Whether you are a piercer in a small shop in Germany or an American piercer working at one of the country’s busiest shops, we all have the obligation to open our hearts and our shops, to build up the piercing community and strengthen the industry. So, like with food, it is not so important what we are piercing but who we interact with and who we inspire to be better through our work. It is the people of this industry that are the important part.

So as another year ends, let us reach out to one another. Let us make this planet feel a little bit smaller. We all share a common love of this industry; let’s make sure that we share that love in 2017.

Marina Pecorino

With this issue I am proud to announce that my responsibilities with the APP continue to grow. This new development has me involved with administrative tasks and membership records. As 2016 draws to an end, I have the pleasure of printing, packing, and mailing our 2017 membership certificates (oh, by the way, they’re vertical and absolutely awesome.) This is giving me some new perspective on the size and reach of our organization, and I’d like to share some of that information with you.

In Issue 76, we shared some data about the country of residence for our 2016 Conference attendees who received seminar certificates for attending classes. This map shows a large Canadian, South American, Australian, and European attendance.

Now I’d like to share a map depicting the location of APP Members based on their country of residence. Certainly, as one might expect, the predominance of our membership is housed in North America, but our membership also reaches several other continents.

Outside of the United States and Canada, the largest collection of APP Members can be found in Australia, followed closely by the United Kingdom and Mexico.

Mexico and the UK have dedicated professional associations for piercers. Both the Latinoamérica Body Piercing A.C. (LBP) and United Kingdom’s Association of Professional Piercers (UKAPP) are fledgling organizations, but they have strong members and advocates. Much like the APP, these associations were formed to disseminate industry specific education for professional piercers, health officials, and the general public, with a focus on raising the standards. Despite the similarities between organizations, each offers unique benefits and specializations for it’s members with regard to provincial obstacles.

Despite the vastness of our global population and geography, there are passionate body modification practitioners and advocates around the world. With hard work, dedication, and cooperation, we can work toward consistent improvement and an expanded knowledge base. I encourage you all to check out LBP, UKAPP, and other local and international groups. Socialize, share, and learn. We’re all in this together.

Kendra Jane B

It is no secret that I love food, I love to cook, and most of all I love to feed people. There is something magical that happens when people come together to break bread, or cookies, or pie. I find that when we share food something special happens, prejudices fade away, preconceived notions of our dining partners no longer seem relevant, and our differences seem less noticeable.

Now it is also no secret that over the past year many of us have seen things that have angered us, saddened us, and for many of us left hurt—a deep and genuine hurt, the type that breeds fear and hate. Over the past months I have felt this deep hurt and been saddened in ways I didn’t know were possible. As a result, I have been cooking up a storm. I have cooked comfort food, and I have cooked warm spicy food, food that feels like a hug, but most importantly I have cooked for those I want to spend time with. In that process I have realized that in a climate of anger and sadness we cannot let fear take hold. Instead we must open our hearts and our homes, we must break bread and build better communities. After all “it’s not so much what’s on the table but who is at the table” which has become so important to me.

In many ways cooking is like piercing, there are basics that are fundamental to ensuring success, however many aspects are open to interpretation and variation without sacrificing the final product. From a simple grilled cheese to the most elaborate 10-course meal, food has the ability to stir emotion, strengthen bonds, and create intimacy. A basic eyebrow piercing or a multipoint ear project both also have the ability to build bonds, continue traditions, or to create a positive and lasting memory.

For the exact number of APP Members per country, an interactive version of this map is available.
As we usher in 2017, I’d like to take time to ponder all of the efforts that are taking place worldwide to make body piercing safer and to promote health and safety education. The more I travel, the more I see how far these efforts really have made it. Everywhere more and more sister organizations to the APP are sprouting and developing educational opportunities for piercers worldwide. These are exciting times!

I was fortunate enough to attend and instruct at the 2016 LBP Conference. It was my third time teaching in Mexico, and I must say it is one of my favorite events. The conference was once again in Tlaxcala, and each year the sunsets seem to get more spectacular. I did my best to attend as many classes as I could, and I was not disappointed. This year’s conference seemed to have a dual concentration on history and cutting edge health and safety. Blake Perlingieri and Danny Yerna both presented outstanding lectures on their perspectives of history in body piercing. I left these classrooms feeling reinvigorated and thankful to have heard these stories from the piercers themselves. Many of the instructors at LBP offered elements of health and safety education, each seeming to build on the information that came before them. In particular, I felt Alejandro Hernandez Salazar (Arte) had an especially well thought out and well researched class on asepsis. I loved his perspective and his passion was palpable; I felt lucky to be there for his presentation. I strongly encourage piercers in South and Central America (and around the world!) to try to attend the next LBP Conference. You will not be disappointed!

