

TEXAS

the publication of the
Texas Jewelers Association

Winter 2009

Jeweler

TJA Annual
CONFERENCE & EXPO
Highlights

WINNERS
from the TJA
Jewelry Design
COMPETITION

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Cover Spotlight photo courtesy of Stuller, Inc. – These pieces were created through the newly-developed, jewelry design software, CounterSketch Studio.

Lower Dues, A Stronger Voice for Texas Jewelers



Instead of a message from the TJA President, this important information is about our relationship with (JA) Jewelers of America and comes from our entire TJA Board of Directors.

As you may know, Jewelers of America, which is based in New York, has “redefined” the relationship with state affiliate associations such as Texas. Though the Texas Jewelers Association and JA will remain partners, TJA will no longer be an affiliate of JA. In fact, TJA will now be operating as an INDEPENDENT ASSOCIATION.

Though JA gave us very short notice, the timing couldn't be better. TJA had already begun working on a new strategic plan to ensure that we are serving the unique needs of the jewelry industry in Texas. This new opportunity will allow TJA to focus on Texas legislation and retail trends that will provide our members with even MORE benefits.

In the past, you received ONE

membership dues invoice from JA to belong to both associations, TJA AND JA. JA retained a \$20 processing fee. Beginning in 2010, JA will solicit its own membership dues of \$95 per store. This will NO LONGER INCLUDE YOUR MEMBERSHIP TO TJA.

Since TJA will no longer be paying the JA \$20 processing fee, we are passing that savings on to you. TJA is reducing your membership fee from \$150 to \$125. It is only \$50 for each additional store.

Your TJA Board of Directors and staff are committed to providing you excellent customer service by continuing to be the “Resource Center” for all of your questions and requests.

2009 – 2010 Board of Directors

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5956 Sherry Lane, Ste. 1410
Dallas, Texas 75225
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YOUR NEW TJA

- TJA will be partnering with other Texas trade organizations to bring you more services and opportunities in state legislation issues via email and mail.

- TJA's website will soon have more social media components that will provide more information, communications, education, and networking opportunities. TJA members will be able to provide input on our upcoming web presence via Facebook and other blog sites.

- TJA's first class quarterly glossy magazine and newsworthy information is the best in the nation.

- TJA now has expanded into the television medium and offers a very cost effective TV media plan via Baby Face Productions on our website for only \$500.

- TJA will continue to partner with service providers to offer TJA members exclusive discounts on business services.

- TJA will continue security alerts through the Jeweler's Alert e-mail blast system from Jeweler's Mutual.

- TJA offers members and their employees benefit programs such as dental,

vision and even hearing plans not available through JA.

The Texas Jewelers Association has a long legacy of leadership and innovation, and continues to be one of the largest state jewelers associations in the country because

we remain committed to serving the needs of our members. We ask for your continued support to serve your needs—the needs of the jewelry industry in Texas.

Sincerely,

TJA Officers and Board

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We Made It!

Executive Director's Note

Joe McCullough



TJA's Saturday evening "Vendor Reception Party" participants (L-R) are incoming TJA President Eric Wright of Dallas, Sue Jackson/of Jewel Mart of Paris, TX, and Cecile Wright of Village Goldsmith Jewelers.



The 2009 TJA 70th Annual Conference and Expo was held in beautiful downtown San Antonio and we did not have to experience another "Hurricane Ike" like we did in 2008. What was forecasted for 2009 was lots of fun, great educational presentations from nationally known presenters and lots of networking in the Expo areas with food and free drinks.



Beyond the networking and fun, TJA featured some EOY product purchases and this year products were on hand just before the holiday season. Exhibitor Mark Lyon of Equity Diamond Brokers Cincinnati, Ohio/(513) 793-411 shows-off his beautiful line of rings to Robert Harrison/Harrison Jewelers of Austin and Doug Jackson/Jewel Mart of Paris, TX.

The goal for this year with our TJA exhibitors was to meet new vendors and new product lines, as well as "fill in the holes" for jewelers' product lines around the state.

Vendor product lines were varied this year in that the TJA Expo Show featured various lines of in-store enhancements such as new product case display lighting, which was very economically feasible and with a much brighter intensity for best visual display.

Hi-Lites...owner/vendor James Wonders display featured these quality lights and to contact him call (361) 459-6048.



