job opportunities, fantastic adventures, and people I can call any time, friends who take the time to give me explanations and advice. I feel like I have been given so much, working in this industry! Teaching was a great way to give back some of what was given to me, passing on the knowledge and experience.

**Tiffany:** What have you been focusing on since leaving the Fakir Intensives?
Dustin: It has been all about jewelry making! I have been a full time student working towards an Associate Degree for jewelry making at Austin Community College and will complete my degree requirements next semester. I’m focusing on getting better at CAD for jewelry design which I have a ton of fun with, learning new skills, and starting a new company. In my free time, I occasionally play supporting roles in a friend’s transgender burlesque routines, which is a blast and a break from my life of all things jewelry!

Tiffany: Your designs have a unique aesthetic. How would you describe the style of your creations?

Dustin: I love using bats, insects and skulls in my designs. I see beauty in darker things that many find more grim or disturbing. Decay, the eerie stillness that accompanies it, old things abandoned and repurposed and transformation are all things I find appealing. I hope that people who have similar attractions are drawn to my designs. Piercers tend to be an odd bunch, so I feel I’m in good company!

Tiffany: What can we expect to see next from Phoenix Revival Jewelry?

Dustin: There are a ton of design ideas that I want to experiment with! I’d love to collaborate on designs with other artists as it is a great way to work off of others strengths and create something bigger than I could do on my own. I’ll have my wholesale-only store up on my website soon. This will allow me to share my new designs throughout the year and provide a way for shops to place orders. I’m already brainstorming plans for APP 2016. It feels like I have so much going on and I’m just getting started!

CONTACT INFO
PhoenixRevivalJewelry.com
(512) 522-9353
Every year I have the joy of working with an ever growing group of people who volunteer to help before, during, and after the Conference. Of all the things I do for the APP—of all the tasks that I do in my job—meeting, training, assisting, working alongside of, and getting to know these people is my favorite thing. Mentoring these young women & men to meet their own personal challenges through the act of service is the thing I am most proud of professionally.

This year our Al D. Sowers Scholarship recipients came from all over the world and came together to tackle all the new-ness that is Conference.

- Gladix (Gladys) Porca Miseria
- Sydney Harbaugh
- Jason Heeney
- Mariona Huertas Riera
- Aiden Johnson
- Charlie Remy LeBeau
- Paul Rainer – “Shannon Larratt – Industrial Strength” scholarship recipient
- Jose Carlos
- Mandy Thiel—“Industrial Strength” scholarship recipient
- Lucina Ayelen Ugarte Basulto

JD Lorenz and Industrial Strength donated two complete scholarships. Gorilla Glass, Quetzalli Jewelry, Intrinsic Body, Inc. and Anatometal all contributed to the scholarship fund in 2015. Stephen DeToma from Anatometal also ran a contest at the Expo challenging attendees to test...
their core strength, in the Plank position – and raised money towards next year’s fund.

We also had several piercers contribute passes and money to the No Excuses Scholarship fund which this year allowed Caleigh Bell-Morena, James Garvin, Jessica Stone, Emily Woods, Miriam “Loreia” Haslinger, Rob Gold, Anderson Reinkordt, and Matt Lyle to attend Conference.

The amazing amount of support the two scholarship programs receive is growing each year and this is a beautiful thing – we and the piercer recipients are so very grateful.

This year we invited a number of 2014 and 2013 scholars back to work with us, based on their outstanding performances:

• Marita Wikström
• Andre Nalin
• Ismael Vargas
• John Robberson
• Zach Fitzgerald
• Ryan Clark
• Jacob Spjut
• Nathan Grosvenor

Many of the following volunteers not only did all the things all volunteers do – but also served on the Speaker Operations, Product and Design, and Conference Operations Subcommittees.

I pushed some of the Super Volunteers to be involved in those committees, make training videos, and provided support to encourage them to do their own mentoring of the other volunteers. While most of them do a variety of jobs – they each have their “home base”.

