

SkinScribe

Alliance of Professional Tattooists, Inc.

Sept.
2009

NEWSLETTER

APT's New Home Office





SkinScribe

is published by the

Alliance of Professional Tattooists, Inc.

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Peggy Sucher

From the Rock in the Sea...

The Rendezvous came and went like lightening, didn't it?

One minute anticipating it, the next having a great time with everyone and then POOF back to reality! Dang! It was a great show and we had some historic turnouts.

Tawnee Beekman, the founder of Skin Deep Tatoo in Hawaii (yes, the one I work at) came courtesy of Bonnie Jean McVay. It was a grand time to reconnect with this lady of tattooing. Oh, the stories! I'd like to get her and Lyle together with a tape recorder between them....oh my!! What a treat...thank you, BJ, for the pleasure and Thank YOU Tawnee for the honor. Next issue will be the Rendezvous Issue so we will have plenty of time to get photos, stories, etc. ready.

Lots of great things happening with APT right now. The home office move, hiring a new home office manager, course updates and expansions on the horizon...it's a great day to be a part of it all!

If you haven't logged onto the website forum DO IT! RIGHT NOW. Go. I'll wait. Ok, NOW....this newsletter will continue to bring you information on a quarterly basis but for that instant gratification you can turn to the online FORUM. Lots of shop talk going on like sharing of those dark secrets that you once had to pry out of old schoolers! Info, pictures, just all sorts of great things. Hope to see you there! And tell your clients...they can pop on as visitors and see what APT is all about! (they can join APT too, ya know)

Got an email from Dick Goldman...he found an ad on Craigslist for 'any tattoo...\$20'. Hey, the guy said he had an atoclve (sic) for his needle! (singular?) Yikes. I know here in Hawaii there are a plethora of Craigslist ads for kitchen tattooers and even shop tattooers working on the sly. People just don't get it do they?

But I won't give up beating the drum....from the tiki top to the sea. IT'S ABOUT SAFETY AND PROFESSIONALISM. Come on, join me, it's fun up here on the soapbox!

Aloha a Hui Hoi!!

Peggy

The President's Report: July 2009

Much has happened since I last addressed you in the SkinScribe. If you attended our Kansas City Rendezvous 2009 or if you are participating in our online Forum, you may be aware of some of the changes we are implementing.

Probably the most important piece of news is the relocation of our Home Office. That's right, we are moving out of Maitland, Florida and settling down into Kansas City, Missouri. The decision to move came after receiving some criticism that the APT was perhaps too old and established; that we were no longer progressive or in touch with the current pulse of the tattoo community. Well, we are listening to what you members have to say. Moving the APT is the first step. It is a most prudent decision. For the last four years, we have put on the Kansas City Rendezvous in Missouri. What better place to relocate to then? We deemed being centrally located in the United States to be beneficial for all our members. Having a Home Office that is welcoming to its members, officials and the local community is a step to put our best face on and present ourselves to the public. We know it is time to be more accessible and open.

With this move comes great strides in reorganization. The officers are being called to task to do the jobs they were voted to do and expected of them instead of relying on a single person to handle the workload. In this way, there are checks and balances to ensure the proper handling of our daily business. We've hired a new Home Office worker, Jaymie Bojanski. She will be at our new Home Office by the time you receive this newsletter. She will be handling and processing our paperwork including putting all the old files onto disk to eliminate the large physical footprint of tests, applications and more documents that we need to keep. Jaymie says she actually enjoys doing mundane, monotonous jobs such as archiving since she does genealogy in her spare time. But, I'll let Jaymie tell you all about herself in our next issue.

I mentioned being more public. Our new location, 215 W. 18th Street is in the Crossroads Arts District of Kansas City. The building is the former home of Commonwealth Pictures, a part of United Artists theaters. The headquarters in Kansas City closed its doors in 1991. The building has changed hands twice since then. Currently, the building tenants range from large format print media providers, and attorneys to yoga instruction. The neighborhood is thriving with artists, musicians, galleries, restaurants, shops and services who all participate in First Fridays monthly events. What a perfect opportunity to visit the Home Office. We've already begun brainstorming the showing of original tattoo art and photographs which represent you, our members in our very own "gallery."