The UKAPP held its second annual meetup in Britain this summer. The Point is lucky to have had UKAPP President, Nicole Holmes, give us the behind the scenes details about their conference. It is really exciting to see this sister organization making such wonderful strides!

Luis Garcia has also written a recap of the 2016 BMXnet Conference for The Point. This educational gathering continues to be immensely popular. It is very reassuring to see that body art education can have such staying power, and I know that piercers and body modification artists all over the world look forward to BMXnet, to learn and spend time with their colleagues. I hope to join them one of these years!

In winter of 2016, the APP introduced our first ever Apprenticeship Guidelines. This was a pet project of mine, and something that I’ve been very passionate about for several years. Fortunately, dozens of people worked together and contributed to make the guidelines a reality. I wasn’t quite prepared for how much these guidelines resonated within our community! Within a few weeks, Ronaldo Sampaio from Brazil had developed a Portuguese translation! This was really very special to me, and I thank him and his assistants for making this translation happen.

The year ahead brings us new opportunities to improve. With more and more education becoming available around the globe, safe piercing is more accessible than ever before! The piercers and other professionals involved in educating our community have my deepest thanks for all of their hard work. To those attending classes, participating in professional discussion, and constantly improving, thank you for making piercing safer!
Camp APP 2016

photos by April Thomas
I have to admit that I wasn’t entirely sure what to expect from Camp APP. Let’s be honest, when we think of body piercing we don’t usually think of camping, and vice versa. Upon arrival, I found myself comparing Camp to Conference. In fact, I noticed a lot of piercers making that same analogy. While Vegas can be loud and quite overwhelming, I found Camp to be the polar opposite. The vibe was exceptionally laid back and as you can imagine, it was so much quieter than Vegas.

Last year I sadly had to miss Camp, so this was my first time trip to the Hard Labor Creek State Park and “piercer Camp”. I was impressed with how intimate the workshops were. Rather than having hundreds of piercers in a huge room for a lecture, we worked in small groups and were able to exchange ideas and perspectives. I found this aspect of Camp resonated with me; we rarely get this kind of opportunity, all contributing in this most amazing learning environment. How often do piercers of different skill levels and backgrounds get together to show each other their own style of setting up a tray or marking for placement of a ring? It felt strange, surreal and was downright exciting to end up in a small group with Steve Joyner and Paul King. These guys are big names in the industry and they were discussing basic level piercing techniques with me. Something I really value as a newer piercer, having so many opinions and techniques available to me to better my piercing. I would have never had that opportunity had I not attended Camp. We had open discussions about topics we may not all agree on, but even when we disagreed, we were respectful of different opinions as well as open to hearing other ideas.

Outside of classes and workshops, time was spent getting to know people I may have never had the chance to get to know in Vegas, or catching up with old friends that I hadn’t seen in a while. I’ve found that one of the drawbacks to Conference is that conversations are often cut short by having to rush to class or interrupted by needing to be somewhere. This wasn’t the case at Camp. We were able to have extended discussions and conversations that continued over the course of several days. There was also a strong sense of community in the fact that we were all APP Members and we had all gone through the same process in order to get to Camp. It felt like everyone contributed to a bigger and greater experience because of this connection; whether they were helping out in the kitchen or finding an activity to do. Speaking of activities there were so many over the week, but the highlights included: watching shooting stars, seeing several piercers jump semi naked into a lake, and witnessing a piercer breathe fire. I really could write a neverending list of the memories we built and shared.

I also have to note that none of this would have happened without Bethrah and you could truly see how much effort she had put into it. There was a plethora of tea, coffee, snacks, and games. Vegans didn’t have to worry about their dietary restrictions because Bethrah and John Johnson made sure that they had options (even vegan desserts!) It really is a special week where everyone there is welcomed with open arms. Don’t get me wrong, I love Conference and Vegas is great, but Camp felt special on a personal and professional level; I would recommend it to any piercer. I am already looking forward to next year.
Top to bottom: needle bending practice; John Johnson enjoying a moment of calm. Courtney Jane Maxwell playing Jenga—where it wobbles and it wobbles.

