

TEXAS
Jeweler

the publication of the
Texas Jewelers Association

Spring 2010

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Opportunity!

lists of opportunity available by being a member of TJA.

find a new source all at once.

Opportunity

It's right there on your desk, out on the sales floor and outside your front door. It may be one of those orders that has no deadline but does represent money on the table. Many times changing up the displays and making our inventory look new to US can conjure up sales. And for many, that opportunity is in the satisfaction of doing community work (the ultimate relationship builder).

Opportunity

It is in your hands right now. This TJA magazine, the finest in the nation, is filled with opportunities for services, products and connections to grow your company. If you are not a member, I urge you to go to www.texasjewelers.org and explore the

BIG Opportunity.

On Labor Day Weekend, TJA will be hosting the annual conference in Fredericksburg, Texas, September 4-6. The location is GREAT. And what an opportunity! The format and schedule is simplified. Come in early and play during the day on Friday and then enjoy a social event Friday night. Saturday, a James Avery tour is being organized followed by a business lunch, and then a Saturday afternoon speaker. Saturday evening will focus on a social get together/party with exhibitors.

I encourage you to mark this important calendar event now. It's an opportunity you can't afford to miss. It's an opportunity to see a new vendor, meet a new friend and

Something to Share

I recently took my entire staff to a trade event. We closed the store for a day. I treated everyone to a nice hotel and some great food. It WAS expensive. A few days later, one of my staff asked a vendor to send a particular ring in on memo. I briefly saw the ring and was surprised by a nice sale in the register a few days later. Come to find out, this staff member had seen a unique one-of-a-kind bridal design at the trade event. That expensive weekend is already not so expensive. In fact, I'm thinking that it is just the beginning of what will surely be one of the most profitable investments I have recently made. Always believe in your staff.

Mark Priest

TJA President

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Joe McCullough



TJA Annual Conference

Exciting...Special Offer!

September 3-4, 2010 TJA Members and Stuller Customers and even non-members have a chance to attend and receive this \$499 Jeweler-Kiosk program for free!

STULLER'S - TJA SOLUTIONS SYMPOSIUM

Introduction: Sell More, Own Less

Innovation, Information and Inventory. Understanding and learning to implement these simple words in your store could spell success in the coming year. Let us help you find out how.

Take advantage of our innovative customer interaction programs, such as CounterSketch Studio or our Digital Selling Solutions. CounterSketch Studio allows customers to participate in designing the ring of their dreams with their jeweler, while viewing the complete design in 3-D modeling. Our Digital Selling Solutions are easy-to-use selling tools that allow the jeweler to search Stuller's vast inventory and customize jewelry with customers.

Inventory control issues are a thing of the past with our prototype selling systems, designed to reduce overhead inventory costs while raising profitability. Filled with the freshest and most popular styles, the pieces in these systems will accurately reflect their precious metal counterparts, giving customers a realistic view of what the piece will actually look and feel like. Take charge of your inventory, Sell More and Own Less!

TJA ANNUAL CONFERENCE SESSIONS:

SATURDAY: SEPTEMBER 4, 2010

(8am to 4pm programming)

Session I: Minimize Owner Investment While Maximizing Profitability

This session explores effective ways to

increase your return on investment, free up cash flow and enhance the customer experience in your store. Facilitated by Claudia Zale and Dawn Morgan of Stuller, this discussion highlights how Stuller's Prototype Selling Systems contributes to a highly profitable interactive selling experience.

Session II: Selling With Technology

Chris Glaser and Doug Kerns of Gemvision will highlight how CounterSketch Studio simplifies custom design selling and provides virtual inventory you can tailor to your market.

Session III: Innovative Solutions Bring Innovative Rewards

Discover how easy it is to convert your computer into a powerful selling tool with Stuller's Digital Selling Solutions. Led by Claudia Zale and Dawn Morgan of Stuller, this session includes practical guides to enhance customer satisfaction while increasing sales. Bring your own laptop and follow the demonstration online and demo these applications.

Part 1: Stuller Showcase – Free to all those with a valid Stuller account. Or, sign-

up now at www.Stuller.com login. Once on the Stuller home page see the very top of the page "sign-up" and go to new accounts login.

Part 2: JewelerKiosk - Attendees will receive FREE sign-up to JewelerKiosk, valued at \$499!

Receive: Web-based JewelerKiosk program branded with your company store name, which allows TJA members and Stuller customers the ability to sell, design, search, engrave all while sitting with your customer. You'll be making their dreams come true! Build everything below 1-4 from this wonderful web-based tool and receive product direct from Stuller to your store.

Stuller Exhibits and Solutions

- Gemvision Product Demonstration
- Prototype Showcase Inventory Solutions
- Prototype Selling Systems
- Virtual Kiosks
 - 1) Family Jewelry Design Tool
 - 2) Loose Diamond Search Tool
 - 3) Engravable Wedding Band tool
 - 4) Earring Design Tool

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TJA 2010 Jewelry Design Competition Entry Form

Deadline: August 6, 2010

Eligibility

Anyone who is a TJA member, or is employed by a TJA member, or a student, currently enrolled at a college or university, who is interested in designing and/or creating a one-of-a-kind piece of jewelry.