TJA 2009 Conference & Exposition



Brad Koen of Joe Koen and Son Jewelers in Austin visits with a new TJA vendor Michael Johnston of Gabriel & Co out of New York. Michael, a representative of Gabriel, is based out of Houston and was a first time vendor in San Antonio. He featured lots of beautiful rings and made some good contacts. Give Michael a call at (832)725-7185 to visit your store.

Hadley Roma, Midas Chain, Geneva & Bfly featured at the 2009 Annual Conference. Pamela Colborg of Dallas, a regular TJA exhibitor, produces a wonderful line of new products every year at the TJA conferences. This year Pam is visiting with jeweler Steve Kriechbaum Designer Goldsmith of Austin about her unique line of products on display, which she is representing.



The Texas Institute of Jewelry Technology in Paris, Texas, joined our exhibitors this year to demonstrate the fine programs with which they have their students enrolled. The Institute goes to great length to produce the highest quality of training available so that their students can hit the ground running and be an effective employee once hired. So... when you're looking for a store trainee "with experience" give them a call at 903-782-0474.



Signature Engraving Systems, Inc and representative Dennis Gossett makes money for jewelers. The automated and computerized engraving system is highly efficient and almost impossible to break. It just keeps on keeping on. A number of demonstrations happen every year at our TJA show and the return on the dollar for volume jobs is priceless. Have Dennis give you a demonstration by calling 800-323-3283.



TJA 70th Annual Business Meeting



The conference Sunday luncheon was filled with a little business as Federated Insurance, an endorsed TJA insurance provider, demonstrated the multitudes of ways they can protect your jewelry business assets from weather related licks or burglary concerns. With multiple representatives throughout Texas, you owe it to yourself to get a free analysis of your business safety concerns.

The business session was followed by a report by (standing) President Mark Priest/Legend Jewelers, San Angelo, TX, followed by Robert Harrison's treasurer report.

After the business portion was completed there were tons of great give-away items from businesses and board members. Great appreciation goes to board member Jeanie Roberts Roe of Del Rio and her mother who gathered up some really fantastic gift items for this year's annual conference in San Antonio. Check out just a few of the happy faces who had winning ticket numbers.



David Harrel/TX Inst.



Steve Kriechbaum



Tim Parks/Breuning

NewTJA Board of Directors /Affiliates



(L-R) Dennis Gossett/ Signature
Engraving Systems, Inc & Bruce Bartl/
KIM International

TJA Professional Improvement...Education

Education and "quality" education is always a highlight of all of TJA's annual conferences and this year was no exception. Our three main speakers this year in San Antonio were very timely and not only from the standpoint of the slow economy, but also given the pre-season time of year and what to do about your competition. They were entertaining and on target. Go see these guys or sign-up for their newsletters.

Bill Hoefer, in his presentation titled "Bulletproofing Appraisals", spoke about all of the rules and legal responsibilities a jeweler needs to know about when appraising a client's pieces. Hoefer is an aficionado who researches proper valuation methods. In "Bulletproofing Your Business" he discussed what the average retailer needs to know about the law to bypass costly lawsuits.

Brad Huysken gave two fun and motivational seminars showing businesses what they need to do to maximize their holiday season selling opportunities. During the high traffic holiday season, sales staff has to be trained to be a selling machine to capitalize on the multitude of selling opportunities that are available.

Trace Shelton talked about "Turning the Tables on Internet Competition."

Shelton is editor-in-chief of *INDESIGN Magazine*, the monthly business publication for retailers of fine jewelry design.



Thanks to our 2009 Exhibitors

San Antonio, Texas • October 9-10-11, 2009

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And the Winners Are...

TJA Jewelry Design Competition Winners Unveiled at Annual Convention

Winners from the annual TJA Jewelry Design Competition were unveiled during the Texas Jewelry Association's Annual Conference in San Antonio in October. There are four categories in the competition. Categories 1, 2 and 3 are for the bench jeweler to show their expertise in jewelry design. The person entering these categories must be the only one to touch the piece from conception to final polish. The pieces cannot have been mass produced or previously sold. In addition, pieces may have been entered in other competitions, but cannot have won any awards.

The Four Categories Are

CATEGORY 1

Material may not exceed \$1,000.00. Pieces must be made of silver, gold or platinum and may contain precious stones.

CATEGORY 2

Material from \$1,000.00-\$3,000.00. Pieces must be made of gold or platinum and may contain precious stones.

CATEGORY 3

Materials over \$3,000.00. Pieces must be made of gold or platinum and may contain precious stones.