Top to bottom: Gigi Gits vs. Jef Saunders; Aaron Pollack vs. Rob Hill; Matt Bavougian vs. Mic Rawls; Steve Joyner vs. Courtney Jane Maxwell

LET'S WRESTLE!
The Piercing Bible
The Definitive Guide to Safe Body Piercing
by Elayne Angel

This one-of-a-kind comprehensive resource covers everything piercers and piercees need to know about the subject. Piercing pioneer and authority Elayne Angel shares her exhaustive knowledge about piercing techniques, jewelry, placements, aftercare, troubleshooting, and more.

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.

Available for wholesale or retail purchase through the APP office: 1 (888) 888-1APP or APP website: www.safepiercing.org

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“Essential reading for anyone who wants to understand how modern body piercing arrived at the place it currently occupies.”
James Weber, Former President Association of Professional Piercers
This year was the first time in almost a decade that I got the chance to go attend BMXnet, and it was as fun and crazy as I remember it. This Conference started as an offshoot to the Body Modification Exchange social website, a place created to openly share information for all forms of body modification, with little to no limit or censorship. The BMXnet Conference is a unicorn in many ways. It takes place at a wonderful place called Unperfekthaus in Essen, Germany, which is a combination of a café, bar, restaurant, show venue, art gallery, collective art studio, hostel, and hotel. You’d expect a combo like this to be less than viable, but it actually works perfectly. It’s uniqueness really is a great fit for BMXnet.

The classes offered cover almost all aspects of body modification: piercing, tattooing, scarification, sterilization, and implants. Live demonstrations are offered with instructors like Brian Skellie, Paul King, Steve Haworth, Samppa von Cyborg, and Brenno Alberti, just to name a few. Suspensions are facilitated on the rooftop garden of the Unperfekthaus, overlooking the urban retail neighborhood. Instructors and attendees come from all over Europe, the US, and even some from South America. Most classes are in English and German, though this year several of the classes were taught in Spanish, as there was a very large attendee contingent from Spain.

BMXnet is run in a very laid back manner, with very little official structure. I’m old and my brain likes structure, so I found the lack of structure a bit crazy, but this format works very well for BMXnet and it seems to match the overall vibe of the attendees. When not in class, everyone congregates in the café/bar/restaurant area and outside, even well into the night. The atmosphere is vibrant and fun, but doesn’t get over the top crazy. Even the banquet dinner is entertainingly different, this year being held in a local church (yep, a church).

I had a great time teaching and interacting with everyone at this year’s BMXnet, and I definitely suggest checking it out if you’re looking for a very different approach to body modification education. It’s a fun, wild ride, especially for those of us used to the heavy structure of the APP Conference.
The LBP (Latinoamérica Body Piercing Association) is a newer body piercing health and safety organization. Recently I had the honor of teaching for them at their 4th annual conference in Santa Cruz, Tlaxcala, Mexico. Held far away from the big city, it is in a quiet town, surrounded by mountains and volcanos. This atmosphere is a more relaxed and serene learning environment than that of Las Vegas, if you feel the need to compare it to the APP Conference.

Their conference technically begins in Mexico City, where everyone meets at Estudio 184 Tattoo and Piercing early in the morning to get registered and board the group buses which transport attendees to the conference venue. The initial three hour bus ride is great fun, giving people the chance to socialize and get to know each other. Some use the ride to catch up with old friends. Others even manage to take a little nap.

Once we arrive at the venue, everyone has a few hours to get their rooms and settle in before orientation and a nice group meal. No time is wasted though; afternoon classes begin on day one after lunch. With instructors from all over central and south America, the US, and Spain, there is no shortage of information to absorb. This year’s instructors included Matías Tafel, Beto Rea, Sergi Tinaut, Alejandro Salazar, Mauricio Torres, Javier Fingazz, Brian Skellie, Jef Saunders, and Cody Vaughn just to name a few. The class topics were well balanced, covering everything from techniques, sterilization, asepsis, studio and display set up, to meso-american decoration and jewelry.