Our Classroom Supers:

• Kristin Young (Speaker & Conference Operations Subcommittee)
• Seven Wolfe
• Ryan Feagin *Super in Training
• Chadwick Jackson
• Mike McInnes *Super in Training

Our Merch Booth Supers:

• Casey Hosch (Design / Product Subcommittee)
• Danny Greenwood (Design / Product Subcommittee)

• Monica Sabin
• Mark Montgomery

Our Raffle Booth Supers:

• Ken Seyler
• Zane Nichols
• Kenny Hughes

General Supers:

• Dianna Brown *Super in Training
• Andru Rogge

Our Registration Supers:

• Kendra Berndt (Conference Operations Subcommittee)
• Theo Sheffler
• Anna York
• Badur Ramji
• David Kelso
• Tiana McGuire
• Marina Pecorino

Our Information Booth Supers:

• Jezebel Voulé (Conference Operations Subcommittee)
• Luna Duran

Our AV Supers:

• Gus Diamond (Conference Committee)
• Allen Falkner
• Brian Moeller (Conference Committee & Speaker Operations Subcommittee)
• Shana Gyure
• Shorty Calma *Super in Training
• Ryan Clark

William Spencer (Conference Committee) and I shared the management of the volunteers. He’s always willing to pitch in and he keeps me from taking things too seriously while at the same time making sure I don’t forget to feed and water the volunteers. He also reminds me that there’s more to our experience at Conference than work. He jokes around a lot, but he’s an essential part of the team and a critical support to me personally and to the event.
We had a lot of returning LOVE volunteers and a few new ones:

- Amanda Badger
- Arik Johnson
- Aubrey Diebler
- Brittany Kronbeck
- Christina Blossey
- Dae Jedic
- Evan Quinno
- Hika Kierkenupp
- Julie Taylor
- Kaitlin Siebken
- Krystal Slager (Klos)
- Lani Soleil
- Rob Church
- Robyn Johnson
- Solo Paige-Turner
- Stephanie Hill
- Stephanie Savage
- Trist’n Peterson
- Vivi Contreras

As everyone here knows, the industry has been experiencing huge growth and this is clear at our Conference. The Conference Committee and the related subcommittees worked really hard to implement some new technology at Registration, the classroom doors, and booths, also creating new programs like the Conference smartphone app.

I need to give special thanks to a group of the volunteers. These folks worked extra outside of Conference and while at Conference to really make things happen this year. They are the best and the brightest of the bunch, reviewing countless spreadsheet-based schedules, doing research and writing merch proposals, proofing badge packets, proofing the website, and helping with the app. My job has grown too big and without my smarty pants team I wouldn't have made it.

Team AV
CONFERENCE SPONSOR THANK YOU

Every year the APP relies heavily on vendor sponsorships to assist us with the expenses incurred for our special events, services, and scholarships. If it wasn’t for these companies the APP Conference would be less than what it is every year. We urge you to consider supporting these companies throughout the year when stocking your shops. Please support those who support the APP!

LEVEL ONE: BANQUET DINNER
- Industrial Strength Body Jewelry
- Anatometal, Inc.
- LeRoi, Inc.

LEVEL TWO: OPENING PARTY
- NeoMetal, Inc.
- Buddha Jewelry Organics
- Safe Products
- Body Vibe

EXCLUSIVE SPONSORSHIP: ATTENDEE LOUNGE
- Anatometal, Inc.

EXCLUSIVE SPONSORSHIP: VOLUNTEER SUPPORT
- Body Vision Los Angeles
- Body Art Pro

LEVEL THREE: EXPOSITION COFFEE & REFRESHMENTS
- Anatometal, Inc.
- Omerica Organic
- Oracle Body Jewelry

LEVEL FOUR: AL D. SCHOLARSHIP
- Anatometal
- Gorilla Glass
- Quetzalli Jewelry
- Intrinsic Body, Inc.