And that's just the story about the new home office. The other piece of news is we are changing the dates and the name of our Kansas City Rendezvous. The Alliance of Professional Tattooists Trade and Tattoo Exposition is going to be held September 22 through 26, 2010 at the same venue we've been at the last four years—The Embassy Suites, Tiffany Springs Parkway, Kansas City, MO. We are planning on inviting all manner of industry relevant suppliers, services and more with actual tattoo supplies available to professional level members and non-members (with proper identification and proof of professional licensing) in a secure area not accessible to the general public. We are discussing displaying the "Wall of Flash" that we featured at our very first convention held in Baltimore in 1995. For those who weren't there or don't remember, member artists were given an area to display their own flash for sale. We are still in the planning stage and are open to your ideas to help make this the best and ONLY tattoo trade show. We have a year to work together to make this an event to remember.

The initial murmurings of our new plans and changes have already inspired some members to renew their lapsed memberships. That's exactly what we hoped for. We want you back and your friends and colleagues. We want you to think of the APT as progressive, innovative, informative and current in all areas related to tattooing. Most of all, we want you to be proud to be a member.

— Pat Sinatra, APT President

Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Alliance of Professional Tattooists, Inc.

July 15 , 2009
Kansas City, MO

Present:

Sailor Bill
Mike Martin
Don Corah
Tim Corley
Chuck Householder
Jack Rudy
Peggy Sucher
Deana Lippens
Shahn Anderson
Pat Sinatra
Sharon Brouse

Absent:

Robert Davis unexcused
Dave Bein with excuse

Meeting called to order 10:22 a.m.

Tim Corley makes motion to waive minutes from April. They will be read in Richmond.

Mike Martin seconds
Passes unanimously

Committee Reports

By-Laws Committee

Don Corah

Don resubmits By-laws and Manual for acceptance by board.

Discussion takes place clarifying the Board's power and authority to change the by-laws without the vote of the membership. Pat informs the board that the attorney stated that any changes made to the by-laws must be put before the membership. The board read through and made changes and corrections to present the amended by-laws to the members for adoption in Richmond 2009. Approval for the amendments by members can take place via the newsletter, on the Forum and at the meeting. Amended version will be available online and hard copy will be mailed upon request.

Recess for lunch 2:00 pm
Reconvened 3:43

Nominating Committee

Dave Bein, Chair
Fip Buchanan will not be present at elections if elected. It is excusable since the by-laws regarding the determination that the nominees be present have not been approved.

State Representatives Committee

Dave Bein, Chair
Not present; no report at this time.

Health Education Committee

Mike Martin, Chair
We have two new instructors, Sunshine McCurry and Jacqueline Beach. We have two new instructors in training: Ryan Corley and Don Corah. Aaron McKeough will co-teach this weekend with Sunshine McCurry.

The list of fully qualified instructors are:

Jacqueline Beach, WA
Sister Bear, CO
Dave Bein, NC
Fip Buchanan, CA
Nancy Johnson, AL
Mike Martin, CA
Sunshine McCurry, NC
Mary Skiver, MD
Peggy Sucher, HI

The 2-hour seminar Peggy put together for NTA convention was a success. Updates are forthcoming for the PDTT seminar. New ideas include the Short Course, but only if you have taken the Long Course. A Business Owners' course and the "Full Monty" Artist Course to include set-up and tear down of work space including gloving and more.

We require at least 3 months lead time to put on a seminar at a convention or venue.

The upcoming list of seminars includes Tucson, AZ July 27; Minnesota October 16; Las Vegas October; New Orleans October 29; and Portland ME.

Shan makes a motion to give the instructors the certificates for the PDTT to be distributed immediately upon completion and passing of the course. Don Corah seconds.

9 in favor/Sailor Bill Johnson opposes
Motion passes by majority

Discussion revisits the Tattoo Mastery Certification and offering it at other venues. We agree that we should make it available at NTA's Seattle Convention in 2010. Peggy and Mike will talk with Flo to make that happen.

Advertising/Fund Raising Committee

Sharon Brouse, Chair

Flash sets are for sale at \$150 per set.

Legislative Committee

Peggy forwarded a communication from Louis Crescitelli of New Jersey who contacted NTA with regard to legislation changes in that state. Unfortunately, we were notified too late to respond and to stop the legislation from passing.

Home Office Report

Discuss moving the home office. Pat and Chuck talk about the two locations that they've narrowed the choices down to. Talk ensues about hiring a new home office worker.

Bill discusses the newsletter, mailing, and procedures. He also gives us a financial report in lieu of the treasurer's report in Dave's absence.

Trade Show Committee

Tim Corley, Chair

Sailor Bill goes over the schedule for this year's convention. He discusses assigned duties, etc.