The overall feeling and vibe you get from this conference is one of friendship, warmth, and family. Everyone makes sure to help others feel welcome, even for the few that might not speak Spanish (though if you do decide to attend, you ideally should be able to at least understand Spanish to get the most out of the experience). This year the conference took place during the national holiday for Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), which added a wonderful learning experience to the overall trip. They took the opportunity to create a traditional altar for the holiday, and explained to many of us the meaning of the holiday and the significance of the aspects of the altar and offerings, culminating in a beautiful ritual dance during our first dinner.

They have an expo similar to the APP Conference, offering high quality jewelry from the US and South America, which is one of the most important aspects (in my opinion). For many in Latin American countries, it’s insanely expensive to get quality jewelry, because of import fees and taxes, combined with economies that make our own look like Beverly Hills. This means that while at LBP they can easily purchase quality jewelry and take it back to their studios, making it easier for them to evolve and up their game.

I’ve been lucky to attend three of their four conferences since the organization’s inception, and it’s been amazing to see the conference grow year to year, with more people coming from more places. Every year I’m greeted with a feeling of coming home to a family, welcomed with warmth, love, and friendship.
How quickly each new year rolls around - and what an exciting and investing year it has been for the UKAPP. We have gone from being a collected board of like-minded acquaintances with a dream to a fully fledged and respected organization. This transformation happened in just 18 months. Not only have we held our second annual Conference but we have now also taken on our first official members and for that, we would love to thank everyone for their support and recognition.

This year’s UKAPP annual conference was held at the Radisson Blue in Birmingham, England over two days, September 4-5, 2016. With the second floor dedicated to the UKAPP, its plush surroundings helped keep the atmosphere cozy but still professional.

As you entered the hall space visitors were greeted by the welcome desk, staffed by both members of the board and a handful of the kindest volunteers. Here you were able to buy raffle tickets and have any questions answered about classes, times, and locations.

Wrapped around this area was the vending space, two huge spreads from our friends at Industrial Strength UK - the official UKAPP Sponsor - and the delightful crew from Lovely Lobes, who traveled from Germany to show their support.

Day One—Sunday:
Registration went swimmingly, with attendees receiving their wristband. A soft material keepsake indicating attendee or volunteer.

First up was Brian Skellie with "Asepsis and Bevel Theory." What an amazing way to start; Brian being the super piercing-brain that he is! There’s been nothing like this before in the UK and it was great to see nodding heads amongst the crowd and many questions asked.

Next up was Paul King addressing "Female Genital Piercing versus Female Mutilation," which again received a very empowering response. Many had not fully understood the legislation and situation. It was wonderful to see such strong industry solidarity.

Following right after was Ryan Ouellette teaching us Brits how to "Upsell Jewellery." Personally, I always love watching Ryan prance about getting all camp over jewellery and listening to him reel off wonderful information about products we sell.

Last up on the first day was Luis Garcia providing "Surface Piercing Technique." Again, many eyes opened wide with Luis’s wonderful teaching manner and personality. The way he bends and breaks rules to demonstrate what’s comfortable and what works is much better than the "latest piercing trend."

By the end of the first day, with venue space slowly emptying, the overall feeling was sheer pride tinged with an indescribable energy.

Even the vendors saying the response and sales were much better than anticipated.

Honestly, day one was over too quickly for me.
Day two—Monday:
Began with Ryan Ouellette and “Ear Piercing Fundamentals.” Ryan has a way with words, piercing through the odd hangover and ringing in the listening ears. Starting the day vigorously and setting a great mood.

After a short lunch break, it was time for us, the UKAPP board to make an announcement. Telling the world that we were ready to begin taking members and that all the necessary criteria are available to read on the website.

We explained that our goal for the next five to ten years is to 100% match the APP standards. It was important for us to explain that we understand the industry is very different here with varying obstacles, so we intend on gradually changing the requirements to give opportunities for development over time. Annually existing members will need to adhere to the new standards imposed to maintain their membership. Those new conditions will be announced six months ahead of membership renewal, which will allow ample time to update. All the while the ultimate criteria are permanently available online.

After this, we held an open discussion and wow did the questions come firing in. It was so unbelievably new to both the board and the UK attendees, we were very impressed by the support and also by the number of studios already wanting to join.