Industrial Strength Body Jewelry also donated two complete packages for two additional Scholars (in the names of their company and Shannon Larratt).
Sponsors of our smartphone app include: Industrial Strength Body Jewelry, Blessings to You, Eleven44, Krak-en, Buddha Jewelry Organics, Namaste Adornments, Nakaztli, Tawapa, Prysm Body Piercing, Body Art Solutions, and Anatometal, Inc.

We would also like to thank Anatometal, Inc. for providing the Conference with badge lanyards this year.

A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO MAKE THIS CONFERENCE WHAT IT WAS.

RAFFLE THANK YOU

Each year at Conference, lives are changed. One of the catalysts for change is the big raffle prizes. In the past, these raffle prizes have been enough to allow winning piercers and/or shops to completely switch over from externally threaded jewelry, or meet standards for APP membership. This type of change can indeed be life altering. By providing such substantial prizes, sponsors Industrial Strength Body Jewelry and Anatometal, Inc. change our attendees lives and generate funds which help sustain the APP and its programs all year long. But remember it isn’t just our big donors; every vendor that donates and every attendee that purchases a raffle ticket helps the APP.

The APP would like to offer a very special thank you to Industrial Strength Body Jewelry and Anatometal, Inc. for their continued support on a grand scale!

- **Industrial Strength** donated $15,000.00 Grand Prize and $10,000 in smaller prizes
- **Anatometal, Inc.** donated $12,000.00, plus an additional four surprise prize packages given out at the banquet!!

The APP would also like to recognize our other top donors: BVLA; H2Ocean; LeRoi, Inc.; Glasswear Studios; Omerica Organic; and NeoMetal, Inc.

Thank you to all of our donating vendors and our attendees who made this a record year for the raffle!

TOP PRIZES & WINNERS FROM OUR BANQUET DINNER.

- Industrial Strength $15,000 of jewelry—Chrissy Shull
- Anatometal $1000/month for 12 months—Brand X
- H2O $1450 of product—Kim and Aya
- Industrial Strength $1000 credit—Trisha; Will VonDoome
- Omerica $1000 credit—Chris Norris
- Namaste $1000 credit—Amanda Waters
- APP free 2016 pass and 1/2 off a new attendee—Shorty; Woodstock

As some of you are aware, BVLA’s raffle prize was inadvertently left off in the 2015 Conference Raffle. We have been working with Nick and the team at BVLA to come up with the best way to remedy this. Generously, Nick and BVLA, understand that mistakes happen and we have moved forward to establish this special raffle, which is open to all attendees of the Conference. This does not include vendors or vendor workers unless they were also registered as general attendees. This does include all regular attendees whether or not they participated in the onsite raffle.

FROM NICK AND EVERYONE AT BVLA:
BVLA is proud to support the APP and offer this $5000 WHOLESALE jewelry prize to all 2015 Conference attendees.

- The sole winner will be able to order anything we make up to the $5000 value!!
- We wish to thank the APP for this opportunity and wish you the best of luck.

—Team BVLA

UPDATE!

The drawing was held at noon on August 20th, and the winner is Eva Nieto from Maya.

- Buddha Jewelry Organics $500 gift certificate—Stealy Tattoo and Piercing
- Industrial Strength $500 credit—Leo Cabrera; Gladix Porca Miseria; Alien Ink; Blake Williams
- Safe Products Stone Plugs $500 credit—Stephanie Hill; Jesse V.

Anatometal also surprised us all by giving away an additional 5 prizes of $1000/month of credit for 12 months!!!!

- The lucky winners were; Precision Body Arts, Adorn Body Art, Rick Hartwick, and Steph Devotchka.
The Leather Archive and Museum and the Association of Professional Piercers are thrilled with the success of the Sailor Sid Diller Photographic Archive fundraising campaign!

