

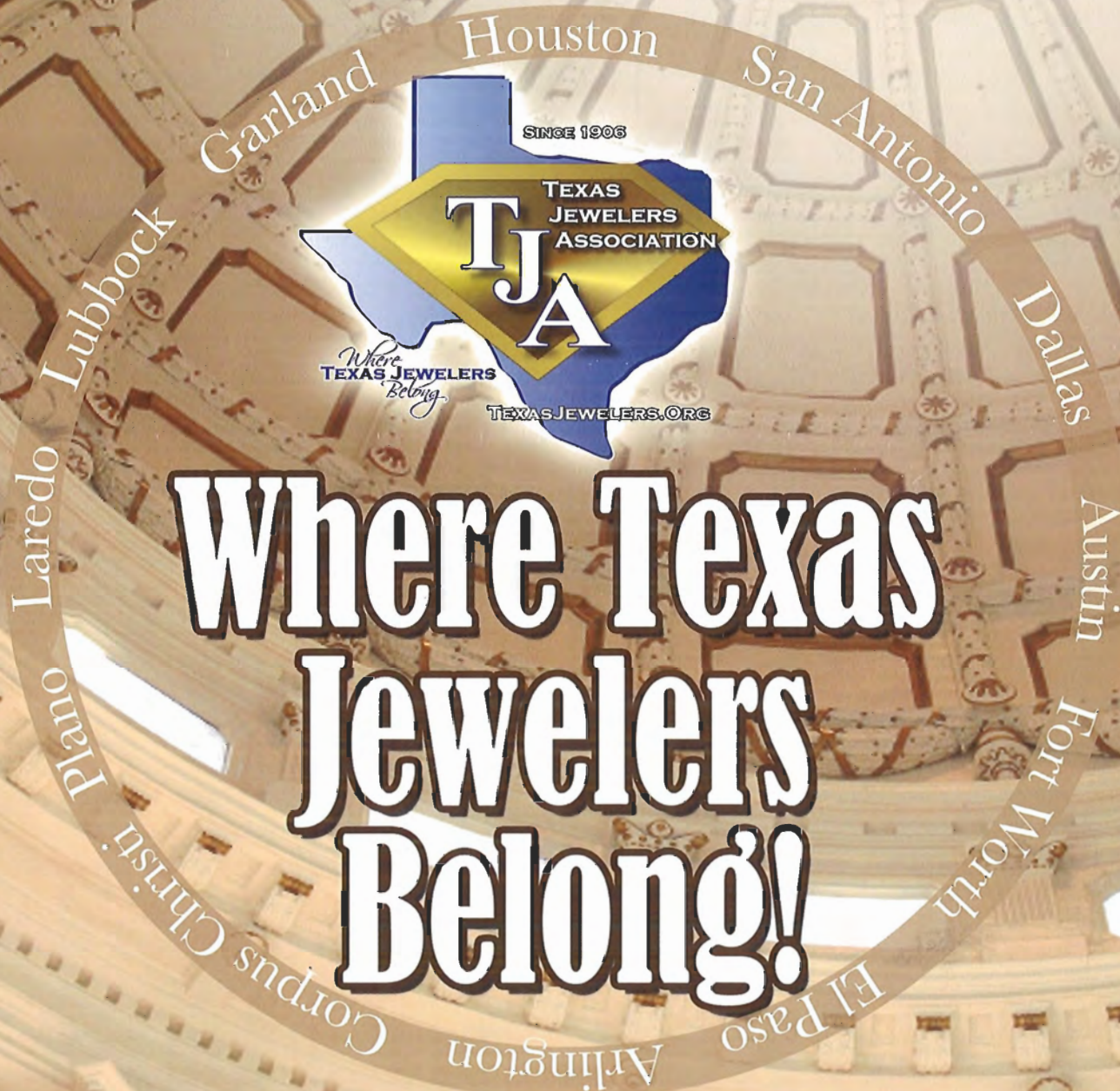
SUMMER 2014



TEXAS

JEWELER

The official publication of the Texas Jewelers Association



Where Texas Jewelers Belong!



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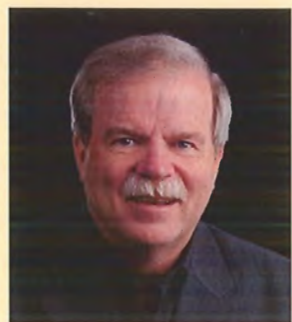
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About the Cover:

TEXAS JEWELERS UNITE!
As our association grows,
so do the markets!





From the desk of
Robert Harrison
 T J A P R E S I D E N T



Dear TJA Members & Friends,

As we head into the Summer months, I can hardly believe that I've been your TJA President for nearly 18 months. We've made a lot of positive changes to our organization during this time, and I'm proud to say that we only have more of the same ahead.

This early summer season brings many of us to the final "push" for retail dollars as we work through Father's Day and graduation season. These events allow us the opportunity to drive more business into our stores, and more revenue into the cash register, before things quiet down later in the summer.

I'd like to remind you all to remember to stay safe during the summer months. Statistics show that July and August are the most frequent months for break-ins. Take this time to be proactive about your safety, and the safety of your employees, by reviewing your security policies, security tips for opening and closing your store, and policies for secure selling. Our industry is rich with resources, many of which are free, to help you do business safely and securely. Jewelers Security Alliance (<http://JewelersSecurity.org>) is an excellent way to keep up with Crime and Security-related news that is affecting our industry. And Jewelers Mutual has several excellent articles, along with their "Secure Business Series" videos, which are provided free, and can be accessed by anyone, through both the Jewelers Mutual website (<http://JewelersMutual.com>) and the Jewelers Mutual YouTube page.