After this discussion, it was time for Luis Garcia to give his last class, “Advanced Ear Piercing.” As always Luis has a knack of engaging the crowd and after the last talk, the attendees were fired up and ready to participate.

The event finale had local Matt Lodder, a historian and anthropologist in the field of body modification, piercing and tattooing. He gave an amazing seminar on the “Queer History of Body Piercing.” Many had never even suspected much of our industry’s history and Matt always manages to keep his talks informative and interesting, but can still rouse a giggle now and then! We loved having him and can’t wait to get even more from him next year.

Altogether, the seminars, the crowd, the location, and the attendees mixed like a basket of kittens! Some moments were calm, others had tons of energy. One way or another everything worked.

Personally, I can’t wait until next year and couldn't be prouder of the board and what has been accomplished in such a short time. There is no chance it would have gone nearly so well without the support of the speakers and the APP as a whole. Three of our six board members have been APP scholars to the annual APP Conference in the last few years. Providing a whopping opportunity to learn and see behind the scenes on how to organize such an event.

Who knows what next year has in store for us, but if the growth and support from our first to the second year suggests anything, it’s that there is a huge yearning for this progression in the UK.
JEWELLERY CHALLENGES FROM A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

ANGIE VAN DIJKEN

Going through the online catalogs of quality jewellery websites, seeing the beautiful pieces, the different possibilities and knowing it’s the best of the best, high polished titanium with lifetime guarantee.

Most piercers you know of sell this type of jewelry, and it’s great to see they’re going for the best. In North America this type of jewelry is very accessible. In many places outside of North America it is hard to get, especially when you’re a small studio owner like me, or work part time as a piercer or rent a space. For now, I can only speak for myself, but I know many of you are also struggling. Just getting by, earning only enough to pay the bills and get new supplies, but at least you’re doing what you love. Yes, I can put a little aside, but then comes the slow months, your yearly autoclave check up, the health inspector, first aid course, or advertising and so on. I’m my own boss, but I don’t live in a big city. My shop is not located in the city centre and is only open three days a week.

“It’s just an investment and you’ll double it” they say, and you know what? It’s true! The problem is getting the money for that initial investment! I listened, and with my extra money, I did invest in quality jewellery when I visited the BMXnet 2015 in Germany. I started with the starter kit from Neometal, a 20 piece display for €230, which turned out to be a great investment!

Place it in your cabinet, offer it to every client with an explanation of how good it is, and what the differences are between the quality jewellery and the standard that they would normally get. Show it to them and it easily sells. More and more clients will choose quality. It sounds so easy right, everyone should be able to do that and build a great backstock of implant grade jewelry.

So yes, I do want more, I want to stock nothing but the best, but I wish more vendors would offer starter kits. I don’t know what will or will not sell in this farmer region, and sometimes when I try to order I get confused. Which design will sell best with that gem selection? Additionally, most manufacturers require a minimum order amount; add in the shipping and handling costs and when you’re really lucky, the UPS guy shows up at your store with the jewellery. However with their arrival also comes another bill, paying even more money on import taxes. Not only is it expensive, but because of shipping and customs we need to adjust our selling prices accordingly. When it’s all done, you’ll have the best of the best, not much yet but you have it, and your customers will love you for it.

For these reasons, I couldn’t wait to go to the APP Conference earlier this year to get my hands on some high-end jewellery. I ordered my new Neometal kit and got some beauties from Industrial Strength that I could afford and take home with me.

It’s not only the big names in jewellery that are hard to get as a small shop owner in Europe. Standard high polished titanium is also a problem! I’m still not always sure and after three years, I’m still ordering randomly from different suppliers to try theirs out. I’m always looking for additional suppliers.

I can’t blame other piercers for not having quality jewellery; not all clients choose quality first. Most want it to heal first and upgrade later for quality, and of course you’ll always have the clients who find everything too expensive. But as long as we keep providing information and advising them of the best, clients will eventually learn!

We do have some distributors in Europe, but still most European piercers order directly from the US, which usually takes about three to four weeks to arrive. Gorilla Glass, Industrial Strength and Neometal are most popular in Europe, and it’s great to see more names being added to that list. It’s great to see the increase of quality jewellery, to see that so many studios want only the best for their clients. It’s definitely worth the investment, but let’s hope there will be more European suppliers in the future with the same high standards, so Europe can also grow more in quality.
HIKA KIERKENUPP

There is one thing we all know: being a piercer and working in a multitude of studios always leads to marveling at how the same job can always be so different. When I started my career, I heard the expression “five piercers, six opinions.” Our methods of work always differ at least slightly; freethinking vs. tools, which to use, the way we mark, and studio setup. Even the way of presenting jewelry towards the client varies from piercer to piercer and studio to studio.