CATEGORY 4

Open Design. This category is for pieces of any value, silver gold or platinum, with or without stones. These pieces may have been designed and created by more than one person.



2009 Winners

CATEGORY I

1st place

Ziad Noshie

Almaza Jewelers

2nd place

Peter Barr

Peter Barr Designing Jewelers

3rd place

Steve Kriechbaum

*Steve Kriechbaum Designer/
Goldsmith*

CATEGORY II

1st place

Peter Barr

Peter Barr Designing Jewelers

2nd place

Ziad Noshie

Almaza Jewelers

3rd place

Steve Kriechbaum

*Steve Kriechbaum Designer/
Goldsmith*

CATEGORY III

1st place

Ziad Noshie

Almaza Jewelers

CATEGORY IV

1st place

Ziad Noshie

Almaza Jewelers

2nd place

Peter Barr

Peter Barr Designing Jewelers

CATEGORY I



First Place

"Cricket Bats" – Ziad Noshie

One pair of earrings in 18K yellow gold set with two Australian black doublet opals and 16 full cut diamonds 0.27 carats. The two doublet opals were cut from one single stone and the total weight of the earrings is 8.0 grams.



Second Place

Peter Barr

10.5mm Tahitian Pearl in 14 karat white gold with 18 karat yellow gold bail pave set with .33 ct diamonds in a pendant enhance.



Third Place

Steve Kriechbaum

The Rutile Quartz Bracelet is fabricated in 14K yellow gold and sets a .41ct rutilated quartz from Brazil.



CATEGORY 2



First Place
Peter Barr

1.83 carat Pear Shape Blue Sapphire with .28 carats diamonds in 14 karat white gold and 14 karat yellow gold ring.



Second Place
"The Nancy Ring" – Ziad Noshie

This contemporary cocktail ring is made out of 18K yellow gold. It is set with 57 full cut diamonds 1.15 carats and its total weight is 12.1 grams.



Third Place
Steve Kriechbaum

This ring contains a natural 13mm golden south sea pearl set in 18K green gold accented by .75 ct total weight of diamonds paved.

CATEGORY 3



First Place-
"Circle of Life" – Ziad Noshie

This set, consisting of a necklace, bracelet, earrings, and ring, took Noshie over a year and a half to make. It is composed of 149 grams of 18K green and white gold and all of the circles are made by hand without using a template and no two are exactly the same. In this set is 4.55 carats of full cut diamonds, 5.80 carats of natural multicolored sapphires, and black mother of pearl cut from the Pinctada Margaritifera oyster.

Winners Contact Information

Almaza Jewelers
2510 University Blvd.
Houston TX 77005
713-521-0071

Peter Barr Designing Jewelers
3850 S. Alameda
Corpus Christi TX 78411
361-992-2277

Steve Kriechbaum
Designer/Goldsmith
8140 N. Mopac - Bldg. 3 - Ste. 205
Austin TX 78759
512-346-9423



CATEGORY 4



First Place

"Andalucía" – **Ziad Noshie**

This necklace is made out of 18K yellow and green gold and some 24K yellow gold. It is set with one semi-black crystal opal 13.18 carats from Lightning Ridge, Australia that has been hand-cut and polished without any template. Surrounding the opal are 117 full cut diamonds 0.72 carats and 7 natural colored sapphires 0.90 carats. Dangling from the bottom of the necklace are 5 faceted natural colored briolette sapphires 3.97 carats. The chain is all made by hand and is fused, not soldered and has a boxed clasp in the shape of a crescent moon. It is set with 21 full cut diamonds 0.21 carats.



Second Place

Peter Barr

11.5 mm Tahitian Pearl in 14 karat white gold ring with .26 carat diamonds accents.

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● **Health, Vision & Dental Benefits**
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● **Credit Card Discount Plan** which has proven to be one of the very best around via Covenant Financial Solutions.