Are you planning to attend the JCK Las Vegas show? If so, we hope to see you there! The Texas Jewelers Association will once again be sponsoring a JCK/TJA Meet and Greet at the JCK Las Vegas show, on Saturday, May 31st, 2014 from 5pm -7pm. Please make some time in your busy JCK Show schedule to stop in and say "Hi" to your fellow TJA members and friends during this event. Some of our members have also expressed an interest in getting together after the Meet and Greet for dinner, so if you don't have plans for Saturday night, please join us. We'll be announcing more information about this informal dinner gathering in our TJA May, 2014 newsletter.

I'd also like to remind you that we have partnered with the Atlanta Jewelry Show, and have received generous benefits from show management that allow us to extend to our members the opportunity for a free, 2-night stay at either one of their two annual shows. Certain

restrictions do apply, so if you are interested in hearing more, please feel free to contact me, or Ann Glynn, TJA Executive Director. The Fall edition of the Atlanta Jewelry Show is August 9, 10 and 11 at the Cobb Galleria, and you can find more information on that show here in our Texas Jewelers Magazine, or online at: <http://AtlantaJewelryShow.com>

And, of course, we now have all the of the dates, and the location, firmed up for our TJA Convention. We'll be holding our Texas Jewelers Association Convention in San Antonio, at the St. Anthony hotel, September 27 - 29, 2014. The St. Anthony hotel is undergoing a \$24 million dollar renovation, which will be finished up by the time of our convention, and we've been told that we will be the first group to use the new facilities after this renovation has been completed.

The room block is now open for reservations, and we've been able to negotiate a convention rate of \$139 per night, which the hotel has agreed to honor for three nights before and after the convention, in case you'd like to spend a little extra time in San Antonio enjoying the sites.

We've lined up a great list of speakers for this event, and you'll find more information on them, and on the convention, in this issue of our TJA Magazine.

Our events schedule includes Jewelers of America certification testing on Saturday, our President's party on Saturday night, and a full convention schedule Sunday and half-day Monday, along with our Gala Dinner, which has been generously sponsored by the Israel Diamond Institute.

I'd also like to extend my sincere appreciation for all of you who have been so supportive of our association the last 6 months. We've been through a lot of changes, but those of you who have taken the time to call or email with such positive thoughts and comments have really kept us motivated to continue to move forward and embrace the new changes and opportunities that have been coming our way.

Much of the interaction is coming to us through our new marketing tools, such as our TJA monthly newsletter, and through social media from Facebook and Twitter. If you aren't receiving our TJA monthly newsletter, and would like to sign up, please visit our website at TexasJewelers.org and click the "Sign Up For Our Email" link. And if you haven't yet joined us on social media, please "Like" us on Facebook at [Facebook.com/TexasJewelersAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/TexasJewelersAssociation) or follow us on Twitter at @TexasJewelers.

*And as I write this on April
 21st., it is San Jacinto Day.
 It has now been 178 years
 since General Sam Houston
 and his troops captured
 Santa Anna!
 God Bless Texas!*



JEWELERS FOR CHILDREN

A GIFT OF LOVE FOR CHILDREN IN NEED

In 2013, Jewelers for Children, the industry's charity, donated more than \$ 3 million to their charity partners. Since 1999, total donations exceed \$ 43 million. That's a lot of great support from our very generous industry.

While JFC works with national charity organizations, much of the funding is used to support local branches of those charities in every state, including right here in Texas.

The Make-A-Wish Foundation of America received \$ 700,000 to help grant the wishes of children facing life-threatening medical conditions. The funds were used to help grant 72 wishes in the U.S., bringing the total number of wishes granted since 1999, to more than 1,350! Here in Texas, 16 year-old Jessica went on a shopping spree and 12 year-old Ian went to Disney World.

JFC also provided \$ 500,000 to the National CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Association for use in providing support to their local chapters to support volunteer recruitment and training to assist kids in foster care. Since 1999, more than 4,800 children in foster care have been aided with a trained, caring volunteer to assist them through the system and get them into a permanent, loving home as quickly as possible.

In Texas, 24 local CASA chapters have received JFC grants.

In 2014, JFC will continue to support the National CASA Association and the Make-A-Wish Foundation of America to grant more wishes and reach more kids in foster care. The local organization of these fine, national organizations are always interested in working with local jewelers to promote the industry's support, say thanks personally, and in some cases, to actually help grant a wish. Getting involved is a great way to generate some local publicity for your business.

Jewelers for Children also provided support to the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation in 2010 that was used to fund prevention of mother to child transmission programs in So. Africa, a country that supplies many of the raw materials used in jewelry. Support was also provided to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital where thousands of sick children are treated each year. Due to confidentiality regulations we are not able to provide a list of patients from Texas treated at the hospital.

JFC will be reaching out to jewelers across the country in the year ahead to try and make connections between you and the local chapters. If you're interested in being involved, contact Ann Glynn at Texas Jewelers.

DIRECTOR'S NOTES
ANN GLYNN
TJA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Get Ready for Summer & the Big Trade Show!

I can hardly believe it's been six months since I took over as Executive Director for the Texas Jewelers Association.

We've seen a lot of changes in the last six months, and as we head towards the JCK Las Vegas show, I'm here to tell you, more changes are on the way.

We've developed a lot of ways for our members to keep in touch with the latest news from the Texas Jewelers Association, and I hope you're taking advantage of them all. Our monthly newsletter has been a resounding success for us, and we've added over 150 new subscribers during the last several months. The newsletters are a great way to grab snippets of the best news for the current month, including trade show schedules, timely articles, TJA happenings, and a short, exclusive focus on the gemstone of the month. If you aren't on our TJA monthly newsletter list, please join us now, online at TexasJewelers.org

Our social media efforts have been steadily growing as well. Our Facebook and Twitter accounts see activity on a daily basis, and they provide a fast and easy way for you to keep up with the top news for TJA every day, 7 days a week. If you haven't yet had a chance to follow us, or "like" us yet, please take a moment to do so now. You'll find us on Twitter @TexasJewelers and on Facebook at: [Facebook.com/TexasJewelersAssociation](https://www.facebook.com/TexasJewelersAssociation)

This month also brings about a refreshing and upgrading of our current Texas Jewelers Association website. The re-designed layout gives us more room to stay up to date with current events, provides a trade show calendar, member search, and soon, a forum for our members to communicate exclusively with each other. As we continue to grow and expand, so too, does our need for more effective and efficient communication, and we believe the layout of the new website will provide just that. If you haven't seen the new layout yet, please take a moment to check it out now online at TexasJewelers.org

Our partnership with IDEX continues to deliver our members the weekly IDEX Diamond Price report for Rounds and Fancies, which is branded under the TJA logo, for free. If you are a TJA member, and haven't been receiving this report on a weekly basis, please email me at Ann@TexasJewelers.org and let me know so I can add your email address to the list.