This project began in September 2014, when Elayne Angel forwarded an email to the APP from the Leather Archive, a non-profit museum[1], requesting a grant of $10,000 to preserve a fragile collection of Sailor Sid Diller’s ephemera, letters, photographs, and films, that had been passed on to the LA&M by Jim Ward.

The Officers and Board of Directors of the APP thought it would be best to share this undertaking with the greater piercing community. The goals of the fundraiser were to raise a considerable sum of money for preservation expenses, as well as educate folks in the piercing community who may have never heard of or knew very little about our communities’ historical figure “Sailor Sid.” the LA&M loved the idea of a fundraising campaign and worked closely with the APP in every step of the process. The financial goal was upped to $11,000 to cover most of the costs of gifts to those that would contribute to the campaign. The online Indiegogo portion would be $6000 with the APP committing to match up to another $5000. The campaign was a resounding success exceeding all expectations!

The Indiegogo online campaign raised $12,286, with 102 registered contributors.[2] The largest contributors were Badur Ramji (Punkmedics) and Vaughn Body Arts (Cody Vaughn) at $2,500 each, Tiffany Diamond (DV8 Body Art) at $1,000, and 3 additional contributors: James Weber, Metamorphosis (Kristin and Joe Otter), and Billy Wood Jr., at $500 each. If you see these folks out and about or online, please thank them! In addition to the online Indiegogo campaign, the APP raised another $2,654 onsite at Conference and LA&M raised $3,824 from a business donor. Altogether, we were able to raise funds totalling $23,764!

Originally, the scope of this endeavor was focused on preservation with the intent to share a representative selection of the digitized photographs and films online. However, as a result of the exceptional support, the LA&M has committed to digitizing the entirety of Sailor Sid’s archive, making it all available online! This will be a huge and unprecedented undertaking for our communities.

In addition, this project raised enough funds to cover the expense of an exhibition featuring original materials and film screenings during the next annual APP Conference and Exposition. [3]LA&M’s archivist, Jakob Vanlammeren, will be in person to oversee the exhibit and lead small groups on tours.

Both the LA&M and the APP are excited about the possibilities for future projects that will save precious collections that are historically significant to both communities.

The campaign would like to acknowledge the efforts of the individual team members that helped make this happen: from LA&M—Rick Storer (executive director), Jakob Vanlammeren (archivist and project lead), Jeffrey Storer (social media), and Christina Court (reviewer), as well as from the APP—Paul King (advisor), Miro Hernandez (social media), and Dannielle Greenwood (designer), Matte Erickson (BPA), Becky Dill (BPA), and Kendra Jane Berndt (BPA).
January 2015 started off with a bang. Emails, Facebook notifications, and text messages started flooding our inboxes, as serious discussion began in preparation of creating the Body Piercing Archives. It had begun. Months of casual conversations were now not so casual. They had intent and a purpose to preserve the history of the body piercing industry. The core players were in place with only a general idea of where this was going to take us. The boxes started arriving. Details were worked out. Goals were set. All the pieces were falling into place.

One month later, the three of us (Paul King, Becky Dill, and myself) sat on the floor of Paul’s apartment discussing proper handling of ephemera and other technical details before digging through the boxes and envelopes that had arrived over the last few weeks. Time flew by. We were completely lost in the moment. Eight hours later, we set a time for our next meeting and said our goodbyes.

It took three meetings to get all the items photographed and categorized by year. During this time we were constantly receiving data, more ephemera, and doing individual research on our off time. Finally, we got to sit back, admire our work, and decide just how we were going to put all this information together into a cohesive display. Over the next two months, we were averaging an eight hour, in person, meeting every two weeks. This involved an insane amount of reading and scanning, as well as at least a half dozen layout changes.

As Conference drew closer, our lives became organized chaos to say the least. Long hours and late night phone calls became the norm. Contributors were pushed to their limits—thank you from the bottom of my heart, Barry Blanchard and Gus Diamond—and vendors were put to the test. We literally received the last printed items 3 days before I was to leave for Las Vegas.