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● **TJA Newsletters, E-blast Updates and Legislative Alerts**

● **Annual TJA Educational Conferences and Nationally-Known Speakers**

● **Continuing Education Hours**

● **TJA City Breakfast Clubs**

(More Benefits / Over)

www.texasjewelers.org



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☐ New Member

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Address: _____

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Business Phone: _____ Business Fax: _____

E-mail: _____ Web site: _____

Contact Name: _____ Title: _____

TYPE OF BUSINESS: (Please check all that apply)

☐ Regular Retail Member

☐ I will abide by TJA Code of Ethics & Standards of Conduct

☐ Retail Jewelry Store

☐ Leased Department

☐ Other (please specify)

Total Number of Outlets _____ (Attach a list of outlets with complete addresses)

Total number of employees at all locations _____

Year Established _____ Do you collect sales/use tax? _____

Tax ID Number: _____

LIST BELOW TWO INDUSTRY REFERENCES (names, addresses, and phone numbers)

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Stuller Unveils New CounterSketch Studio Software



CounterSketch Studio is designed to increase customer participation in creating personal, custom jewelry — and to reassure your customers that you've got all the answers when it comes to custom design.

Do you want to be a jewelry hero?

Of course you do! Every jeweler wants to be his or her customer's hero. And, now technology is going to make hero worship even easier with the revolutionary new CounterSketch Studio.

Who developed CounterSketch Studio?

The technology behind this radical new way to design jewelry is brought to you by the strategic alliance of Stuller, Inc. and Gemvision Corp. It is the collaboration of Matt Stuller, CEO, president and founder of Stuller, Inc. and Jeff High, Gemvision founder and president, and the product of the two companies' 20-year relationship.

What does it do for my store?

It turns every member of your staff into a potential CounterSketch Studio operator, no CAD experience necessary. Just think of how powerful it will be for

your staff to sit with your customers and grab a piece of jewelry from the "starting point" library and customize it the way the customer envisions it, with the customer participating in just a few minutes.

But, isn't this CAD? And really difficult to learn without prior experience?

Yes and no. There is a strong CAD program running in the background of this program, but the controls that you work

with are very simple to use. It offers:

- Full 3-D design modeling.
- Photorealistic rendering.
- Instant price estimates.
- Seamless transfer of the CAD files to Stuller for fulfillment.
- So easy to use that anyone at the store could take a custom design job from start to finish.

We've never really done custom work because of the skill levels and time required. Is this for us?

There is no better time to start increasing your custom work than now. It helps you give your customer exactly what they are looking for in jewelry, right in front of both of you on the screen. You probably already know that many of the customers who walk into your store are looking for something different than you have in the



case already. Why not give them what they are looking for, close that sale and increase your business, both immediately and in the future when they return for more custom jewelry? And, according to David Geller with Jeweler Profit, custom is where the money is these days in the jewelry store.

2 days training... is it really that easy?

Absolutely. In fact, many of the jewelers we've spoken with after the training told us they and their staff members had a good handle on how to work the program after just one day. And, many trainees were sales associates with little or no design or computer experience.

So, what exactly is this CounterSketch Studio?

- It is a fully 3-D CAD software package with photorealistic rendering and real-time price estimate capabilities.
- It is very easy to learn and use.
- It is about easily modifying and truly customizing the flow, line and detail of a design.
- It is a way to use customer gems and tailor a setting to precisely match the dimensions of your stone.

And, what is it not?

- It isn't a start-from-scratch design tool. All designs begin with a library style, so the process is immediate.
- It isn't intended to output files to just any CAM equipment. It allows you to easily transmit files to us for fulfillment.
- It isn't a typical, build-a-ring, 2-D representation often seen on websites.
- It isn't intended for consumers to use from home on the internet. The jewelry expert is an integral part of the consumer experience.
- It isn't static. Product libraries and software features will continue to be updated via the Internet.
- It isn't cut-and-paste "customization."

For more information regarding CounterSketch Studio, contact Gemvision at (800) 357.6272 or online at www.gemvision.com.