Are you heading to the JCK Show in Las Vegas? We're looking forward to seeing you there! I'm proud to announce that under an agreement with the JCK Show, we were able to secure a booth this year for the Texas Jewelers Association. You'll find us in booth L19, which is located in the lobby with all of the other industry-related associations. If you're going to be at the show and would like to give us a hand running the booth, I know we'd surely appreciate it! Even if you only have an hour or two to spare, it would surely be a huge help for us. If you're planning on being there, and have time to help us out, please email me and let me know. We're working on a booth schedule now,

so we'd love to add you to our list.

We'll also be holding our second annual Texas Jewelers Association Meet & Greet at the JCK Show on Saturday night, May 31, from 5pm - 7pm. You'll find more details on the exact location on our website online at TexasJewelers.org. We're planning on a huge turnout, and would love to have you join us there to support our Association, see old friends, and make new ones, too. We'll be offering an open bar with beer, wine, water and soda, along with some light appetizers to enjoy during your networking. After the Meet & Greet has concluded, we will be heading out for a TJA member dinner (each person pays their own), and we'd love to have you join us there, as well, to continue the socializing and fun. Our immediate Past President, Eric Wright, is working on booking a location for our dinner now, but we need a head count as soon as possible, so if this is something you'd like to participate in, drop me an email and I'll add your name to our dinner list. I'd like to thank TJA's own Lucinda Rogers for recommending we add this dinner to our agenda in Las Vegas this year - it is a wonderful idea, and I think it could turn out to be a great "tradition" for TJA at JCK.

And of course, once we get past Las Vegas, I'll be working with our Executive Board to finalize all the plans for our TJA Convention, to be held September 27 - 29, at the St. Anthony hotel in San Antonio, Texas. If you haven't yet registered for the convention, please do so online now at TexasJewelers.org. You can also book your hotel rooms directly through the St. Anthony hotel. Call (888) 595-3868 and as for the Texas Jewelers Association special rate. We've been able to negotiate room rates down from over \$200 a night to \$139, and we'll be the first convention group in there to take advantage of the St. Anthony Hotel's \$24 million dollar renovation. The room block is closing on June 30, 2014, so please make sure you call now, to secure your room at this great rate!

As I'm winding up this sophomore edition of our TJA magazine, I'm so proud of how far we've come in these last six months, and eager to see what the next six have in store for us. I'd just like to again express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for all of the support, kind words and generous offers of help I've received along the way. TJA is back, and it's all because of the effort each and every one of you are making to take pride, once again, in our association, and ownership in helping to build it back up to its former greatness. As always, if there is anything you need, or any suggestions, recommendations or thoughts you have as we are continuing this journey together, please feel free to email me at Ann@TexasJewelers.org, or call me directly at (504) 615-1191.

Ann M. Glynn

Executive Director
Texas Jewelers Association
Email: Ann@TexasJewelers.org
Phone: (504) 615-1191



San Antonio

in September - what could be better?

Join us for the Texas Jewelers Association annual Convention,
September 27 - 30, 2014
at the St. Anthony Hotel in San Antonio, Texas

Speakers:



Terry Chandler
President & CEO,
Diamond Council of America



Dr. Linda Talley
President, LindaTalley.com



Shellie Bill
VP, Premier Consulting

Here's a peek at our can't miss schedule:

- Jewelers of America Certification Testing
- The Texas Jewelers Association President's Party
- A host of Fabulous Vendors
- Our exclusive TJA/IDI Israeli Diamond Pavilion
- Our Gala Dinner, sponsored by the Israel Diamond Institute
- Industry-specific speakers
- Networking opportunities, cocktail parties, world-class education and more!



Susan Desmond
Shareholder,
Jackson Lewis P.C.



Ira Favoite
Past President
Jewelers of Louisiana (JLA)



Brad Huisken
President, IAS Training

For more information or to register online,
visit our website at: TexasJewelers.org

2014 TJA CONVENTION SEPT 27-29



Industry Trade Show Schedule May 1, 2014 - October 31, 2014

May 29-June 2
AGTA GemFair at JCK
Las Vegas, NV
Mandalay Bay Hotel and
Convention Center
800.257.3626
www.agta.com

May 30-June 2
Swiss Watch at JCK
Las Vegas, NV
Mandalay Bay Hotel
and Convention Center
800.257.3626
www.lasvegas.jckonline.com

May 30-June 2
JCK Las Vegas
Las Vegas, NV
Mandalay Bay Hotel and
Convention Center
800.257.3626
www.jcklasvegasshow.com

July 19-23
**Independent Jewelers
Organization (IJO)**
Boston, MA
Marriott Coply &
Convention Center
203.846.4215
www.ijo.com

July 27-29
JA New York Summer Show
New York, NY
Jacob Javits Convention Ctr.
508.734.4986
www.ja-newyork.com

August 9-11
SJTA Atlanta Jewelry Show
Atlanta, GA
Cobb Galleria Centre
800.241.0399
www.atlantajewelrysthshow.com

August 16-18
RJO Fall Buying Show
Minneapolis, MN
Hyatt Regency Minneapolis
800.247.1774
www.rjomembers.com