The first day of Conference I found myself standing in Bronze 4 with stacks of boxes. With each box that was opened, our dream came closer to fruition. The next two days were spent unpacking items, filling flash drives, and building a beautiful tribute. With the help of several volunteers, the room slowly took shape and became the Body Piercing Archive’s first exhibit.

First thing Wednesday morning, the doors finally opened to the public. As our peers filed through the exhibit, there were a myriad of emotions. People laughed. Several people cried. People were chomping at the bit to give docent tours—thank you to all the people that volunteered—and even more were excited to hear the stories first hand. There was a definite energy in the air. One of my personal highlights (one of many) was David Vidra watching the slideshow, talking about all the people in the photos in a way only Mama could. Many attendees also brought with them personal stories to share and add to what our docents were offering. This all contributed to the experience. Many stories were passed back and forth between attendees as banners chocked full of data were read, analyzed, and discussed. The banner topics included key articles, Board Members, membership, Conferences, The Point covers (and evolution), volunteer information, Al D. Scholarship recipients, International Conferences, and a touching tribute to Raelyn Gallina. Information on the Sailor Sid archive preservation fundraising campaign and a sneak peek at next year’s exhibition was also included.

Over the two and a half days of the exhibit, hundreds of people filed through. Some reminisced, some learned a few things, many learned quite a bit. I think everyone who attended took something away with them that, I hope, will stay with them for many years to come. I believe our goal was met and exceeded based on the feedback from the attendees. It has truly been a labor of love.

This exhibit could not have been possible without the unwavering dedication of Paul King and Becky Dill. I would also like to thank Be-
thrah Szumski for never throwing anything away and for having a memory like a steel trap, Caitlin McDiarmid for keeping great records, Barry Blanchard for taking and keeping so many photos, Gus Diamond for having the foresight to shoot lots of video when nobody else was, Brian Skellie for helping fill in some of the blanks, Fakir Musafar and Babs McGary for their generous donations for the Raelyn tribute, and all the people that allowed us to pick their brains. Also a big thanks to The Point staff for getting the word out there for us.

If you would like more information on or would like to make donations to the Body Piercing Archive, please email us at archive@safepiercing.org.
IMAGES FROM THE BODY PIERCING ARCHIVE EXHIBIT
Hello Members and Readers! We have just wrapped up another successful Conference and have many big things on the horizon. Here are our most recent updates and announcements.

**2015 BILLING & CERTIFICATE UPDATE**

Membership dues billing has traditionally taken place in February with the due date at the end of May—when certificates expire. This year the APP changed the timing of when billing takes place and when membership dues are paid.

2015 certificates were issued in May of 2015 with no payment required from an existing member and are good until the end of 2015. Bills will be sent at the end of September, with membership dues for 2016 being due by the end of December 2015. The certificate received from this payment will go from January to December 2016. This will effectively move our billing cycle to the end of the year for all members.

Those new members paying initial dues in July-December, will not be billed for the following year, but will be issued a 2016 certificate along with the rest of paying members in December.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CRITERIA COMPLIANCE CHECK**

Notices were sent to Members this Spring who need to update their environmental criteria.

To ensure all of our members are operating at the current minimum standards, we are requiring that all current members who have a video walk through and environmental criteria older than two years provide an updated video walk through and submit updated environmental criteria.

Members who received this notice will need to submit these updates by January 1st, 2016. There will be no video processing fee with digital or hard copy submissions.

**NEW LATE DUES POLICY**

(2016 Billing Cycle: Notice of Membership Dues will be sent September 2015; and due by December 31, 2016.)

Any member who has failed to pay dues and/or provide evidence of membership certification and testing requirements (CPR certification, First Aid Certification, BBP certification, autoclave spore test results) by 6 months after the Membership Renewal due date will be required to re-apply in full with the Membership Committee.