Rules of Entry

- Pieces must be original designs created by the persons entering them.
- Pieces may be designed and made by more than one person.
- Pieces cannot have been mass produced or previously sold.
- Pieces must have been produced between Sept. 2009 and Aug. 2010.
- Pieces may have been entered in other competitions, but cannot have won any awards.
- Pieces should not be identified or hallmarked until after the judging.

Details of Design Entry

Entrants may enter one piece in each of three categories. Each piece must be submitted with a \$25 nonrefundable entry fee. Only finished pieces will be accepted.

Category 1

Materials may not exceed \$1,000. Pieces must be made of silver, gold or platinum and may contain precious stones.

Category 2

Materials from \$1,000-\$3,000. Pieces must be made of silver, gold or platinum and may contain precious stones.

Category 3

Materials Over \$3,000. Pieces must be made of silver, gold or platinum and may contain precious stones.

Category 4

Bench jewelers exclusive. This category is for the bench jeweler to show their expertise in jewelry design. The person entering this category must be the only one to touch the piece from conception to final polish. Materials of any value may be used.

Student

-See details next column.

Deadline - August 6, 2010

Application, entry fee and finished piece must arrive by August 6, 2010.

Judging

The entries will be judged by qualified people in the jewelry industry. When the pieces are being judged, they will be identified by number only. The judges will select the winning pieces on the basis of creative use of materials, craftsmanship, wearability, originality, and fashion merit.

Awards

Awards will be awarded to the winning piece in each category listed above and to the "best overall," which maybe from any category. Display of entries and presentation of awards will be during the Annual Convention Luncheon Banquet. Entrants are encouraged to attend. The winning piece judged "best overall" will be crowned during the TJA 2010 Conference.

Cash awards for the student category are sponsored by:

J. Patrick Diamonds, Inc.,
5956 Sherry Ln. #538,
Dallas, TX 75225

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your entry in the 18th Annual TJA Jewelry Design Competition. We appreciate your interest and support of the organization. Please fill out and submit the following form with your entry fee.

Finished entries must be received by August 6, 2010.

Name: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Categories entered (Only one piece per category)

☐ Category 1 _____ (\$25 entry fee)

☐ Category 2 _____ (\$25 entry fee)

☐ Category 3 _____ (\$25 entry fee)

☐ Category 4 _____ (\$25 entry fee)

Describe the jewelry pieces entered, including material value (cost). Attach an additional page.

Student Category - Entry Fees & Info

Student Awards Sponsored by J. Patrick Diamonds, Inc.

\$15 per jewelry piece or (set) entered.

Pieces will be judged on design and execution. **PRIZE**

1st Place: _____ \$250 with plaque

2nd Place: _____ \$150 with plaque

3rd Place: _____ \$100 with plaque

4th Place: _____ Honorable Mention with plaque only

(No category rules apply to student competition)

Total Fees: \$ _____

Mail entries to: TJA Design Contest

Brad Koen
Joe Koen & Son
611 Congress Ave.
Austin, Texas 78701
512/478-2595
brad@joekoenjewelers.com



All finished entries must be sent by **registered mail, insured with a return receipt.** Entries remain the property of the person entering item. All winning and nonwinning entries will be returned by registered mail as soon as possible.

TJA assumes no liability for loss or damage to any piece entered.



Texas Jewelers Association 2010 Annual Conference & Exhibition

(Schedule at a Glance)



Tentative schedule is subject to change. The TJA Conference Onsite Program will contain final TJA conference schedule and hotel meeting room assignments.

Friday, September 3, 2010

11am TJA Board Meeting
12:00pm Registration
2:00pm James Avery Kerrville Factory Bus Tour
6:30pm Informal Social gathering – EXHIBIT HALL

Saturday, September 4, 2010

7:30am Registration
EXHIBITS OPEN

8am -12n **Solution Symposium**

Session I: Minimize Owner Investment While Maximizing Profitability

Claudia Zale and Dawn Morgan of Stuller discuss Prototype Selling Systems and how they contribute to high profitability and interactive selling experience.

Session II: Selling With Technology

Chris Glaser and Doug Kerns of Gemvision highlight how CounterSketch Studio simplifies system design selling and provides virtual inventory tailored to your customer.

12n – 1:30pm TJA Business Luncheon/Design Contest Winners

2pm – 4pm **Solution Symposium – Conclusion**

Session III: Innovative Solutions Bring Innovative Rewards

Claudia Zale and Dawn Morgan of Stuller demonstrate how to convert your computer into a powerful selling tool with Stuller's Digital Selling Solutions.

Part 1: Stuller Showcase – Free to all those with a valid Stuller account and Stuller.com login.

Part 2: JewelerKiosk - *Attendees will receive FREE sign-up to JewelerKiosk, valued at \$499!*

Stuller Exhibits and Solutions

Gemvision Product Demonstration

Prototype Showcase Inventory Solutions

Prototype Selling Systems

Virtual Kiosks

- 1) Family Jewelry Design Tool
- 2) Loose Diamond Search Tool
- 3) Engravable Wedding Band tool
- 4) Earring Design Tool

6:30 pm TJA Group Dinner on the River – Lone Star Café

Sunday, September 5, 2010

Enjoy the City and Unique Shops of Fredericksburg!