September 22-23
**41th ACE IT Mid-Year
Education Conference**
Rosemont, IL
Intercontinental Hotel
718.896.1536
www.najaappraisers.com

September 27 - 30
**Texas Jewelers Association
2014 Convention**
San Antonio, Texas
St. Anthony Hotel
(504) 615-1191
www.TexasJewelers.org

October 10
GIA Jewelry Career Fair
Carlsbad, CA

Gemological Institute of
America
800.421.7250 ext. 4100
www.careerfair.gia.edu

October 11-14
**Jewelers International
Showcase (JIS)**
Miami Beach FL
Miami Beach Convention Ctr.
561.998.0205
www.jisshows.com

October 27-29
JA N.Y. Special Delivery
New York, NY
Jacob Javits Convention Ctr.
646.654.4983
www.ja-newyork.com

October 25-27
**Miami Beach Antique
Jewelry & Watch Show**
Miami Beach, FL
Miami Beach Convention Ctr.
239.732.6642
www.usantiqueshow.com



Scholarships available from the 24 Karat Club Southeastern US

The 24 Karat Club Southeastern United States (SEUS) is pleased to announce that applications are currently being accepted for multiple scholarships. Individuals currently working in the jewelry industry and holding residence in the following states are eligible and encouraged to apply: AL, AR, FL, GA, KY, LA, MS, NC, SC, TX, TN, VA, WV. The deadline for application submission is July 1, 2014. Scholarship winners will be notified no later than August 1, 2014.

Scholarships will be awarded to deserving individuals based on criteria outlined in the Scholarship Application. Available scholarships are:

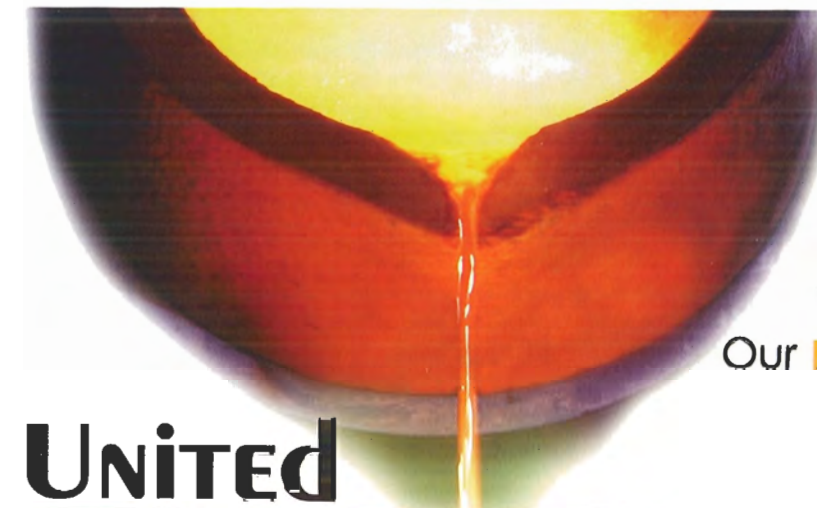
• **Robert Foreman Memorial Scholarship** - a \$2000 award to be used for jewelry education and training.

• **Sterling Reputation Scholarship Program** - One or more scholarships distributed from a \$2500 fund to be used for jewelry industry education and training. This scholarship program is made available through a generous gift from Sterling Reputation, a leading manufacturer of fashion-forward, high quality sterling silver jewelry based in Sunrise, FL.

• **Diamond Council of America (DCA) Scholarships** - Three scholarships covering the cost of any course from DCA - made available through a generous gift from the DCA. The DCA is one of the jewelry industry's leading accredited schools and offers professional certifications in diamonds, colored gemstones and jewelry sales through distance education.

Scholarship applications are available from any 24 Karat Club SEUS member or by contacting David Peters at dave_peters@sbeglobal.net. A list of members can be found at www.The24KaratClub.org.

The 24 Karat Club SEUS is a prestigious organization of industry professionals representing leading members from the jewelry supplier sector. Members are considered and recognized because of their industry accomplishments, personal and civic contributions and their commitment to the betterment of the jewelry industry. For more information about the 24 Karat Club SEUS please visit www.The24KaratClub.org.



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Stone Removal
Pool Accounts
Product Discounts
Investment Bars & Coins
Wire Transfers/Checks



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RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES



A Good Employment Policy Involves More Than Just Hiring

Business owners frequently ask, “What can I do to avoid a wrongful termination charge by an employee?” The easy answer: “Don’t hire the wrong person for the job.” The reality is, one day every business owner will face the unpleasant task of having to terminate an employee for one reason or another.

How can a business retain good employees and avoid terminations?

Diligence when hiring is the first step

Always check a candidate’s background, references, and driving record if driving will be a part of the job. Have two management level people involved in all hiring decisions. A second set of eyes reviewing an applicant helps ensure that the hiring decision is based on the candidate’s qualifications and work experience, rather than one person’s opinion of an applicant’s personality.

What happens after the handshake?

So, the ideal candidate walked in your door, everything checked out, and you hired yourself a new employee. Of course, you will train and orient your new hire. And, once you feel confident that he or she has the abilities and knowledge to perform the job, it’s back to business as usual again, right? Not so fast.

Did you know new employees face more job-related risks? According to the most recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, almost twenty-eight percent of workers injured on the job have been with their employer for less than twelve months.

Training and orientation are essential for new employees. But don’t just stop with the basics. Provide ongoing opportunities to learn more about the business and improve skills to help keep employees motivated. Mentor those who show initiative and promise for developing into future leaders.

Why are new workers more likely to be hurt? One reason is new employees are often unaware of how they can be injured in the workplace. They may not understand how to safely perform the job—especially what not to do.

Employers may not include safety in new employee orientation because they believe “common sense” will keep workers from committing unsafe acts. Unfortunately, a lack of knowledge—not a lack of common sense—is more often the problem. Including safety training in employee orientation can help your new employees gain the knowledge they need to avoid injury.