If one changes studios or does a guest spot, one must adapt to the studio policies and method of work, which always includes a certain amount of relearning and getting used to a new routine, but at least the basics are – mostly the same. Especially when it comes to APP-Member studios – the same: blade needles, internally threaded or push-fit jewelry, skin prep, gloves.

As a German piercer, the first two already don’t apply, at least not as a regular standard. When you are starting your career by finding a studio that will teach you, chances are high that you will be introduced to a cannula needle as your future tool of choice. Being a medical tool, this short-beveled needle is covered by a flexible sheath which has the original purpose of being used as a catheter for intravenous medication or blood transfusions. While originally not intended as a helpful tool in adornment methods and also opened a lot of doors for me. Other studios invited me and took my applications for guest spots.

While this seems to be a very regular and uncomplicated thing to do for a piercer from the US, there are certain things to keep in mind for those that come over from the other side of the big pond. There are strict regulations that prevent you from guest spotting in some areas, be it due to licensing or work visas. This makes it especially important to do research and prepare before accepting a guest spot.

There are certain other differences between the German and American piercing industries. There is a feeling of professionalism in customer care that studios over here some times seem to lack. This doesn’t mean that European studios are lead by grumpy, rude piercers – although, as everywhere, you’ll stumble over some of those – but more that German piercing studios are very casual. It might be that it is a question of a general attitude; Germans are sometimes known as cold, straight-to-the-point and not really chatty, while there is more smalltalk and glossing over when one thinks of Americans. On the other hand, in studios with better opportunities for upselling there might be an awareness that is similar to a high-end jewelry store; so the approach of “the customer is king” might be embedded in one’s mind way stronger. As I said, it is rare for us to have those opportunities and you will rarely find a studio where staff will sit down with the customer to discuss jewelry options and get them to spend a few hundred euro.

I have found that being a guest piercer in Germany is very different than guesting in the US. In Germany, the guest’s responsibilities usually entail working as the piercer and counter staff while the main piercer is on vacation, if they don’t just shut down the piercing area for this time period. I must admit that I always had a harder time finding places in Germany to guest. There were requests, but it’s important to choose carefully which offers to accept and where to distance oneself from, since we don’t have piercing licenses and basically everybody can open a studio. Even if one finds a studio that has the right hygienic standards, there are a lot of places where piercers only have customers now and then, and even spend some days with nearly nothing to do. As a very compression based industry, this is something one doesn’t want to gamble with.

In Germany, we don’t speak of such a close-knit community as in the American piercer community. Being in America I noticed how everybody was supportive and helped to find me more studios, make space and take days off so I could fill in, as if they feel responsible to help out a fellow piercer. I felt less of a sense of competition, more about learning and teaching together. I know this mindset exists to a certain point in Germany too, but I hope it will become the norm here too.

JASON HENEY

I’ve been piercing in Ireland for over 4 years now. There are so many differences when it comes to body piercing in Ireland and the US. In my experience, there are only a few of us here that have made the push to advance our career to accept and where to distance oneself from, since we don’t have piercing licenses and basically everybody can open a studio. Even if one finds a studio that has the right hygienic standards, there are a lot of places where piercers only have customers now and then, and even spend some days with nearly nothing to do. As a very compression based industry, this is something one doesn’t want to gamble with.

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Female Genital Adornment (FGA) vs. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Editor’s Note: In Issue 76, Paul King gave as a detailed review of the harmful classification of consensual, female genital piercing as mutilation by authorities in the United Kingdom. There is currently a petition to rescind this classification; we encourage you to sign and share the petition and both of these articles.

Unfortunately, some authorities and anti-FGM activists in the United Kingdom are on a campaign to criminalize consensual, adult female—but not male—genital piercings. This appears to have originated due to the inclusion of the word “piercing” in the definition from the United Nations’ (UN) / World Health Organization’s (WHO) joint classification of four types of FGM:

Type IV — All other harmful procedures to the female genitalia for non-medical purposes, for example: pricking, piercing, incising, scraping and cauterization. [Emphasis added.]