Texas Jewelers Association 2010 71st Annual Conference & Exhibition

REGISTRATION FORM

Fredericksburg, Texas

September 3-4, 2010

Registration form also available at www.texasjewelers.org. If you need another registration form for a colleague, feel free to photocopy this form. To receive the early bird discounted fee, pre-registrations must be postmarked, faxed, or received online by August 21, 2010. Plan to register on-site at a higher fee after 8/21/10. Do not mail forms to TJA office after 8/15/10. A Full Enrollment Registration fee admits you to all functions. Your Full Enrollment Conference Badge is your admission to exhibits, all sessions, and conference meals & functions. A receipt will be included in your packet at registration check-in. Refunds will be processed after the conference if a written request is sent before 8/30/10. ***There will be a \$25 processing charge on refunds.***



Complete this entire form. Type or print clearly for each registrant.

First Name / Registrant: _____ **Last Name:** _____

Spouse or Staff Name(s): Registrant: _____

Place of Employment / Company Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ **City/ST/Zip:** _____

Phone: _____ **Fax:** _____

E-mail Address (Required for confirmation): _____

Note: If you are a retail store owner, spouse, or store manager, you pay either the TJA Member or Nonmember "Full Registration Fee." If you have employees, they can choose from and add to sections below.

Registration Fees (*FIRST TIME ATTENDEES (\$25 DISCOUNT) NONMEMBER RATE*)

Refund requests postmarked after 08/30/10 will not receive refunds.

	Qty.		Total
Full Registration - Full Attendance <i>(Includes: Saturday luncheon, breaks, seminars, and social functions)</i>			
<input type="checkbox"/> TJA Member or Staff: Full Registration <i>(Includes all meals, seminars, and social functions)</i>	_____ @	\$200	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Nonmember or Staff: Full Registration <i>(Includes all meals, seminars, and social functions)</i>	_____ @	\$225	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> TJA Member or Nonmembers/Staff <i>(Includes Luncheon, seminars, and Exhibit Hall only-Meals Extra)</i>	_____ @	\$75	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> James Avery Factory Bus Tour/Kerrville, TX <i>(Friday 2pm - Busses Leaves from Hotel)</i>	_____ @	\$25	\$ _____

Additional Meal Tickets

(Must be purchased by 08/30/10)

<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Luncheon	_____ @	\$35	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday Reception	_____ @	\$15	\$ _____

☐ **I require special assistance/I require special dietary needs**

Specify: _____ **Total:** \$ _____

Credit Card Payments: (Online Registration Available at www.texasjewelers.org)

Select One: ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover ☐ Mastercard ☐ Visa

☐ **Check Payments**

Account #: _____ Exp. Date: _____

For office use: _____

Cardholder's Name: _____

Date Received: _____

Cardholder's Phone: _____

Amount: \$ _____ Ck#: _____

Billing Address: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

I authorize TJA to charge my credit card and understand that the billing statement will read Texas Jewelers Association.

If paying by credit card you may fax to 512/454-3036 for fastest registration; or register online at www.texasjewelers.org. A receipt will be enclosed in your registration packet.

Mail this completed form with registration payment to:

**TJA Headquarters
1306-A W. Anderson Ln.
Austin, TX 78757**

For Questions Please Call TJA Headquarters at 512/454-8626

Is This the Year to Place Your Sales Staff on Commission?

BY DAVID GELLER



Given the economy, jewelers can't keep "slackers" around their store. In fact, many jewelers had to make tough choices this past year. Keeping sales staff because "we're family" is way past its prime. This was the year for many "put out or get out!"

But, of course, many jewelers overreact. "I've had enough!" then they fire the staff. Like being in a marriage, waiting for an explosion is the worst time to try and solve your problems. By then it's way too late.

Most sales staff problems can be blamed on who?

The owner!

Most jewelers hire staff and toss them onto the floor, maybe even giving them a few books to read. Then, when the staff doesn't sell, both are frustrated.

"Why aren't they selling? I pay them well. We have lots of traffic! I give them 1% commission. It's not that hard. If I can do it, anyone can!"

Why is it that you sell so well with no formal training and they can't?

A couple of reasons:

YOU

1. You're invested in the store. It's your baby and if you don't sell something you may not be able to pay your vendors. Or maybe you'll skip a payroll.
2. Customers would rather deal with the owner.
3. You come to work to make a good living.
4. You're a risk taker.

5. You love to sell.

6. You love the feeling of closing a sale.

Why won't the staff sell? For many sales staff, the reason they came to work today was:

STAFF

1. The \$12 an hour guaranteed pay.

Sort of smug, aren't I? So how do you motivate the staff to sell? How do you just get them to want to sell?

There's more to it than that.

You first must have the right temperament of people. There are only two types of people in this world.

1. Race Horses—These would be sales people. Like a race horse they love to compete and win.

2. Work Horses—These are bench jewelers, bookkeepers, administrative staff and "clerks". Clerks write up orders, sales people move product out of the store.