The Texas Institute of Jewelry Technology at Paris Junior College, Paris, TX

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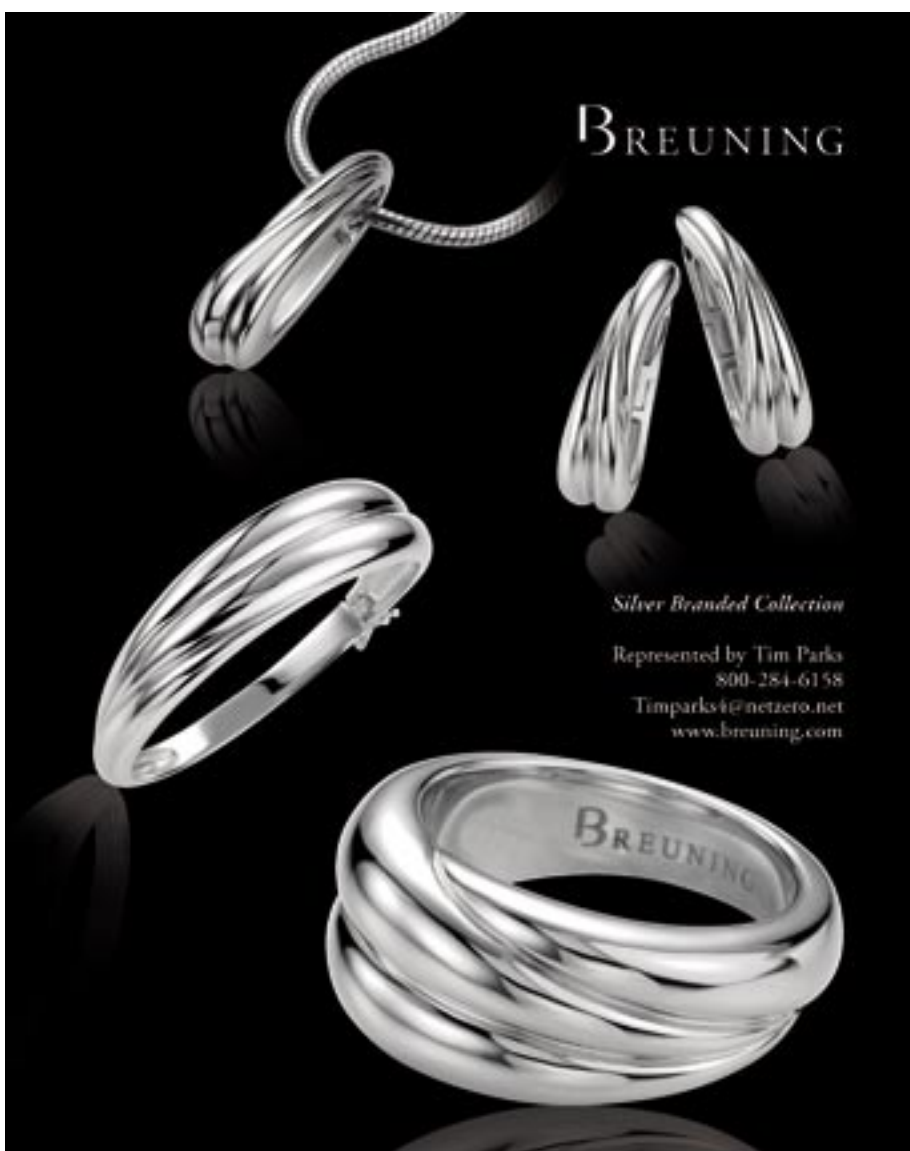
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Tara Energy and Endorsed TJA Provider Can Save Your Business and Home Significant Money

The Secret to Buying Electricity

BY LIZ REYNA



Have you ever shopped for electricity rates for your home or business and found yourself obsessed with getting a lower and lower rate? You set out to simply lock in a rate and the next thing you know, you are checking the internet daily for electricity rates, just as you would check stock prices. It can make you want to pull your hair out!

There is a better way to shop for electricity products that will allow you to lock in a very good rate and lower your stress level.

The secret is to buy at the right time. An analysis of the Market Clearing Price for Electricity ("MCPE") Index from January 2005 – December 2008 reveals that there are certain months that have historically reflected lower electricity rates.

The bold line on the inserted graph indicates the average MCPE rate for the Houston/CenterPoint Area from January 2005 – December 2008. The months with points above this line are indicative of times of


the year when electricity rates are historically higher. The months that fall below the line are months when electricity rates are typically lower than average. According to an analysis of the Houston/CenterPoint and North/Oncor zones, the best time to buy electricity are the late fall and winter months.

Instead of stressing over \$0.0035/kWh that you may save if you go with a different electricity provider, you can simply choose the company you trust and purchase electricity when rates are typically lower. If you have a good payment history with your current electricity provider, they may work with you to accomplish this goal.

When selecting an electricity company, you should consider TJA's Endorsed Provider for Electricity, Tara Energy. Tara reserves special rates for TJA members. Plus, through the end of February, you will receive \$50 off your residential electricity bill. You can view rates for your home and sign up online by visiting www.TaraEnergy.com using promo code: TJA0705. For more information or to receive a rate quote for your business, call 866-GET-TARA or email associations@taraenergy.com.

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