

Pennsylvania Coalition of Professional Tattooists & Body Piercers Newsletter

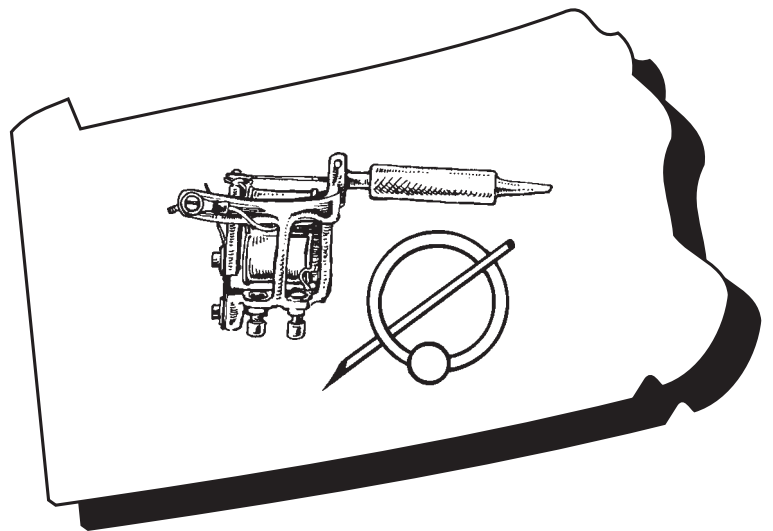
**In
Unity
There
Is
Strength!**

August 1997
Volume 1, Issue 1



IN MEMORY OF...

This first, and all subsequent newsletters of the Pennsylvania Coalition of Professional Tattooists & Body Piercers are dedicated to the memory of Gene Lokey, President/CEO of California Planners and Consultants, Inc. Gene was killed on Sunday, July 27th, 1997, in a plane accident. Gene was a tremendous friend and ally to the tattoo community who gave selflessly of his time and knowledge. He will be greatly missed!



Coalition Hotline:

412•531•5319

<http://www.pa-tattoo.com>

Introducing the Pennsylvania Coalition of Professional Tattooists & Body Piercers

Welcome to the premiere newsletter of the Pennsylvania Coalition of Professional Tattooists & Body Piercers. At the last Coalition meeting (July 20, 1997) it was determined that a monthly newsletter would be a feasible way to communicate updates and information between meetings. At this point in time, Coalition meetings will be scheduled every other month, unless an emergency meeting is necessary - mainly in the event of legislative movement or changes.

This Coalition was formed **by and for** all professional tattooists and body piercers in the state of Pennsylvania in response to pending state legislation from both the House of Representatives and the Senate. Our initial meeting (June 22, 1997) drew over 50 tattoo/piercing professionals from across the state.

Our goal is simple - track legislative issues that directly affect our profession, **decide as a group** how to best deal with these issues, take action when necessary to avoid undue regulation and finally to provide a forum to discuss all issues related to our profession. We're here to keep tattooing and body piercing safe, legal and free - this is an art and should remain as such!

To date, all meetings (room space, refreshments, etc.), mailings, faxing, printing, copying, etc., have been funded out of pocket and through donations from everyone attending the meetings. Unfortunately, **NOTHING IS FREE**, so to keep the Coalition functioning, we will need to determine a **reasonable** annual membership fee to cover our operating costs. This will most likely be determined at the next Coalition meeting.

The Coalition is organized in a democratic fashion (more so than our current government) - that is, **Majority Rules!** All issues are proposed, discussed, voted upon and the majority vote determines our action. There is strength in numbers, and the more professionals that are involved, the more powerful and effective this Coalition will be! The legislation that our state officials are trying to impose will affect us **ALL** whether we're involved in the process or not. **SO BE INVOLVED!**

Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend Coalition meetings. If you have questions you can call (412-531-5319), e-mail (Amazinger@aol.com) or check out the web site (<http://www.pa-tattoos.com>) to find more information!

Maryland Seminar

The Maryland Coalition in conjunction with Dr. Kris Sperry is hosting the Preventing Disease Transmission in Tattooing seminar on Sunday, September 14th from 10AM-7PM, location TBA. PA Coalition affiliates are welcome. The cost is \$125 which includes the seminar, final examination and certificate of attendance.

This newsletter is a work in progress and, just like the Coalition, it should reflect everyone's input and contain useful information. So... if you have an idea, an article, a picture, any information at all that you believe would benefit the Coalition, by all means call, write, e-mail, whatever you have to do to get it to us! Direct all submissions to:

Tim Azinger
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Carnegie, PA 15106
412-531-5319
Amazinger@aol.com

PA Coalition Information Table at Meeting of the Marked 1997

We'd like to have a Pennsylvania Coalition information table at this year's Meeting of the Marked tattoo arts celebration in Pittsburgh. This is an excellent opportunity to reach tattooists, piercers and enthusiasts from Pennsylvania, explain the goals of the Coalition and hopefully gain support. I'm currently creating a general information flier for everyone to use, not only at conventions, but from your studios as well. I'll try to have a first draft before our next meeting. Think about what you'd like to see included and we'll discuss it!