The renewal fee will be the same as the yearly membership dues.

**UPCOMING ELECTIONS**

In the fall the Association will begin elections for three seats on the board. These seats are currently occupied by Brian Skellie, Ashley Misako, and Chris Glunt. Brian is not eligible for re-election at this time; Ashley Misako is able to be re-nominated/elected.

The APP will be sending out nomination forms in the Fall to voting members of the APP, which are business members and business members at large. This election is for two seats on the Board.

Once received, voting members will have 30 days to return nomination forms selecting two people from the list of eligible members as their choice. At that time, the office will send Nominees information about what it means to serve as a Board member, and paperwork including a form to return to the office to accept or deny their nomination.

After 30 days, ballots and bios of the nominees will be sent to all voting members. Please participate in the election and in your Association by voting! Members will have 30 days to return ballots to the office. Once the results are tabulated and the entire election is reviewed and certified, the APP will contact the nominees about the results. Those elected will attend a Board meeting (tentatively March), and take office in July at the Annual Conference.

**Who is eligible to run?**

Only voting members are eligible; for the APP these are Business Members and Business Members at Large. As specified by the APP’s bylaws, each Director can hold office for no more than three years in any given position, and can serve no more than two consecutive terms. If a
member has filled two different seats in two consecutive elections, that person cannot immediately run again and must be off the Board for at least one election cycle before being eligible to serve again.

Nomination packets sent to members will have a list of eligible members to select from. And yes, you are allowed to nominate yourself.

**What is the difference between an Officer & a Director?**

The bylaws clearly outline the titles of the Officers: President, Secretary, and Chief Financial Officer (or Treasurer); but leave the other titles and job descriptions to the discretion of the Board itself. The bylaws further state the Officers may be members of the Board of Directors, but this is not required, as the Officers are elected to their positions by the Board of Directors. Officers are allowed to be compensated for their work; Directors are not. Officers are not subject to terms limits, unless also Board Members. The current Officers are Brian Skellie, President; Paul King, Treasurer; and Aaron Pollack, Secretary. However, of the Officers, only Brian is also a Director. Brian has voting rights as a Director and is subject to the 3 year term limit.

**Is it important that I vote?**

Yes. The Board of Directors, while working for the membership and the mission of the Association bring their own talents and experiences to the table. Every Board will govern a little differently or want to push the Association in different directions, have varied outreach interests, and/or see different opportunities available to the Association. As a voting member it is your right and responsibility to be sure those elected will do their very best, have a mission focus rather than a personal agenda, and have time and energy to devote to this important task. If the APP doesn’t get enough votes cast to have a quorum, the entire election has to be redone. This is an avoidable expense and time-suck from the Association. Your vote is important in many ways. Please remember to vote!

**How do I know if I (or someone else) would make a good candidate for a Board position?**

Ask/Answer these questions:

1. **Do you have the time and energy?**
   All Board Members travel for APP board meetings, annual Conference, health conference/s, and miscellaneous travel such as membership assistance and Conference planning. Average time away from work is twenty five to thirty days per year. Most of the time, you will make your own travel arrangements, but you will be reimbursed your costs. It is estimated a Board Member will spend a minimum of ten hours per week on APP duties for three years.

2. **Can you present yourself in a professional manner, verbally and in print? Can you present the APP’s stance even if it differs from your personal opinion?**
   Most Board Members provide interviews with the press when required, in a professional manner. Most Board Members contribute articles and promote article submission from the APP membership or other potentially informative parties for The Point and other APP publications or online settings.
   All Board Members respond to emails from other Board Members, the employee, members, general public, etc. in a timely and professional fashion.

3. **Have you been actively serving on a committee or have you volunteered, taught, or led a round table at the APP Conference?**
   All Board Members actively participate in ongoing projects and the APP educational Conference; including teaching classes and other duties as assigned. Having an ongoing history of performing these duties is the best preparation for serving as a Board Member.