Old Business

Heather Lusk with the Hepatitis CDC Board in Hawaii is deemed by both

Peggy and Mike to receive an Supporter Membership Certificate and letter of appreciation from the APT. The board is in agreement and will issue before August 15.

Edward Lee has been approved for a free one-year membership in gratitude for all the work and artwork donated to the APT over the last several years.

Shahn motions to adjourn
8:16

Annual Members' Meeting of the Alliance of Professional Tattooists, Inc. July 16 , 2009 Kansas City, MO

6:10 pm
Meeting called to order.
A quorum is present.

Rob Massimiano motions to waive reading of minutes at this meeting. Minutes from the Annual Membership Meeting, 2008 will be printed in the newsletter for the members to read and then approve. Cathy Corah seconds.

Vote is unanimous

President's Report

Pat explains the new changes to the Home Office including the new employee, Jaymie Bojanski and the move to Kansas City, MO. Pat also explains about the new convention which will be called the APT's Trade and Tattoo Exposition (APT T'NT Expo) which is scheduled to take place September 23 through 26, 2010 at the Embassy Suites, Tiffany Springs.

Health Education Coordinator

Mike Martin addresses some of the changes that the Health Education Committee is working on to make the PDTT course more attractive and diversified. **By-Laws and Ethics Committee**

Don Corah introduces the updated Members' Manual and By-Laws which need to be approved by the Members before we can enforce the changes. The updated list will be posted to the regular section of the website in addition to the Forum. All members should read the document and be ready to vote for adoption by November. The new manual adoption information will be posted in the newsletter for those members who are not online. [Unfortunately, the document will not be printed in the newsletter due to the size of the document versus printing costs. If you do not have internet

access, please contact the Home Office or contact another member who can print you a copy.]

Outgoing Director, Shahn Anderson presents an Award of Appreciation to Pat Sinatra.

Collection and tallying of ballots.

Floor is open to questions from the Members.

Sunshine McCurry asks about being able to immediately issue certificates to those taking the PDTT. The board discussed the issue at the Executive Meeting on Wednesday, July 15. The Board of Directors approved the immediate issuance once the procedural details are worked out.

Jesse Neese addresses the production of a Public Service Announcement (PSA) radio ad. Tim Corley reminds Jesse that they both were supposed to get together to discuss this issue over the last year. While no deadline has been assigned the Board will revisit this at the next Board of Directors Meeting scheduled for Thursday, November 19, 2009 at 10:00 a.m., Richmond, Virginia.

Announcement made regarding this year's flash auction.

Jesse Neese talks about public awareness.

Mace Arnold talks about apathy within the industry.

Caroline Evans brings up the issue of new New Jersey legislation. Pat explains that by time we received a communication from Mr. Louis Crescitelli who works with the legislators, the bill had already passed. Pat advises the members take Bill Hannong's class on dealing with legislators as it is each member's responsibility to ensure safe and

enforceable legislation when it is being introduced.

Bonnie Jean McVay suggest we give a verbal PDTT test and seminar. She reminds the board about how the seminar used to be taught with more visuals and more demonstrations including glow-germ. She states the PDTT be more available for everyone.

Jesse Neese addresses Omaha autoclave training.

Sunshine McCurry requests the state representatives qualifications be posted on the website.

The election results are as follows:

Pat Sinatra
Jack Rudy
Mike Martin
Fip Buchanan
Rob Massimiano
Sunshine McCurry

Exiting directors are:

Shahn Anderson
Deana Lippens
Robert Davis

Pat reads the APT's Statement of Goals to the members.

Bonnie Jean McVay motions to allow the APT to accept funds for advertising from for-profit businesses at the discretion of the board. Jeannette McTamany seconds.

Call for vote results,
18 in favor
2 opposed
Motion passes by majority vote.

Mace Arnold makes a motion to adjourn. Jeanette McTamany seconds

Meeting adjourned at 8:35

Zoonotic Tuberculosis in Body Art Operations

By: J.A. George

Member of the Alliance of Professional Tattooists

The only thing between me and the 300 pound White Tail Deer Buck was a chain link gate. As he rammed the gate with his massive 12 point rack I grabbed the antlers, planting my feet and holding tight. The buck kicked and pulled but I maintained my grip. He was angry and he had a right to be, in his mind I had betrayed him. His Doe and Fawn lay just a few feet from me in a holding pin, lifeless. I had assisted in their demise just a few moments before and now I would be assisting in his death. The Zoo's Veterinarian and his assistant moved into the pen and administered the lethal injection of Nicotine, 300cc's and 300 seconds later and "Boss Man" lay dead in the infected dust of his exhibit.