Hiring someone just because they've sold before and seemed so nice just doesn't make product jump off the shelves.

Hire enthusiastic people! Teach product knowledge!

So let's look first at how to gauge your store's ability to put the staff on a commission system (there are reasons you can't do commission) and what's needed to be able to install a commission plan. Then we'll look at how to do this.

Why you may not be able to put the staff on a meaningful commission plan.

A commission plan should be an incentive to sell. It must be rewarding. What's rewarding? The staff must be able to spend that money on something other than burgers. A 1% or 2% commission might seem like a lot to the owner (especially when three or more sales staff are paid you go

“wow! They just got \$600”.) Divide it up by day and \$7 a day doesn't even pay for a burger and fries for lunch. Some incentive.

If in your store, you (the owner) sell over 50% of all sales then your staff may not be able to make any serious money from the crumbs left to them. If you sell the bridal, high end and leave them to sell earrings, charms, repairs and batteries, then they have no chance of making any serious money.

Let's talk about a million dollar store. If you sell \$600,000, that leaves \$400,000 to be divided among 2-3 sales people. Then each might sell about \$133,000 each.

So how much should a sales person sell?

“Typically” sales people should sell between 8-13 times what there are paid. Take their W-2 and divide it by their total sales to see what percentage they cost the store. Sales includes product as well as repairs (repairs are sales, my friend), watch batteries and custom designs. If you do a lot of buying gold off the street, I'll discuss that further down.

So if Mary makes \$30,000 and sold \$310,000, divide the \$30,000 by \$310,000 and you get 9.6%. That's excellent. But if she sold only \$250,000 she cost you 12%, not so good.

Sales staff should cost you between 8% and 13% of their sales. At 8% they are very efficient and at 13% they are very inefficient.

When you calculate the sales staff percentages, figure it based upon “sales” as their full time job. The staff will want to tell you “remember, I package the FedEx packages, that takes time.” “I call customers on the phone.” “I call Stuller orders in every day.”

Yes, that's work but the question is “Does it take them away from selling?”

If Mary calls customers or wraps packages and as soon as a customer comes into the store, she drops what's she's doing to wait on them, then her tasks doesn't interfere in her selling ability.

But let's use the bookkeeper as an example. She sits in the back and helps out when everyone else is with a customer, then bookkeeping keeps her from selling. In this case you'd figure what percent of her time is delegated to selling. If she works a full week at 40 hours but typically puts in



15 hours a week selling, then she spends 38% of her week selling (15 hours divided by 40 hours).

So if the bookkeeper makes \$35,000 a year and sells you first figure out her “selling costs”, 15% of her time is selling and 15% of \$35,000 is \$5,250. This is what you paid the bookkeeper to sell.

Now if her sales are \$75,000 a year (not much, is it?) and you divide her \$5,250 by \$75,000 in sales her cost to you is 7%. Hey, she's a darn good sales person when she sells.!

Overall

1. Using the methods above, first figure

out everyone's selling salaries. Get a total for the store as well as each staff member.

2. Then figure out how much each staff member sold and add it up to get “Total Sales Staff Sales”. This automatically takes away the sales from the store owner. They can't “steal” your sales so we focus just on their sales. Later when we have the staff so fired up, trained and motivated, then and only then can we then ask them to take some of “our sales” to give us more free time. First let's concentrate on what they do now.

3. Use the methods as mentioned to figure up the selling cost as a percentage per sales staff.

4. But also figure up the whole staffs

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selling percentage as a group. Add up all of their “selling salaries” and divide that by their total sales. This will give you an average for everyone. You’ll want to know your store’s overall cost for the staff and then individually.

When I did this for my store in the early 1990s this is what I found:

1. My overall cost for the sales staff was 14%. Way too high.

2. The least experienced sales person (and youngest) and the lowest paid on an hourly basis cost me 12% of sales.

3. The most experienced sales person and the highest paid by hourly wage cost me 18%.

4. I couldn’t give the younger sales person (who cost only 12%) a dollar an hour raise because it would cost me \$5 an hour. Why? Because sales staff members can’t keep a secret! All of the other four sales staff would want a raise. “I’ve been here longer than

she!” “I have more experience than her!”

So I went to a Harry Friedman seminar in 1991 and learned the secrets I’m sharing with you now. You may not be able to do this but Harry said instead of everyone costing me 14% of sales they should cost 10% of sales.

I was paying them \$7 to \$11 plus 1% on repairs and 2% on product sales. It really wasn’t an incentive.

So I placed all sales staff on 10% commission on total sales, including repairs with a guaranteed draw of \$7 an hour.

All five sales staff members said their salaries would drop and they’d quit. They were right, their income did drop for the first month, but no one quit. Why did their salaries drop? Because they used to COST 14% of every sale and now they only COST 10% of every sale. So if you sell the same amount, of course your income would drop. To make more money they’d have to sell more.

Which is exactly what happened. It took about 1.5 months and it finally kicked in. It took us 18 years to get to \$1.1 million. The next year, in 1991, we started the commission plan in June and sales that year increased 35%.

Typically most compensation experts would suggest that at least 50% of their pay come from a commission/bonus plan. My original plan probably gave them 10% of their pay in commission and it wasn’t an incentive.