Some important tips:

- Explain safety rules before assigning jobs. Employees are more likely to follow rules if they understand the reasons for them. Give each employee a copy of the rules for future reference.
- Encourage employees to ask questions if they don’t understand what they are being asked to do.
- Point out workplace hazards and discuss how to avoid injury, including what not to do.
- Make sure employees understand never to operate machines unless trained and authorized to do so.
- Explain how lockout devices prevent injuries, and why not to remove them.

Knowledge and effective communication are the keys to accident prevention. Always encourage discussion—it promotes understanding. Put these principles to work and give your employees the tools they need to work safely!

Help them help themselves

Give feedback to employees on their job performance, but don’t just limit it to scheduled reviews. Don’t assume everything is fine just because an employee doesn’t complain. Employees want to know they are doing a good job. A simple compliment on how an employee handled a situation will reinforce desired behavior and tell employees their efforts are appreciated. Give occasional rewards. When corrective action is needed, use a positive approach with specific recommendations. This can help avoid embarrassment or resentment and possible future allegations of unfair treatment.

What to do when termination seems inevitable

Always base decisions to reprimand or terminate employees on documented facts and observations, not on emotional responses to a situation or on personal judgments. Sometimes “just the facts” may not provide enough information and employees may not be forthcoming about problems. For example:

An employee began to arrive late to work and often seemed distracted. His co-workers were tolerant, but the manager was strict about punctuality and became irritated by the employee’s tardiness. Actually, the employee liked his job and was meeting performance expectations. The problem was that an elderly parent had recently moved into his home and required special care in the morning. In this case, a simple schedule change could solve the problem and help relieve the employee’s stress. It would also demonstrate the manager’s willingness to make accommodations for a good employee.

Sometimes it is necessary to terminate an employee because of poor performance even when good hiring procedures were followed and the employee started out on the right foot. Make certain all terminations are fact-specific. Is the decision consistent with how “similarly situated” employees have been treated in the past?

Consider having two management personnel involved with the termination. Should the terminated employee ever dispute what took place, you have a witness to verify what was said. You may want to implement the “two to hire, two to fire” strategy. It may be an effective risk management technique for your business.



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10 Minutes with

Eric Wright

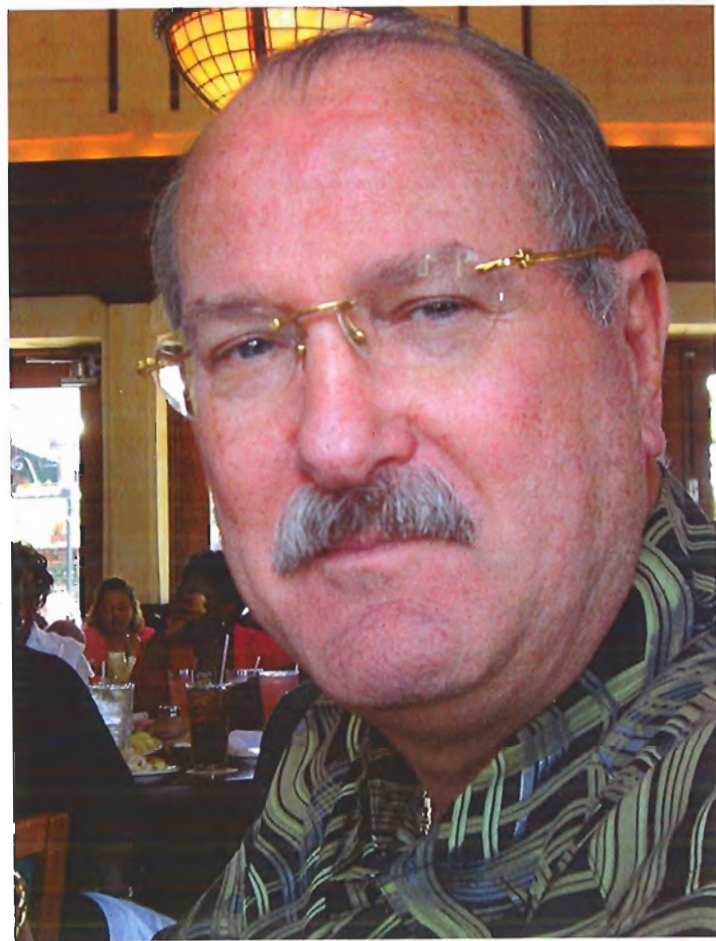
Village Goldsmith Antiques

Texas Treasure Eric Wright, owner of Village Goldsmith Antiques, has been offering his customers quality estate and custom jewelry for nearly four decades. Eric, along with his wife Cecile, two jewelers and three sales associates, run a full service jewelry store featuring the finest in custom and estate jewelry, along with appraisals, watch repair and extensive jewelry restoration services. Recently, Eric took some time out of his busy schedule to talk with us here at TJA Magazine. Read on to find out what thoughts and advice Eric has to share.

TJA Mag: You have a long history of sales and service in the jewelry business. How did you get your start, and what made you decide to specialize in Estate and Antique Jewelry?

Eric Wright: This year will be my forty-seventh year in the jewelry business in some form or fashion. I got started by picking up shiny colored stones out the gravel drive ways of my youth, and learned about gems and minerals as I grew older. I was fortunate enough to have a father who was a career air force officer, and he was stationed all over the world when I was young. This gave me plenty of opportunities to collect gems on location and also to trade with other collectors. During my service in the U.S. Navy, one of the skills I learned was underwater metal welding. This gave me great experience in soldering and welding, and that was very easy to translate into soldering and welding precious metals. I have to say, however, that learning to do it with the expertise necessary to repair a piece of jewelry was different story! This came with lots and lots of practice and figuring how to fix what I screwed up without the customer knowing it had been not done correctly to begin with (we who sit behind a bench know what I'm talking about). While in graduate school I had job working in a jewelry store owned by an "old school" German master bench jeweler, the kind who started out in his youth sweeping out the shop and worked his way up. It was under his tutelage that I learned how to repair, hand craft and design jewelry the hard way (no cad cam, no computers, etc.) making each piece by hand.