4. **Are you able to keep matters to yourself? Not gossip? Understand your behavior will be under scrutiny at all times? Behave professionally even when no one is watching? Keep your cool online? Not be drawn into arguments or into offering your opinion as separate from the APP’s position on something?**
   All Board Members must sign and abide by a confidentiality statement and statement of conduct. All Board Members must conduct themselves for the duration of their term, in a way that reflects the mission and professional attitude of the Association, acknowledging their position as a leader, role model, and spokesperson for the membership, organization, and industry at large. It’s a big job and responsibility but it’s also hugely rewarding. Need more information? Talk to your current Board Members; they too wondered what it would be like, and now they most certainly know.

**WEBSITE UPDATE**

Our web presence as an Association is constantly evolving to better serve our members and the public at large. Our newest version of our website has recently launched. Be sure to check it out: www.safepiercing.org

**2016 APP CONFERENCE AND EXPOSITION**

We are excited to announce the location and dates for the 2016 APP Conference and Exposition.

Where: Bally’s Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, NV

When: July 24- July 29 2016

Can’t wait to see you all there!
The Association of Professional Piercers is proud to announce our first ever APP Members Retreat. The retreat will be held at Hard Labor State Creek Park in Rutledge, GA from September 29, 2015 to October 3, 2015. Attendance is limited to APP Business Members and Business Members at Large and registration is limited to 100 people. Registration closed September 20. We can’t wait to see you there.

**HOW TO GET HERE:**

**For those who are driving from Atlanta:**
- Take I20 East from Atlanta
- Get off at Newborn Rd. Exit and go left
- Follow signs to Hard Labor Creek
- Follow sign for main park entrance
- Continue on that road until you cross a small bridge and then take an immediate right—this is the road to Camp Rutledge. Pass through the gate, entry code is #1234. ([Directions](#)) Permits are required—we will have them for you when you arrive at the camp.

**For those taking our transportation from Atlanta:**
- First, to get to the pick up location:
- The Atlanta [MARTA](#) train system is VERY simple. There are only 3 trains! The system is convenient and safe and starts at the Atlanta domestic airport terminal. The DORAVILLE train, northbound will take you to the Chamblee station.

**Our transport to and from the camp:**
- Shuttle service will pick up and drop off at the Chamblee station. Departure time September 29th will be 4:30pm. Shuttle will depart from the camp October 3, at 9:30am and arrive at the Chamblee station at around 11:00am.

Camp APP is providing an opportunity to explore previously unused advanced curriculum as well as more thoroughly presenting topics that can only be touched on in Las Vegas. Workshop leads and instructors will be posting about their sessions in the main forum and on the event page. The certificates for this event will both read and be distributed differently than ever before. Attendees will receive their certificates during the closing session.
We also understand how important eating well is when you are in the forest. We are striving to cover all of the bases here. There will be plenty of vegan and omnivore options.

We will also be fortunate enough to have some extra special additions to our menu.

**SOME OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW**

- No procedures will be performed
- No Wi-fi
- Limited phone reception
- Fishing licenses are available at the ranger station
- No pets
- No projectile weapons of any sort.

**SPECIAL EVENTS**

**GROUNDING AND PUBLIC SPEAKING**

(John Johnson)

APP member John Johnson first started teaching Bedside Manner and Grounding in Las Vegas in 2008 and this fall he's teaching Public Speaking and Grounding at the member's retreat. The mission of the APP is to disseminate health and safety information relevant to body piercing and public speaking is a great way to fulfill that mission. Our members often get this opportunity and this class will help them be prepared. As a professional piercer you may be asked to speak to groups like schools, health departments, and professional organizations.

Public speaking doesn't come naturally for anyone. This is a skill we all have to work on and develop through experience and hard work. If you speak to any group about piercing you represent yourself, your studio, and the association. We want you to be confident, competent, and prepared. After attending John's course you'll have the tools to prepare both yourself and a presentation that impresses and engages your audience.