So for many people I help them devise a plan that’s 50% wages and 50% commissions. You’ll find that giving them a good incentive will give them the carrot they need.

But before you instill a commission plan there are two other things you must do first:

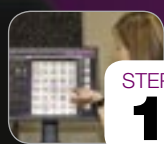
1. Devise a plan that’s right for your store. There are several.

2. You must train them! Like I said before too many jewelers hire smiling faces and EXPECT them to sell when in fact they don’t know HOW to sell. Training is the only way to get them to perform.

For some staff members a commission plan will turn the tide but most people come to work for the hourly wage.

Here’s to a successful year.

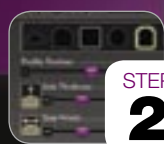
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STEP 2

Customize

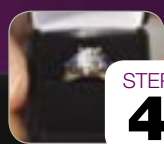
Perform real-time 3D alterations to any design using easy Slider controls.



STEP 3

Order

Quote pricing and send design to Stuller for any amount of manufacturing, setting, & finishing.



STEP 4

Deliver

Stuller will deliver custom designs and higher profits to your store in 8 days or less.

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Chris Glaser

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March 6-8 • Atlanta, GA • Booth 1521 & 1523

MJSA Expo New York
March 14-16 • New York, NY • Booth 1004

The SMART Jewelry Show
April 24-26 • Chicago, IL • Booth 207

JCK Las Vegas
June 4-7 • Las Vegas, NV • Booth 60008

Employee Texting While Driving Can Jeopardize Your Firm



Toward the end of January, the U. S. Department of Transportation made its stance on texting while driving crystal clear – at least to one segment of the driving public.

“Today we’re sending a strong message,” Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood told truckers and bus drivers. “We don’t merely expect you to share the road responsibly with other travelers – we require you to do so.”

This was the latest in a Washington campaign to make drivers keep their eyes on the road in an age of wireless devices increasingly prone to distract them. The previous month, President Barack Obama ordered about 3 million federal workers to stay off their cellphones while driving, strongly encouraged states and companies

alike to follow suit.

Now, a number of insurance firms are warning businesses – including jewelry store owners – who provide employees with mobile devices that they may be caught in a situation of “vicarious liability.”

“We recommend that a prudent practice for every company to consider is developing an electronics usage policy and implementing it uniformly to help proactively manage this risk in their operations where physical exposures exist,” one company said.

Noting that Wisconsin has become the 20th state to ban cell phone text messaging while driving, Zurich -- a global property and casualty insurance provider -- advised

that now is the time for businesses to take the initiative to help protect their employees—and themselves—from the potential dangers of distracted driving, such as texting, dialing cellphones, programming GPS or flipping through iTunes.

According to Zurich risk prevention specialists, employers could be held “vicariously liable” if they permit employees to use particular technologies while driving. This could include operating a company-owned cell phone or mobile device while driving.

Since 2001, a growing number of jury awards have illustrated that businesses could be forced to pay the price for employees’ distracted driving because companies themselves—large and small—are now threatened if suddenly they’re faced with a hefty lawsuit caused by an employee’s negligence with an electronic device.”

Insurers are recommending that a prudent practice for every company to consider is developing an electronics usage policy and implementing it uniformly to help proactively manage this risk in their operations where physical exposures exist by:

- Restricting use of all types of technologies—including cell phone, BlackBerry, laptop, MP3 player—in the company’s distracted driving policy
- Prohibiting use of non-work-related technology gadgets in non-office work areas to help minimize distractions and other safety-related hazards; and
- Enforcing rules consistently and fairly with all employees.

While electronics usage policies by themselves do not guarantee success in preventing risks associated with distracted driving, the company said such rules “may help reduce exposure and, more importantly, send a clear safety message to employees.”

An Adventure Every Day

With 40 Years of Experience, Every Day is an Adventure for Steven Silver at Jewelry Appraisal Services

BY ALICE ADAMS



Like Forrest Gump's now infamous box of chocolates, each day Jewelry Appraiser Steven M. Silver, Gemologist (GIA), opens the door of Jewelry Appraisal Services in Houston, he never knows what he's going to get.

Over the years, these "surprises" have ranged from disgruntled brides who had nagging doubts about the value of their wedding rings...to the forgetful grandmother who cannot remember what she did with her family's heirloom necklace...or the soon-to-be divorced gentleman who wants to make sure he gets his rightful share of the community property.

"Every day is different," explained Silver, president of the firm that provides

appraisals of gems and jewelry. "I've seen Princess Diana's necklace and earrings (purchased by a Houston businessman) as well as a few Olympic gold medals I've been asked to appraise. "Surprisingly, Olympic gold medals are, actually, gold plate over sterling silver, so there's not a lot of gold value. However, to replace an Olympian's gold medal costs around \$2,000 and there's a whole process that's required to get these medals replaced, including proving to the International Olympic Committee that the medal was lost or stolen.

"So yes! Every day definitely brings something different in the universe of appraisals," Silver confirmed. "Sometimes you see an inexpensive piece of jewelry that means the world to its owner... and sometimes the pieces you see are irreplaceable...and they, too, mean the world to their owners."