The tears mingled with the dirt on my face as I helped carry the 8 animals we had to kill on that hot August day in 1985 to the waiting trailer that would take them away for the Necropsy that would confirm the Vet's diagnosis of Bovine Tuberculosis. As the trailer pulled away I walked out of the service area of the El Paso, Texas Zoo's Hoof Stock exhibit and removed my surgical mask. As the Senior Keeper over this group of exhibit's it was now my duty to try and correct the ignorant mistake that had taken place 22 years previous that had led to this sad day. I looked down at the little circular pin pricks that I had received the day before, the Tuberculin test, and I knew that me, the Keepers under me and the rest of the Zoo Staff had a long road ahead of them. I said a silent prayer that no one would be infected with the deadly bacteria.

Bovine TB, caused by *M. Bovis*, can be transmitted from livestock to humans and other animals. No other TB organism has as great a host range as bovine TB, which can infect all warm blooded vertebrates. Bovine TB has affected animal and human health since antiquity. Once the most prevalent infectious disease of cattle and swine in the United States, bovine TB caused more losses among U.S. farm animals in the early part of the 20th Century than all other infectious diseases combined. Now it had infected our Zoo.

In general, disease-causing mycobacterium

live only a few weeks outside a host's body because they cannot tolerate prolonged exposure to heat, direct sunlight, or dry conditions. Under cold, dark, and moist conditions, the organisms can survive longer. In 1963 a female Nilgai Antelope who was infected with *M. Bovis* was brought to the Zoo and placed into population with the other Nilgai Antelopes. In those days quarantine of new arrivals was not standard practice. In a few weeks Nilgai calves started becoming ill and dying at an alarming rate. The calves had become infected from drinking the raw milk of the cows. Though the adult herd showed no signs of infection resulting tests showed that they were indeed infected with the contagious disease. The herd was destroyed and new soil was brought into the Nilgai hoof stock exhibit. The infected soil was not removed before the new soil was placed in the exhibit. For 23 years the contagion lay dormant below the soil safe in it's moist darkness until over time it again worked it's self to the surface to infect not only another herd of Nilgai Antelope but the entire animal population of the hoof stock exhibits; Three White Tail Deer, One North American Bison and Four Nilgai Antelope. The first victim in 1985 had been a Nilgai calf the last victims had been a herd of over 100 North American Bison. The disease was far reaching beyond the Zoo and Bison the Zoo sold to a ranch in New Mexico had carried the disease with them.

Bovine TB is a chronic disease, seldom becoming apparent until it has reached an advanced stage in cattle, captive cervids (deer and elk), and swine. TB lesions may be found in any organ or body cavity of diseased animals. In early stages of the disease, these lesions are difficult to find, even during post mortem examination. But in later stages, the nodules or lumps caused by bovine TB become very evident in the lungs and associated lymph nodes and in the lymph nodes of the head and intestinal tract. Lesions may also appear in the abdominal organs, reproductive organs, nervous system, superficial body lymph nodes, and bones. This would have been a difficult thing to diagnose in captive Zoo animals.

Humans and animals with TB develop an immune response, which can be detected by the tuberculin skin test. Tuberculin is a sterile laboratory product made by growing TB bacteria, killing them with heat, removing them from the substance on which they were grown, and properly diluting and preserving the remaining mixture. About 72 hours after tuberculin is injected into animals affected with TB, a characteristic swelling reaction appears at the point of injection. This reaction is a positive test result, indicating exposure to one type of mycobacterium.

The staff at the Zoo had to be tested every 30 days for one year to ensure that no one had contracted TB due to the exposure to the affected animals. Besides the skin tests further diagnostic methods are necessary to confirm the presence of bovine TB. In humans, these tests include chest x rays and sputum cultures. For animals, the comparative cervical tuberculin test, serological tests, post mortem examinations, and other laboratory procedures are used.

The necropsy revealed that all the animals were indeed infected with Bovine Tuberculosis. The Zoo staff dodged the bullet and no one ever contracted TB from this episode. The exhibits were left empty and

ers enter your studio then there is a very good chance that on the bottom of their boots, within the crevices of the soles and heels there are mud deposits. These deposits act as incubators and give the perfect habitat for the bacteria to thrive and survive. Outside a host in a cultured environment, such as mud, it takes the mycobacterium almost 20 hours to multiply. Because of this relatively slow rate of growth, the disease usually takes many months to develop. However, the disease can lay dormant within a host for many years.