**MOVIES**

(Paul King)

What camp out would be complete without a movie night? We will have an assortment of films including action, comedy, body piercing classics, as well as horror films situated in the woods of course!!!!

We even have a surprise Hollywood blockbuster filmed on location at our camp! How terrifying :) Don't blame us for your nightmares, you guys get to compete for what you watch.

So bring your comfy PJs and enjoy the snacks, popcorn, and soda.
• OSHA— IT ISN’T JUST ABOUT THE BLOOD
   (John Johnson, Rick Frueh)

We all know that OSHA is about worker safety. We have all taken a Blood Borne Pathogens courses, many many times. Need to renew your certificate? Well, sorry but this isn’t that class. In this 2 hour seminar we will be going into detail about some other aspects of OSHA that apply directly to the body piercing industry. Topics will range from Fire Safety to Electrical Standards and several points in between. John Johnson and Rick Frueh will be co-instructing. They are both Authorized OSHA Outreach Instructors for General Industry. If you have ever had an OSHA specific question this is the course to ask it.

• SOCIAL MEDIA WORKSHOP
   (Social Media Committee)

Ever wonder how to make pictures look their best working with the equipment you already have? Do you have poor lighting in your studio or outside and are looking for ways to improve your media content? Join us for our content creation workshop! We will be covering everything from equipment, lighting techniques, apps, detachable lenses and setting up a photo studio in your piercing shop. Bring your smartphones, or even your full sized cameras!

The second part of our workshop will include a round table discussing ways to increase your media reach beyond Facebook and Instagram. We will cover utilizing the social functions of review sites such as Google and Yelp, as well as some newer options like Reddit and Four-square. See you there!

• DIALING IN JEWELRY SALES WORKSHOP
   (Bethrah Szumski lead)

We have had numerous presentations about how to up-sell. Particularly for gold and genuine stones. The skill involved in selling people not only higher price point products but items that fit their style and personality has been generally under addressed. This session will cover three main points. First how color theory works both in metal/stone combinations and skin tone. Second, how color forecasting effects fashion and design. Third, ways to assess and talk with clients, incorporating these concepts and their personal preferences, to fit them with jewelry that they will be happy about buying.

We will also have four other workshops available, including a hand positioning workshop, we will be sure to update you as details are available.

• HAND POSITIONING WORKSHOP
   (Luis García lead)

Whether you work freehand, with tools or somewhere in between, hand positioning is crucial. This session will focus on this for all style preferences. Participants will be able to focus on areas they find difficult as well as demonstrate the techniques they excell at.

• FINE TUNING THE EYE WORKSHOP
   (Chrissy Shull lead)

Just as athletes can always find small ways to improve their performance, body piercers can and should as well! Accuracy and consistency can be fine tuned by a better understanding of visual perceptions and how they apply to marking and performing a piercing. This workshop will utilize a series of exercises that will give you the opportunity to discover your blind spots and how to work with them, how you personally perceive depth and shape and how to use your perception to your advantage, and visual illusions and how they might be affecting the quality of your work.

• ADVANCED INDUSTRIAL CONCEPTS WORKSHOP
   (Rob Hill lead)

Techniques that can apply to the most advanced industrial piercings. Starting off with some modern tips for traditional industrials, we will build off that with some key tips and tricks to help you nail those multi point and curved industrial projects taking your skills to the next level.

• PRACTICAL ASEPSIS WORKSHOP
   (Brian Skellie lead)

This workshop will include discussion and demonstration of achievable means to establish and maintain asepsis for procedures. Brian will facilitate a roundtable to concentrate upon the interdependent concepts, methods and equipment available for aseptic contact and non-touch techniques.

This should be an extension of the concepts discussed in the workshops, designed for members to go further. Come share your thoughts and learn more about safety and quality.
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