After graduating with a degree in advertising from The University of Texas in 1979, Silver said he returned to Houston to go to work for his uncle at one of Houston's largest jewelry companies. Sixteen years later, he had worked his way up to the positions of vice president and general manager of the prestigious firm.

"Over the years, I had heard colleagues in jewelry retailing complaining that Houston did not have a good gemological lab," Silver recalled, "so when I retired in 1994, I opened Jewelry Appraisal Services with the goal of becoming the most trusted and respected appraiser in the area"...and since that time, he has dedicated his career to the art of appraising gems and fine jewelry.

Well-qualified for his new endeavor, Silver had previously earned his Gemologist

Diploma, Diamond Diploma, Diamond Grading Diploma and Colored Stone Diploma from the Gemological Institute of America.

He also is a member of the Jewelers Vigilance Committee and has completed the Jeweler's Board of Appraisal Review. He is a member of the Jewelers Security Alliance, the Better Business Bureau, Jewelers of America, an affiliate member of the Texas Jewelers Association, the Gemological Institute of America – Alumni Association and the Accredited Gemologist Association and is active in the Appraisers Association of America (AAA), Accredited Gemologists Association (AGA), Jewelers of America (JA), National Association of Jewelry Appraisers (NAJA) and is an advisor for Texas Jewelers Security Hotline.

As his reputation as a gemologist and appraiser continued to grow, Silver also became a sought-after expert witness in bankruptcy cases, contested divorces and misleading jewelry purchases and is qualified to testify as an expert witness in the State of Texas, Civil and County Courts and for the United States Department of Justice.

His appraisal clients come from around Texas, across the country and from all walks of life...from national chains and individual pawn shops, as well as U.S. government agencies, such as the U.S. Customs Service.

Some of his clients are attorneys seeking to prove theft or forgery. Others are large jewelry companies – like Zales, Kays and Gordons Jewelers -- while still others are jewelers from small communities, seeking to provide their customers with appraisal services for new gems, jewelry or estate pieces.

"At Jewelry Appraisal Services Inc., we are dedicated to producing unbiased, accurate appraisals," he said, "and our business is to accurately document and determine the current market value of diamonds, gemstones and all types of jewelry, no matter how old or new they might be."

With his staff of Gemological Institute of America (GIA) trained Graduate Gemologists and his state-of-the-art Gemological Laboratory, Silver assures each client an accurate and in-depth appraisal of their fine jewelry, along with an explanation of every step of the appraisal process.

"What most people don't realize is that homeowner's insurance doesn't cover fine jewelry," said Silver. "In order for jewelry to be covered, you must have an appraisal and a separate schedule policy attached to your homeowners policy...and this will cover loss, theft, damage or mysterious disappearance of jewelry."

Silver also said the recent escalation of metal prices and diamonds has made every appraisal on file out of date. "When the prices of diamonds and metals skyrocket, that's a signal for those who have a number of pieces of jewelry in their personal collections to make certain that the appraised value would, indeed, replace their jewelry," he pointed out.

"I usually recommend having jewelry re-appraised at least every three to five years," he said. "However, with the recent run-up in metal and diamond prices, I would encourage jewelry owners to update their appraisals now, to make certain their insurance is adequate to cover replacement values."

"Determining the current market value of your gems and jewelry is the only way you can be sure your insurance is adequate to cover them against loss, theft or damage," he added.

In addition to insurance appraisals, Jewelry Appraisal Services offers estate appraisals for inheritance purposes, donation appraisals, evaluations before buying a gem and evaluations to assist in selling gems.

In his own work as an appraiser, the gemologist said he is able to see trends as they emerge and then disappear. "Right now, the most popular diamond cuts for engagement and wedding rings are the

square cuts," he said, "although the round cut remains a top choice. We're seeing more square cuts, however, including the Asscher cut, princess cut, radiant cut or cushion cut. These are the shapes being featured in the bridal ads of today, so these are the cuts most couples are looking for."

"Other shapes -- like the pear, marquise and oval -- that were popular in 70s, have been outrun by round and square shapes... and the most popular choice of metals is platinum -- but it's also very expensive, followed by white gold. We're seeing very little yellow gold in demand, unless it's coming from women in their 50s and 60s."

The veteran appraiser said because of the current economy, he is seeing people going back to the basics in their jewelry purchases. "Instead of having many necklaces, bracelets and earrings, people are going back to wanting only one very nice bracelet, one necklace, one pair of elegant earrings, and they're looking for classic styles," Silver said. "Yes, there's definitely a trend back toward basic, traditional jewelry."

In addition to appraisals and grading reports, Jewelry Appraisal Services also offers jewelry repair by an expert goldsmith, watch repairs by a certified watchmaker and brokerage services for individuals who wish

to sell their jewelry on a confidential basis.

"Our brokering service started when young people inherited jewelry and wanted someone to help them sell it," the appraiser explained. "A client can bring an item to us, we will shop it with dealers we've known for 25 years or longer and get the best offer," Silver said. "This assures clients a safe and confidential way to sell better jewelry without them having to meet strangers or advertise."