In early 2015, multiple articles appeared online and were widely disseminated stating that women with “vagina piercings” were to be classified as victims of FGM. They asserted that the United Kingdom’s Department of Health had begun requiring healthcare practitioners to record all female genital cosmetic surgeries as la-biaplasty. So, rather than correct their path, it seems they aim to widen it.

The Association of Professional Piercers (APP) released an official response: “The Association of Professional Piercers do not consider elective female genital piercing to be mutilation or ‘Female Genital Mutilation’ (‘FGM’). We support the right for all adults to pierce their bodies in a safe, informed, and consensual manner when performed by a qualified practitioner under appropriate asepsis.”

“We are urging UK government officials to redress the language of the current laws and regulations to clarify the confusion arising from the current definitions, including definitional section 6 (1) of the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, in which ‘girl includes woman,’ as well as any ‘FGM’ regulations that include the term ‘pierce,’ such as ISB 1610 of 2014. We are available to assist in this process. While the APP does not directly regulate, perform outreach, or offer procedural guidelines on practices other than body piercing, we support health and safety organizations that do. Our most fundamental principles as expressed in our environment:

1) http://www.who.int/reproductive-health/topics/fgm/overview/en/
2) http://content.digital.nhs.uk/fgm
ave you ever wondered what the APP Legislation and Regulatory Affairs Committee is currently up to? Do you want to know more about what the Committee is doing for various states and countries, as well as what we are doing for the piercing industry in general? If so, you are not alone.

It has been brought to the attention of the Committee that many people, Members and non-members alike, do not know much about what we do or what projects we are currently involved in. Members who attend the Members’ Meeting at Conference get a short verbal and written summary of what the Committee has accomplished over the year between conferences. However, if you are not present during the Members’ Meeting, you most likely do not know much about what the APP is contributing to legislation and various regulatory agencies. We would like to change that, by communicating more with both Members and non-members about the projects our Committee is involved in.

Starting with this issue of The Point, the Legislation and Regulatory Affairs Committee plans to provide readers with regular updates about what we have been working on. Please keep in mind when reading these columns that the amount of information we can relay will vary depending on the particular circumstances surrounding each project. That being said, we will do our best to keep you updated on what we are doing for the piercing industry.

The Legislation and Regulatory Affairs Committee chairperson is current APP Board of Directors member, Steve Joyner. Committee members include myself, Seth Dietz, and Matt Bavougian. We all have experience working directly with our own states, as well as providing insight into regulations in other states and countries. Brian Skellie, current APP Medical Liaison, has also been working with our committee. Any of us would be happy to answer your questions regarding legislation.

I’ll kick off this first column with one of the most exciting projects that we are currently working on: the NEHA Body Art Model Code. In 1999, the NEHA (National Environmental Health Association) model code was developed by a committee of knowledgeable environmental health professionals throughout the United States and has been endorsed by The Alliance for Professional Tattooists, The Association of Professional Piercers, and The Society of Permanent Cosmetic Professionals. The model code is a color-illustrated reference that provides “a comprehensive, consistent, reasonable, public health-oriented model code and guidelines. The code provides detailed definitions of different types of body art; forms used by professionals and regulators in the industry; and personal stories from people who have had tattoo, body piercing, branding, and scarification experiences.”

As you can imagine, the various body art industries have evolved a lot over the last 17 years and a revision was long overdue. In December 2015, NEHA started to develop a group of “Subject Matter Experts” who have relevant experience in body art, body art regulation, or model code development to participate in updating the Body Art Model Code. The piercing industry is currently represented by two members from the Legislation and Regulatory Affairs Committee in addition to a representative from the Alliance of Professional Tattooists, representatives from AFDO (the Association of Food and Drug Officials), and various health inspectors. So far, the group has logged 11 months of work and has much more to go. While this may seem like an extraordinary amount of time, this body of work will be referenced by many states and possibly even other countries, so it is crucial to get all of the details right.

In addition to our contributions to the NEHA Body Art Model Code, the APP Legislation and Regulatory Affairs Committee had two representatives present at the 2016 NEHA Annual Educational Conference and Exhibition. Steve Joyner and Matt Bavougian were present at the conference in San Antonio to represent the APP and the piercing industry. This conference provided an excellent opportunity to educate and inform about the piercing industry, and lead to some great networking with various health officials.