The most common means of transmission is through respiration. Invisible droplets (aerosols) containing TB bacteria may be exhaled or coughed out by infected animals and then inhaled by susceptible animals or humans. The risk of exposure is greatest in enclosed areas, such as barns. Inhalation of aerosols is the most common route of infection for farm and ranch workers and veterinarians who work with diseased livestock. Livestock also are more likely to infect each other when they share a common watering place contaminated with saliva and other discharges from infected animals. Calves, hogs, and humans can contract bovine TB when they drink un-pasteur-

Post a sign on your door, “PLEASE NO SOILED CLOTHES, BOOTS OR SHOES BEYOND THIS POINT.”

When you announce your policy it is easier to enforce it.

open for a year to kill the bacteria. To assist in this the soil was turned every 30 days. Eventually all the old soil was removed and replaced with new soil, the exhibits redesigned per my recommendations and new animals re-introduced. For the El Paso Zoo the disease was eradicated.

I eventually resigned my Senior Keeper position and moved on to operate my Tattoo Studio full time instead of part time. But I never forgot those lessons learned about Bovine TB and it's dangers. So, you may be asking; How does an outbreak of Bovine TB in a Zoo Environ have any bearing on a Body Art Studio Environment? Well, allow me to answer that question for you.

If your studio is in a rural area, such as mine is, where farming and hunting are highly prevalent then you and your studio are at a greater risk of coming into contact with Bovine Tuberculosis. Remember the factors that are needed to allow the bacterium to survive outside of a host; Darkness and moisture. If you have hunters, ranchers or farm-

ized milk from infected cows. A farmer, hunter or rancher who may be infected can cough, sneeze or bring the mycobacterium into your studio.

Though, the instances of M. Bovine have been reduced greatly in both animals and humans due to the diligent surveillance of state and local agencies and Veterinarians there is still a risk. There are some very simple steps you can follow to reduce the risk in your studio:

Do not allow any type of animal into your studio, not even service animals if possible. Because of the clinical aspect of keeping your studio sanitary you must reduce the dander's, saliva and dirt that animals bring into a studio.

Do not tattoo on people who are fresh from the farm or hunting. If they come into the studio wearing dirty mud caked clothes and boots request that they leave, clean up then return. Be polite and explain that you must keep your studio in a sanitary condition.

Post a sign on your door, “PLEASE NO SOILED

CLOTHES, BOOTS OR SHOES BEYOND THIS POINT." When you announce your policy it is easier to enforce it.

If you have had to escort someone from the studio that has left clumps of mud on your floor, sweep and mop immediately with a effective disinfectant such as a Chlorine Bleach (a 5% solution of Sodium hypochlorite),10% dilution. Remember that there is a certain contact time for disinfection to take place. Chlorine Bleach is also corrosive and will degrade rapidly in the presence of organic matter. It cannot be mixed with other cleaners such as those containing ammonia. To achieve maximum effectiveness you should first clean your floor with a good floor cleaner and allow to dry before using the bleach.

Do not tattoo on anyone that is sneezing, coughing or appears ill. If need be reschedule their appointment for a later date. The little you loose from them today may far outweigh what they may have left you with.

Wear a mask when cleaning. Some Body Artists wear surgical masks when tattooing or piercing. Wearing a surgical mask while cleaning saves the chance of inhaling the aerosols containing the TB Bacterium while cleaning. Remember, respiration is the most common form of contracting the disease.

Empty trash cans often and clean with a disinfectant. Leave the lid to your foot operated trash can open overnight. Remove the inner bucket and lay it on it's side overnight so that air and light can get to it.

Remember to wear disposable gloves when handling any contaminated material.

And now my personal favorite; Leave a light

on in the tattoo or piercing work area 24/7. Bacteria can double every 9.8 minutes and under optimal conditions and with the right nutrients can reproduce in large amounts. If you deprive the bacteria of the nutrients and conditions it needs, i.e.; moisture and darkness, the reproduction cycle can be weakened and retarded indefinitely.

Last, but certainly not least is hand washing. When coming into contact with hunters, farmers and ranchers who are wearing soiled garments it is best not to shake hands with them. If you end up in a situation where your hands make contact with any part of their body or clothing wash your hands immediately.

By taking a few simple steps you can reduce the risk of Bovine Tuberculosis and many other diseases infecting you, your clients and your studio. The steps that I have outlined should not be anything new to most Body Artists and should already be standard operating procedure in all studios.