This was also where I develop a love for antique, vintage and estate jewelry, because most of it was made by hand and from there, we grew our business into what it today, specializing in the antique jewelry and watches.



Eric Wright

TJA Mag: You've been located in the Forestwood Antique Mall for quite a long time. What is it about that location that works for you?

Eric Wright: I built a full sized jewelry store inside of the Forestwood Antique Mall in Dallas because our business went hand in glove with the antique concept. We get lots and lots of clients through the mall who are already into antiques and love our type of jewelry. We also specialize in the repair and restoration of antique, vintage, estate and

costume jewelry and as such, we draw a large client base into the mall and get clients from mall traffic, which mutually benefits us both. Also, you should remember that by definition estate jewelry is not necessarily old. Say by example you bought a piece of jewelry today at your local jeweler and god forbid dropped dead in you sleep tonight tomorrow it's an estate piece (new but pre-owned).

TJA Mag: Recently you were quoted as saying "If you're not getting a 2x return on repairs, you're hurting yourself. In my store, repairs is a 'Department,' and is run as such for a profit, not as a service." What do you think makes the repair side of your business so successful?

Eric Wright: We run our repair department just like any other department in the store, and expect profit from each. For pricing on most of our repairs we use the Geller blue book, however it does not cover a lot of the repairs we do in the shop, especially antique and costume restoration. For pricing on these specialty services, we consider the work to be done from a time and materials point of view before giving an estimate, and also make sure the customer knows that this is an estimate only and not necessarily the final price. Should there be a variance we always contact the customer first before proceeding. This approach has worked well for us over the years. Then no repair leaves the shop until it has been inspected by two or more people, to make sure it looks like "we were doing for family." We find this procedure insures a quality restoration or repair. And, just for my fellow jewelers who are having trouble knowing exactly how to price their repairs, we price at a standard 2.5 times cost on repairs, and sometimes it is much more depending what was done.

We also have an on site master quartz watch repairman who can rebuild movements, as well as a certified master watch maker offsite who works on everything from hundred year old pocket watches to your fine vintage wrist watches. He's one of the few watch makers I trust to work on my watch collection and get them right. When people ask, "What do you think makes the repair side of your business so successful?" I can honestly say it's because we treat our customers like family and strive to insure a quality repair every time. We do repair work one else in town will do or say "it can't be done". But, the single most factor is that we price our services accordingly, which creates a profit center for our repair department on an annual basis.

TJA Mag: You have a very high success rate in getting your customers to trade in their merchandise, rather than having them sell it to you outright. How much of a positive effect does that slight difference (trading-in vs buying) have on your bottom line, and why?

Eric Wright: We've always bought across the counter, however I've always encouraged my clients to trade in their old jewelry on something new for their collection. This way, we're able to give them a much higher amount for their trade in, and they get a new fresh piece of jewelry to wear. In turn, we're getting pieces that under the "Craft-



ed Precious Metal Act" can be sold or deposited of immediately, which gives me and better chance of returning greater profit on the pieces instead of holding them eleven days. It also give the client a sense of getting a much better deal on the purchase. As to how this effects my bottom line? My clients tell all their friends about the service and how well they were treated.

TJA Mag: What do you believe are the most significant changes you've seen within our Industry over the course of your long career?

Eric Wright: The changes that I've seen over the long course of my profession is, as we all know, the dreaded increase of cost of materials and how it affects our bottom line. Also, the Internet, which is a curse and blessing at the same time. This depends if your client has found the same piece you're offering online for much less money or you found the exact piece online for one of your customers. Then there is the government getting in to middle of our business - which we all say some of it was good, but most of it was bad, i.e. Texas' Craft Precious Metal Buying

Act which still has NOT BEEN worked out to anyone satisfaction.

TJA Mag: What's the best piece of advice you can give to our readers?

Eric Wright: One of the strongest pieces of advice I can give to my fellow jewelers is guard your JBT rating. This is your life's blood. If you have a history of slow pay or worst no pay - you can't get what you need to compete, let alone complete the big deal that walks into your store. If your JBT is not an FIN1 you need to fix it now! You do not have to provide all the financials, etc. that they ask for, just pay your bills to your vendors net thirty or better and vendors will flock to your door.

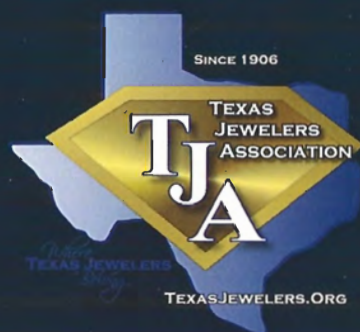
TJA Mag: You're currently the "Past-President" of TJA. What do you think is most important about our association, and what value/benefits do you believe being a TJA member can bring to jewelers here in Texas?

Eric Wright: Being a member of TJA is, to me, vitally important. It gives you credibility by belonging to a trade organization. It give you a broader base of exposure to your local community (through the TJA website's find a local jeweler option). It gives you a network to call on if you can't find something you need. Think about it, "How many hundred of years experience" do our members collectively have? There is not a lot I don't know how to find when it comes to parts and pieces, but when I don't, being a TJA member gives me a huge resource pool out there to tap. Last and not least is the power that a large group of jewelers wield then dealing with vendors, stone dealers and the never ending State of Texas.

Eric Wright is the owner of Village Goldsmith Antiques. To find out more about Eric, visit his website at: <http://www.villagegoldsmithantiques.com/> or contact him at 972-934-0449.

GET READY FOR THE **TEXAS ISRAEL** DIAMOND SHOW THE SHOW THAT COMES TO YOU.

A unique diamond-buying event
is coming your way. The largest names
in the Israeli diamond trade are coming to Texas
to do business.