Aside from our work with NEHA, our committee has been involved in updating regulations in seven states and 2 countries in the five months between the annual APP Conference and writing this in early December. While some of these regulatory bodies have reached out to the APP directly, most of our involvement has been the direct result of the piercing industry reaching out to us. Unfortunately, when states and countries are rewriting regulations, or adopting first-time regulations, the APP is not often contacted directly by the governing body. Often, we have been able to participate in the regulation writing process after piercers in the affected area have reached out to us, and we have contacted the governing body directly.

If you live in an area, or have heard of an area that is getting new or updated regulations, please do not hesitate to contact us. The Legislation and Regulatory Affairs Committee has extensive experience working with legislators and health department officials across the world, and we are here to serve the best interests of the piercing industry. We are happy to offer our experience to your governing body and we have an extensive background of resources to pull from.

Finally, we are working on a new project that we are very excited about. The Committee has started a new outreach project to inspire more health officials to attend Conference. We know how important it is for health department officials, especially health inspectors, to attend Conference. While the APP offers a free Conference pass to health department officials and legislators who book within the hotel room block, this is the first year that we are actively contacting health officials long in advance about attending. Appropriate legislation and regulations come from people who are properly educated about the piercing industry, and we aim to have a higher attendance of regulatory officials in 2017 than we have had in past years.

If you have any questions about what the Legislation and Regulatory Affairs Committee is working on, or if you come across anything that you think we should know about, please contact us through legislation@ safepiercing.org.
Many readers of *The Point* have read my memoir *Running the Gauntlet*. For those who haven’t, it provides a colorful account of the birth and evolution of the modern body piercing industry and the movement it inspired.

The book also has its own website which features additional insights and experiences that did not make it into the book itself. In December of 2016, the blog section began a new series of articles with links to recently digitized audio tapes that date from Gauntlet’s early days in the late 1970s. The facing page features the first article in that series.

To the left is the cover of *Piercing Fans International Quarterly* (PFIQ) issue #6 in which Doug Malloy’s Prince Albert article appeared.

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**Voices from the Past—Part 1**

*The Versatile & Sensual Prince Albert by Doug Malloy*  

Doug Malloy was my friend and mentor and my inspiration for starting Gauntlet. The company was founded in 1975, and Doug passed away unexpectedly in 1979. Few members of the body piercing community alive today ever met him or heard him speak. At the time of his death, he left behind a handful of audio cassette tapes that have been in my possession for over 40 years. This small collection contains several interviews, articles for *Piercing Fans International Quarterly* magazine (PFIQ), and correspondence between Doug and fellow piercing enthusiasts. These were recently digitized by the Leather Archive & Museum in Chicago. In the coming weeks, I will be posting these audio files for your enjoyment.

Doug most likely dictated this first tape sometime in 1979. It appeared in *Piercing Fans International Quarterly*, issue #6. By the time the article made it into print, it had undergone extensive editing, so it differs significantly from the audio file. You may view a copy of the published article [here](#) and compare it with the spoken word.

Readers need to be aware that this article—and many of the other assertions that Doug made—were in all likelihood fabrications that have given rise to a great deal of misinformation which unfortunately persists to this day. Paul King and other scholars of piercing history have found no evidence to substantiate Doug’s claims. Regardless, the tales are colorful and still worthy of enjoyment.
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Calling All Manufacturers, Collectors And Enthusiasts

The Body Piercing Archive, in conjunction with the Association of Professional Piercers, will be hosting a historical body jewelry exhibit on the Expo floor in 2017.

We are looking for jewelry, catalogs, jewelry packaging cards, business cards and any other stand out items from 2007 and earlier. We would like to focus on defunct companies however, any steel, titanium, niobium, glass, and gold companies are encouraged to participate (alternative materials will, hopefully, be another exhibit in the future).

Please note, we do not want your items. We just want to share and display them for our community. All items will have clear attributions and descriptions from the information you will have provided. This exhibition will also appear in the Point Magazine. For more detailed information, please contact Matte Erickson at archive@safe piercing.org.

Thank you,
The Body Piercing Archive
archive@safe piercing.org