Bovine Tuberculosis, as with any form of TB, can be fatal but is treatable if diagnosed in time. It does not matter whether you are in a rural or urban environment there is no reason to allow this disease to invade your studio.

(Next time, Avian Tuberculosis)

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inserting pic of Gypsy George here if I ever figure it out.

Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, November 19, 2009

10:00 a.m.

Scheduled Guest Speaker, Bethra Szumski

General Membership Meeting

Thursday November 19, 2009

12 Noon

Luncheon provided for those attending the Meeting & PDTT Course



APT MEMBERS LIST



Renewals

1705-P James Schuhrke
3120-P Bryan Shaner
1849-P James Dryer
782-P Byron Wallace
1190-P David Mitchell
2379-P Tom Milhoan
2126-P Jarrod Richardson
1885-P Michael Jon Trobaugh
735-P Johnny "Eagle" Telford
2683-P Brandon Lewis
1404- P Eric Lynn
2983-S Tonja Robinson
2982-P Charles Householder Jr.
3117-P Nikki Pettis
3090-PJ Aff Sallas
2686-P Troy Christensen
2636-P Clinton Burks
2132-P Troy Butner
2910-P Amanda Barber-Kramer
2358-P Eileen Young
634-P Thomas Ball
2884-P Randall "Flipper" Doolittle
2888-P Frederick Plunkert
2887-P Jackson Eberlin
2077-ACraig Lankki
3006-PHunter Crawford
1078-PConstance Eller
2256-PWilliam Mcgarrity
3105-PRobert Bittner
2885-POscar Bustos
1407-PRichard Panarra
3192-PRhonda Sigler
2108-AMichelle Mitchell
3142-PKenneth Roper
1617-PAwen Briem
2411-Ct Peggy Sucher
2992-P Maytee Bringas
2067-P David Black
2974-P Charlie Azzopardi
211-P Larry Brogan
155-P Dale Grande
2991-P Leslie Johnston

2096-P Edward "Ox" Occhipinti
522-P Dirk Hays
3185 A Mel Collier
3182-A Lori Collier
2985-P Jennifer Young
139-P Jeff Bullard
917-P Darrin Walters
2681-P Mace Arnold
3178-P Sandra Dawes
3184-S Bill Gerber
3097-At Adrenalynn Richardson
132-P Beth "Sister Bear" Lovold
1383-P Mark Reagan
2127-P Aaron Mackeogh
3100-P Bill Hannong
271-P Leonie Grande
2989-P William Nigh
3109-A Amy Kearney
3146-At Craig Gardyan
1072-P Keith Titus Jr.
1337-P Pop Johnston
661-P Donald Lynch
1706-P Penny Schuhrke
2472-P Lior Fridman
3175-P Robert Treat
2845-Pelizabeth Nelson
2837-P Milton Riley
2800-P Thomas Little
2712-P Charles Maple
995-P Cohwen Allen
2973-P Skully Gilbert
537-P Ford R. Lyon Iii
1144-P Daniel Bumpus
3087-P Jerrett Spaeth
362-P Patricia Kelley
3091-P Tommy Tunaitis
996-A Cindi Siderio
48-P Michael Siderio
3096-P Mark Kok
2033-P Matthew Thrash
696-P Robert Madison
3179-P John Howells

2053-P Joshua Arment
629-P James George
2977-P Jen Beirola
2626-P Stephen "Crash" Dennis
3092-PCathy Hennessey
3177-PTom Meyer
3030-PJamie Henderson
2970-PNoah Lynes

*Thank you for your continued dedication and support.
We could not be here without you!*

New Members

Please welcome our Newest Members...

New Members
3255-At Jeremiah Connor
3256-P Sean Walrad
3258-P Christy Brooker
3259-P Danny Arpin Jr.
3260-At Jessica "Kraken" Leuze
3261-P Dan Makolondra
3262-P Jason Williams
3263-P Dwi Anggono Putro
3265-P Hector L. Velez
3264-At Kevin Derochie
3266-P Chris Lahue
3267-At Scott Magnetti
3268-S Eddie Kolos
3269-At Damion Cressy
3270-P David Derue
3271-P Charissa Eller-Doughty
3272-At Genevieve Arnold
3276-P Brian Gormley
3275-At Joel Jenkins
3274-P Bethanne Callahan
3273-At Nicole Inman
3277-H Heather Lusk

MY STORY

Your friend in Nebraska

Troy Christensen

While attending the APT's 2009 Tattoo Rendezvous Convention in Kansas City Missouri this last weekend, I was approached by Peggy Sucher, who asked me if I would tell my story in the newsletter. She thought that a person like me might just be an interesting read. Who would have known?