"We also buy gold, although this too is done in a confidential manner and we design, copy and repair jewelry for our clients, as well," he said. "As I said, every day is different in this business and there's always something new to learn -- new metals, new treatments, and new designs. Not only do you have to know about diamonds but you also must be familiar with every colored stone, every type of pearl, and every different type of diamond -- so I never want to stop learning," he said.

Obviously, Steven Silver has a passion for what he does and looks forward to working every day.

Jewelry Appraisal Services is located in Houston's Galleria area. For more information visit www.jewelryappraisalservices.com.

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Texas AGTA Winners

AGTA Spectrum Awards™ is an annual natural colored gemstone and cultured pearl jewelry design competition, considered the most respected and prestigious creative award for the design industry.

One of AGTA's biggest contributions in the promotion of color has come from its AGTA Spectrum Awards™ and Cutting Edge Awards competitions, launched in 1984 and 1991, respectively. Spectrum recognizes the

innovative use of natural gemstones and cultured pearls in finished fine jewelry design. Cutting Edge honors creativity in lapidary arts, including faceted gems and pearls, carvings, and objects of art. AGTA promotes both collections in the media on the trade and consumer levels.

We've highlighted the Texas winners from the 2009 AGTA Cutting Edge competition.

2009 AGTA CUTTING EDGE AWARDS

2nd Place - Faceting

Shawn Maddox

Jewels From the Woods – Blanco, TX
19.01 ct. "Celestial Compass" Peridot.

1st Place - Carving

Larry Woods

Jewels From the Woods – Blanco, TX
40.47 ct. Lightning Ridge Opal carving.

1st Place - Objects of Art

Dalan Hargrave

GemStarz – Spring Branch, TX
Executive desk set featuring Lightning Ridge Opal, black Galaxy, black Jade and Quartz (1500 ctw.).

2nd Place - Objects of Art

Dalan Hargrave

Juniper Ridge Opal – Spring Branch, TX
"Cheese" carving featuring a full variety of Juniper Ridge Opal (2400 ctw.).

3rd Place - Objects of Art

R.A. "Art" Guyon

International Gem Mart – Southlake, TX
"Moods" sculpture of Jasper.



**2nd Place
Faceting
Shawn Maddox**



**1st Place
Carving
Larry Woods**



**1st Place
Objects of Art
Dalan Hargrave**



**2nd Place
Objects of Art
Dalan Hargrave**



**3rd Place
Objects of Art
R.A. "Art" Guyon**

Texan Noshie Wins National Design Competition



Jewelers of America (JA), the national trade association for businesses serving the fine jewelry retail marketplace, has awarded Ziad H. Noshie, owner of Houston-based Almaza Jewelers, first place in its 20th annual Design Competition. The competition featured unique entries from top jewelry designers around the nation. It was held at the JA New York trade show, February 28-March 2, 2010, in New York City.

This is Noshie's second first-place award from the JA Design Competition in three years, having won in 2008 in the same category.

Noshie's submitted a complete set including 18K yellow and white gold necklace (left), earrings (above top), bracelet (above center) and ring (above bottom). The collection is whimsical and delicate with each handmade circle featuring a combination of mother of pearl, multi-colored sapphires and/or full-cut diamonds (4.55 cts).

Noshie entered the set in Category III of the competition (for jewelry using materials worth from \$3,001 and over). A panel of industry experts awarded the first place prize to his design based on its craftsmanship, marketability, practicality/wearability and overall design.

Twelve designers competed for the top prizes in four categories: \$1,000 and under; \$1,001-\$3,000; \$3,001 and over; and a Buyers' Choice Award. Noshie also represented the Texas Jewelers Association in the competition, having won "Best of Show" in their Design Competition last spring.

Citibank Gives Zale Extension on Credit Deal

Zale Corp., which has been struggling to regain its financial footing, now has an extra month to come up with \$6 million to pay Citibank to bridge a shortfall in its credit card sales and thereby extend its deal with the credit provider, various media reports say.

Earlier in March, Zale disclosed in a Securities and Exchange Commission regulatory filing that it had until April 1 to pay Citibank \$6 million in order to extend its credit card contract with the bank to March 2011. That amount would cover a shortfall in the minimum volume of credit sales outlined in the agreement between the jewelry chain and the financing provider.

The Irving, Texas-based jeweler is negotiating with several financial institutions, including Citibank, for a new contract to back its credit card accounts, Matt Appel, Zale's chief financial officer, told The Dallas Morning News. A deal is considered critical since historically, about 40 percent of Zale's retail sales have been made through its store credit cards.

Citibank has been servicing the company's credit card accounts since July 2000. The bank said it did not want to continue the existing contract beyond September but that it would service the contract until March 2011 if Zale paid up, the newspaper reported.

Zale has been struggling with sliding sales for two years, most recently reporting that same-store sales were down 11.2 percent for the second quarter 2010.

The chain is currently working with New York-based investment bank firm Peter J. Solomon Co. to evaluate long-term financing alternatives. The Zale Corp. board of directors reportedly rejected a strategic proposal from Apollo Management LP and is now consider a financing offer from Sun Capital Partners Inc.