THE 48 HOUR **TRUNK SHOW** IS COMING TO TEXAS!

In September, the best of two worlds unite to create an exclusive diamond buying opportunity for members of the trade. Thanks to a strategic cooperation agreement between the Texas Jewelers Association (TJA) and the Israel Diamond Institute (IDI), the first Texas-Israel Diamond Show will take place on September 29 – 30, 2014 at the TJA Convention in San Antonio.

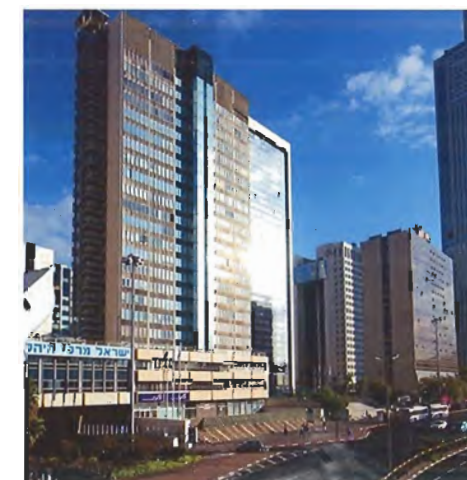
ISRAEL - THE SOURCE FOR POLISHED DIAMONDS

Israel is one of the world's leading diamond centers – a hub for both the trade and manufacture of polished diamonds. Processing a great amount of the world's gem-quality rough stones, Israeli diamond companies supply the gems that adorn a vast amount of the diamond jewelry sold worldwide. The United States is Israel's major market, with Israeli diamonds accounting for half, in dollar terms, of all diamonds sold in America.

The Israel Diamond Center in Ramat Gan, adjacent to Tel Aviv, is like a miniature, high-tech, maximum security city. Four

*Israel supplies
half of the diamonds sold
in the U.S.*

towers host 1,500 firms located in 2,200 offices, and the world's largest trading floor. The Israeli Diamond Industry exports over \$10 billion dollars worth of polished and rough stones and produces a turnover of \$28 billion dollars. This makes diamonds Israel's leading export second to high-technology.



ONE – STOP SHOP

The Israeli Diamond Industry prides itself on being a one-stop shop. Our companies offer diamonds of every size and shape – small, medium-sized and large stones, rounds and fancy-cuts, special cuts innovated by Israeli diamantaires, white diamonds and natural colored diamonds in every shade.

*We offer diamonds of every
size and shape*

Our ability to guarantee a steady supply of any type of goods makes Israel a most attractive supplier to the jewelry trade.

KNOW-HOW AND EXPERT CRAFTSMANSHIP

Experience has made Israeli quality renowned worldwide

Israel's experienced diamantaires rely on a rich tradition of know-how and expert craftsmanship. Israeli companies often comprise three generations of diamond families and expertise is handed down from father to son. The professionalism and experience have made Israeli quality renowned worldwide.

Israel's diamond industry was founded in the 1930's by enterprising

immigrants who brought the trade they had learned in Belgium. With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, an influx of new immigrants were enlisted to work in the fledgling industry.

Over the years the industry continued to grow and flourish, as more manufacturing and trading businesses were established, and exports grew to the United States, the Far East and Europe.

THE 48 HOUR **TRUNK SHOW** IS COMING TO TEXAS!

HIGH TECHNOLOGY AT WORK



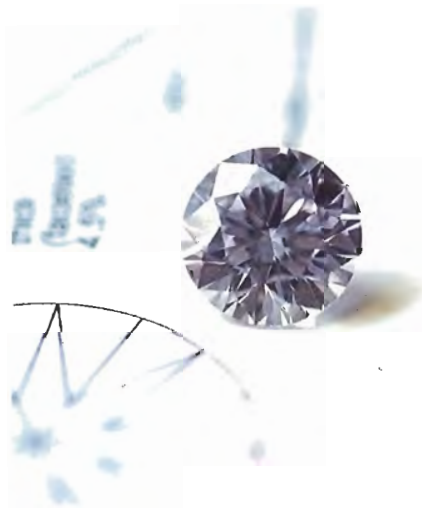
Israeli technologies are the global standard

Israel's diamond polishing factories – considered the most advanced in the world – are equipped with locally developed sophisticated diamond processing technologies. Israeli technological advances such as lasers for diamond cutting, automatic polishing machines and computer aided design systems are now the standard throughout the global diamond industry.

BEST PRACTICES AND 100% NATURAL

The Israeli Diamond Industry adheres to the strictest international standards. Our diamonds are natural, best practice and conflict-free. Israel is a founding member and strong supporter of the Kimberley Process, and has a strict policy ensuring that no synthetic diamonds are allowed on the trading floor of the Diamond Exchange.

The Israeli Diamond Industry adheres to the strictest international standards.



10 FACTS ABOUT THE ISRAELI DIAMOND INDUSTRY:

Half of the diamonds sold in the United States come from Israel.

Israel supplies diamonds to the world's most prestigious jewelers.

Most diamond-set high-end watches use precision cut Israeli diamonds.

Israel leads the trade in natural colored diamonds.

30 million carats are exported from Israel annually.

Israel buys over 40% of global rough diamond production.

The first "Kimberley Certificate" was issued in Israel.

Israel's diamond trading floor is over 26,900 square feet.

Israel leads in specialty and custom-made diamond cuts.

Israeli quality is world renowned.

CREATIVITY AND FLEXIBILITY

Israeli diamantaires are known for their flexibility and ability to deliver, whatever the customer's needs. We are known to be quick to adapt to global market trends, even midstream. We see no request as too difficult, and the impossible often becomes possible when you buy from Israeli diamond companies.



SAVE THE DATE FOR THIS EVENT SEPTEMBER 29-30, 2014 AT THE TJA CONVENTION IN SAN ANTONIO.

jointly sponsored by
the Texas Jewelers Association and
the Israel Diamond Institute.



Is your website living in the 90s?