It was a dark and stormy night. Lighting flashed the walls shook and the lights flickered. I was reading an article in one of the mags that we all look at. The subject was Bert Grimm. I knew that this was the beginning to the end.

No, really, that's not the story, but yet it is. I have been interested in the art of Tattoos since 1976. It's a male hormone thing that got me started and I was intensely drawn to it. I think it was 1978 when I got my first one by a guy named Mike in Omaha, Nebraska. It was done the acetate stencil and graphite way. I just walked in, picked out a moon and star design off the wall, and proceeded to get it on my chest. Damn. I was ten feet tall and bullet proof. I loved it and haven't stopped after 31 years of getting them. Along the way, I was a sponge about everything that had anything to do about tattooing. I mean, to the extent of doing research by myself in the central library at the university where I have both a Bachelor's and also a Master's of Architecture degree from. That was in the late seventies, early eighties.

I now have been designing buildings all over the country for 27 years. Pretty cool actually, designing buildings that hopefully make people's lives just a little bit better. I love Architecture. On a side note, I have been tattooed longer than I have been an Architect. Going on 31 years now and I love tattoos even more than before.

Now for a little history. During the early eighties I traveled to quite a few places. While living in San Francisco, I ventured into Lyle Tuttle's studio on 7th and Market. I believe that was the address. He had a tattoo museum that I visited. He also had a guy that could work with me in adding to the moon and star design. I was gaining ground. Later, I was also tattooed in Henry Goldfield's studio. I then tried Cliff Raven's studio. He was doing an incredible back piece on some guy and didn't have the time that day. I never went back in, my mistake. Additionally, I have been in Bob Roberts's studio on Sunset Boulevard in LA. I tried to get tattooed but the artist left before we could get the design done and that was discouraging. In retrospect, I did drag my feet. I wanted to get a full dragon sleeve and took too long to get it. Once again, my mistake or at least I thought it was. Later on I was glad that it didn't happen.

Currently, I have around 190+ hours of ink. Feet to neck, hands included. Yet I still work in the professional world and I have my own tattoo studio as well. I am still mesmerized by tattoos after all these years. I love it. I love looking at people with tattoos. I love wearing them, and I love doing them on other people. It's the art, not the lifestyle that I love.

Now, I guess the interesting part of this story comes in when you consider all the young people getting tattoos and the extreme measures they are going to in decorating their bodies. Most of these people have never been in the professional world and have not had to deal with the mentality that exists in the business world either. Believe me, they aren't ready for some of you. They are not ready for me either, and I understand that. It has taken me most of my life to get my tattoos and I have evolved with them and digressed with them. All along taking the stares and side comments in stride.

Tattoos are permanent and to paraphrase a heavily tattooed young lady that I met a while ago, "I have artwork all over my body that is never going away, ever." Apparently, the reality of it hit her hard after she got full sleeves, a giant back piece and tattooed hands all in the course of a couple years. She finally realized that they truly are forever.

The hands and sleeve tattoos are not going to go away, and neither will the prejudice of most employers who will not want to have her as an employee representing them out in public. Not everyone can exist outside of the workplace society in the safety of a "bubble" that allows them to be heavily modified and still afford a decent living. I am no different. I, too, experience those prejudices daily including the job killer, "tattooed hands." Yes, they have

hurt my Architecture career including the job I currently have.

Years ago, a heavily tattooed black friend was talking about all the racial bigotry colored people endured, and as he ranted on he indicated that I had no idea of what it is like. I said, “ Hold on,” and pointed out that I too was heavily tattooed (like he never saw them.) He then nodded and understood what I was saying. We both realized that it’s not the same, but yet agreed that it is similar in some ways. Anyway, he changed the subject.

Society’s attitude is changing but not that fast. It has changed a lot since Bert Grimm was tattooing and we owe a lot to those all those guys like those that I mentioned earlier and a whole lot more. Especially about changing attitudes of those who are offended by visible tattoos. Not only did they pass on the knowledge and the torch, they kept alive the craft which has evolved to the art we have today. Somehow, they helped change people’s misconceptions. Not all were perfect and neither are we, but changes have been made.

The people that I mentioned all had to deal with prejudice from those around them. It’s never going to go away just as the tattoos on the necks and hands and faces of the young people today. Hopefully it will work out for everyone but I know that it won’t for all. Even if you have a fabulous degree and are gainfully employed it still could hamper your career.