According to a report in The Wall Street Journal, Sun Capital would provide the company with a cash infusion of \$50 million to \$100 million for preferred stock that could ultimately give it a majority stake

in Zale, and providing a bridge loan to the retailer while it works to refinance debt.

Susan Eisen helps 'Bedazzle' jewelry fans in Texas

Susan Eisen, chief executive officer of Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry and Watches, is the presenting sponsor of a new jewelry exhibition featuring the work of Europe's jewelry masters slated to open March 27 at the El Paso Museum of Art.

The El Paso, Texas-based jeweler said in a media release that she is sponsoring the exhibition, "Bedazzled: 5,000 Years of Jewelry," as a gift to her hometown in honor of Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry and Watches' 30th anniversary in business.

The exhibition will include more than 150 pieces of jewelry dating from 3,000 B.C. through the early 20th century, making for a presentation of the evolution of techniques and materials as well as demonstrating the importance of jewelry as an expression of creativity, and often of wealth and position.

In addition to the main collection--which includes Mesopotamian stone pendants, an ancient Roman snake bracelet, a Tiffany and Co. iris corsage brooch shown at the 1900 Paris Exposition Universelle, and much more--a special exhibition section will be devoted to rings, the only type of jewelry that has been worn continuously through the ages, the museum said on its Web site.

Assembled primarily by Henry Walters, a co-founder of the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, the collection features some of the Walters Museum's greatest masterpieces as well as hidden treasures on view for the first time.

Only a handful of museums worldwide will have the opportunity to exhibit the collection, and the Texas exhibition will mark the collection's first showing in the western United States.

The exhibition will run at the El Paso Museum of Art through July 25, 2010. For more information, call (915) 532-1707 or visit the museum online at ElPasoArtMuseum.org.

Separately, Eisen has invited a selection of visiting experts in jewelry and gemology to participate in a lecture series coinciding with an exhibition of contemporary jewelry by art students at the University of Texas at El Paso and New Mexico State University. Eisen will be assisting in training the exhibition docents and will be consulting with and donating to the museum store.

Graff Diamond Comes To the National Museum of Natural History

Starting January 28th, the Wittelsbach-Graff Diamond, which is a rare deep blue diamond weighing in at 31.06 carats, will go on display at the National Museum of Natural History. The rare gem is said to be from the same famous mine in India that the Hope Diamond was harvested from.

This gorgeous diamond that any girl could only hope for in their collection is said to have indeed had a female owner. The daughter of Philip IV of Spain was given this diamond when she became engaged to Emperor Leopold I of Austria. I guess the age old saying, "Something borrowed, something blue..." was alive and well even back in 1664.

The internally flawless diamond previously weighed in at 35.56 carats, however through re-polishing to bring out the color by its owner Laurence Graff, the stone's weight decreased. The Gemological Institute of America has noted the rare diamond to be "the largest, Flawless, Fancy Deep Blue, Natural Color we have graded to date..."

ITEMS FOR SALE; ITEMS WANTED; JOB LISTING

Each month I get listings from jewelers of items they have for sale in their store. Also received are people looking to BUY things for their store. For instance, February's list includes someone looking for a watch repair shop in Southern California and a jeweler looking for employment in Georgia.

Below is a summary for what was available in February. Please visit the website for the newest items. PLEASE DO NOT EMAIL ME AND ASK QUESTIONS! Contact the people on the document, not me.

Hope you're having a good month.

Sincerely
David Geller

Go To: <http://www.jewelerprofit.com/Items4Sale.html>

FOR SALE

Showcases (3 companies)
Safes (2)
Shop Work Station
Rofin Laser Welder
ROLAND JWX 30 MILL
Presidium Diamond/
Moissanite tester
Cad/Cam Design & Model
Business For Sale
Ultrasonic Machine
Bench Top Polishing Machine
Misc Shop Tools:
Steamer, Pickle Pot, Rhodium
Plating setup, workstation, buffing
machine, flex shaft, scales,
leverage gauge, mandrels, more
ModelMaster CNC Mill
Rolex Wet Pressure Tester
3design CAD Program

WANTED TO BUY

Showcases, Display Cases
Bench Mounted Microscope
Regular Store Microscope
Old Rusty Shop Tools - :)
Gran 2000 colorimeter
Sarin Proportionscope

SERVICES

Looking for a watch repair shop
in Southern California
Jeweler looking for work.
Atlanta area in Georgia

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Roseco	www.roseco.com	Inside Back Cover
Stuller.	www.stuller.com	Inside Front Cover
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Make the Right Moves Early in Your Business

You worked hard to create a successful, respected business. The opening moves of your exit strategy plan will ultimately help determine your final financial victory.

Many professional advisors suggest putting a succession plan in place at least five years before you intend to retire...10 years may be even better. In fact, some recommend that an exit strategy be built into the initial business plan.

Proper planning for your business and personal need should address:

- Retirement income
- The death and disability of an owner
- The departure of a business owner
- Family members involved in the business

Avoid a future problem and make the first move now. To help assure financial security for you, your family, and your business, contact your Federated representative or your association office for information on Federated's Financial Protection Services. The advantage will be yours.

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