As for the convention, we're looking for volunteers to watch the table, hand out fliers, answer questions, etc. Anyone who is interested should contact Tim (412-531-5319). If you can, sign up for a two (2) hour shift at some point over the three days. Convention dates and times are as follows:

Friday (10/31) – 1:00 PM to 11:00 PM

Saturday (11/1) – 11:00 AM to 11:00 PM

Sunday (11/2) – 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM



Special thanks to Duke Miller for donating a National tattoo machine which was raffled at the last meeting to raise money for the Coalition! The winner of the machine, Tony Urbanek, was kind enough to re-donate it to the Coalition. Plans are to hold another raffle at a future meeting or at an upcoming convention.

Know The Difference!

Our government (a so-called Democracy) has to be one of the most confusing political organizations, bar none! From the White House in D.C. down to the Borough office there are laws and regulations, procedures and paperwork, red tape and hassles, most of which is presented in legal mumbo jumbo and 10 cent words that send us running to the dictionary with every other sentence.

Decisions that directly influence our lives are made every day and often we are unaware of them! Take the States attempt at regulating and licensing tattoo and body piercing establishments as a perfect example. With little or no research, no input from practicing professionals and with no regard for our livelihoods, our Senators and Representatives, **our elected officials**, deemed it necessary to license and regulate tattooists and piercers with the intention of "protecting their constituents."

One of the biggest obstacles we've faced in organization the Coalition has been determining what our function should be. What should the Coalition do? Why would regulation and/or licensing be bad? One of the main reasons we spend so much time wrestling with these questions is directly related to our subject matter - the state government and the legislative process. Once we make sense of all the paper and information swirling around us, we'll be better prepared to set down clear goals and focus on attaining them!

I'm gathering support materials for our next meeting on this topic, but until then, think this through...

The Coalition is grappling with three (3) main issues - health department codes, legislation and regulation/licensing - all of which have very distinct purposes.

Health Department Codes (copies of Maryland's Title 10 at next meeting) are the easiest to understand and probably the most acceptable to our situation. They're simply safety and sterilization guidelines for tattooists and piercers to follow. We could easily outline our own and present them to the State Health Department.

Legislation (a "Bill") is introduced by Senators and Representatives to show their constituents that they are "protecting" the public. Legislation varies depending upon the subject it is directed towards. In our case, legislation would place our profession with doctors, dentists and mid-wives under the Medical Practice Act of 1985 (a 30 page document WITHOUT tattooing/piercing) - hefty fines and jail terms for violating any portion of the Act. Do you consider your livelihood a crime? Do you think people need to be **protected** from tattooing and piercing? This situation would also place our profession under the control of the State Medical Board. We all know how body modification friendly most doctors are. Doctors (not tattooists and piercers) would create any tests, standards and/or applications for tattooing and piercing licenses!

Regulation and licensing are an inherent part of legislation. It's the states way of generating revenue. Revenue from what? Tattooists and piercers in this case! On top of the taxes we pay and the operating licenses we buy for our businesses, we would pay X amount of dollars to fund the regulation and licensing process. The State would also make money from the fines and penalties that are imposed in the Medical Practice Act!

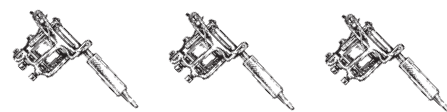
Safety and sterilization are extremely important to our industry, we stake our livelihoods and our reputations on it every day, and the majority of us take these issues very seriously. Certainly, there are always exceptions to the rule, but they exist with or without laws, regulations and licensing. The question becomes should the majority suffer for the wrongdoing of a few? Should you and I pay the fees, take the tests, file the paperwork and deal with the hassles created by some unscrupulous individuals who will continue their practice and ignore the laws that were created because of them?

PA Coalition Information on the Web

Drake Cox (Once Upon a Tattoo, Warren) has been hard at work sculpting the Pennsylvania Coalition's web site (<http://www.pa-tattoos.com>). Drake has donated not only his time, but the space to host the site and the domain name. If you have internet access, this is a great place to go for up-to-date information about the Coalition, pending legislation, useful resources, etc. If you would like to contribute, help design pages, offer ideas, whatever, Drake is open to all help and suggestions. You can contact him at 814-726-2860 or via e-mail at tattoo@pa-tattoo.com.

Other internet sites you might find helpful are the Illinois Coalition web site hosted by Reverend Mad Jack of Body Basics in Chicago (<http://www.bodybasics.com>) and the Zip Code/Political District Database (<http://www.vote-smart.org/state/Pennsylvania/legis>) where you can determine all political representatives for your area simply by entering your zip code. This comes in handy when you're ready to write that letter to your local Senator or Representative!

If you DO NOT have access to the web, simply contact Drake or Tim and we'll do our best to make these materials available to you on paper.



**Check the Status of Any Bill In Harrisburg (Have the Bill Number and Originating Branch - House or Senate - Ready When You Call!)
717-787-2342**

Copies of all Coalition materials (Senate and House Bills, meeting agendas and attachments, etc.) are available via mail or at any Coalition meeting. Simply contact Tim and let him know what you need!