Getting visible tattoos is a gamble and it takes some thick skin to get through most of the bull that the non-tattooed can dish out. Sometimes I just want to bust out because of some of the crap that has been said to me and how my current employer views the new tattoo on my neck. Now, I’m not saying that I regret it. In fact, quite the contrary — I want more. Like I said, I love them. I’m not here to tell people not to get heavily covered or to get tattoos or to forget about making a living once those tattoo collections become more visible. It’s just a fact that society still isn’t ready. You can thank all the people throughout history who have made tattooed people out to be something that most of us are not. I think that escapes some people some times.

We have a long way to go and I want to thank the APT for all that they have done in promoting all the right things and trying to knock down some of these walls. In some ways, I guess that it still is a dark and stormy night.

Editors note:

I asked Troy to write about himself because unlike many of today’s up and coming tattooers he has spent time in the ‘real world’ before following his dream. If a person has not held a serious job outside of tattooing it’s hard to understand the gift we have, the freedom, the creativity, the lifestyle many dream about.

I just counseled a young gal who wanted a heavy forearm tattoo. She lived in Mississippi but said ‘I’ll just wear long sleeves.’ Year round?? Kinda young to make that lifelong decision. Like Troy, I’ve worked many years in the ‘real world’ and know too well the prejudices against visible tattoos. As tattooers we have an ethical and moral obligation to our clients as we are altering not only their physical appearance but their life. Please look into your conscience and not your cash register when you work with your clients. As we say here in Hawaii....is it pono? Pono meaning ‘do the right thing’. We owe it to our clients.

Questions?

Answers?

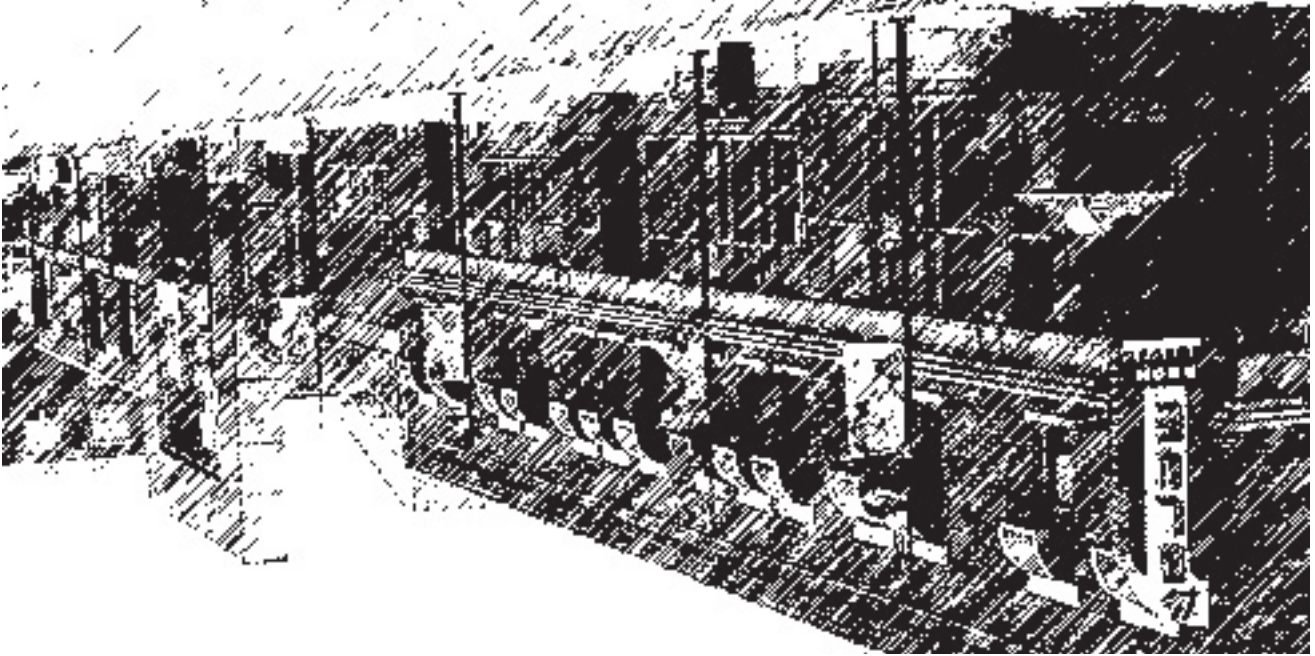
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