Business Insider posted a slideshow online earlier this month that showed the websites of major companies in 1990s as compared with their domains today.

The differences were staggering, to say the least.

The 90s versions of the websites—which include McDonald's, Home Depot and Coca Cola—are primitive, usually single-page sites with one image, blocks of text and little information.

But the simplicity of these websites was appropriate at that time, which was more or less the dawn of the World Wide Web. Like Business Insider noted, the sites were built before developers and the general public knew what a website was supposed to look like, and before developers even had the technology to create the sites we have come to expect today.

The up-to-date page for each company is significantly better, primarily in terms of content and imagery. They have sharp, interesting pictures, attention-grabbing text and an overall pleasing layout. Check out the slideshow to see the differences.

While many of these companies and other brands have updated their websites with the changing times, others have not. And that's bad.

Websites that aren't modern—meaning they don't offer interaction, don't feature photos and have no new content—will likely keep many Internet users away.

Say you visit a news outlet's website. If you return day after day to the same old stories and no new updates, you'll eventually stop visiting, simply because it has nothing fresh or exciting to offer.

The same goes for a jeweler's website. If you fail to upload new product or mention sweepstakes and promotions, you're giving visitors the message that nothing new or fun is happening with your business so there's no reason to visit either your website or your store.



Reiterating what I mentioned in my blog on deactivating my Facebook account, business owners need to have an online presence because that's where today's consumers are shopping. This blog goes a step further by speaking not just to your store's presence on social media but on the web as a whole. If your presence is fun, interactive and fresh, it can translate to even better business results.

What can jewelers do to keep their websites fun and fresh? For a few starter ideas, post images of your new inventory and promote it on the homepage.

Running a contest for consumers? They'll never know unless you advertise it. Are you giving a discount on Mother's Day jewelry or graduation gifts? Put it front and center.

If you know another jeweler who is particularly savvy online, visit their website. Observe what they are doing and how they are engaging their audience.

Jennifer Gandia, who co-owns Greenwich Jewelers in downtown Manhattan, said one of the goals for the store's website is to consistently feature what's new and fresh.

"From seasons of the year to important shopping holidays, we always like to relate what's going on in the world outside to the jewelry we have on our site," she said. "This not only serves as a form of marketing, but it also keeps our clients interested and ensures they return to our site regularly. We also keep our blog updated with fashion, jewelry and designer news as well as behind-the-scenes store features. We like to think of our blog as a news source for our target clientele, and we aim to create content that will keep them coming back."

Don't leave your website behind in the 90s. Your customers and the Internet have moved past that time, and your business needs to as well.



Hannah Connorton

Senior Editor
National Jeweler

**NATIONAL
Jeweler**



IDEX and TJA Working Together

The **IDEX** reach into the professional diamond trade is comprehensive - more than 7,000 professional traders use the system regularly; more than 75% of the supply chain inventory is featured on the system. IDEX prices and data have become one of the industry standards.

IDEX is a leader and innovator in diamond pricing products. The widely used and followed IDEX Diamond Index has been published continuously since 2004 and is the first and oldest index based on actual listing data. IDEX also publishes a widely followed wholesale diamond price benchmark and provides traders with online, real-time asking prices and research tools.

The Marketplace

- The largest online diamond inventory (over \$5 Billion)
- Hundreds of Buy Requests at any given moment
- A commission free trading environment
- The ability to identify the best available deal
- Full ecommerce solution: 100% Guaranteed Diamond Transactions
- Enhanced selling power for retailers - the IDEX inventories on hundreds of retail websites

IDEX Onsite Service

A subscription to the IDEX Onsite service enables you to **customize and broker inventories estimated at over \$4.75 billion from over 500,000 diamonds worldwide**. You may select the polished diamond inventories you wish to sell according to Cut, Carat, Color, Clarity, Make, Price, Certificate, Supplier and Location. You can also specify whether you wish to sell only single stones, parcels or matched pairs and sets.

Diamond Prices

- **Diamond Price Report**
The report is based on price changes as reflected by the global trade on IDEX's trading platform, providing a reliable, transparent and unbiased pricing tool. The IDEX weekly price report reaches over 70,000 industry players.
- **Diamond Index & Drivers**
Derived in real-time from actual asking prices of the global diamond industry, IDEX Online Diamond Index objectively reflects price trends as they happen.
- **Real-Time Online Asking Prices**
Real-time average asking prices, highs, lows, and trends for polished diamonds derived from inventories estimated at over \$5 Billion.
- **Diamond Retail Benchmark**
The first ever diamond pricing guide for consumers, derived from up-to-date market data using an objective and fully transparent methodology.

Content

With a readership of over 70,000, IDEX News, Research and Magazine provide exclusive stories, global insight and analysis on the issues and subjects impacting the diamond, colored gems and jewelry market, covering every facet of the pipeline - all the way from mine to market.

If you have any questions or would like further information please do not hesitate to contact us anytime at **+1 (212)382-3528** or usa@idexonline.com. If you'd like to receive a complimentary copy of the weekly IDEX Diamond Report from the Texas Jewelers Association, email Ann@TexasJewelers.org and ask to be added to our "IDEX" list.

Looking forward to seeing you online!



Atlanta Jewelry Show

August 9-11, 2014

From a redesigned show floor that is the launching pad for new products and trends to an unrivaled buyer rewards program to countless networking and educational events, the Atlanta Jewelry Show invites Texas and Louisiana jewelers to discover new avenues for business growth at the August 9-11, 2014 edition at the Cobb Galleria Centre.

As an added bonus, new retail members who join the **Texas Jewelers Association** or Jewelers of Louisiana are invited to attend the August 2014 edition as a special guest of the Atlanta Jewelry Show, including a complimentary two-night hotel stay. To learn more, contact the Atlanta Jewelry Show's producers/managers, the Southern Jewelry Travelers Association (SJTA), by June 30, 2014 at 800.241.0399.



FRESH LOOKS. FRESH IDEAS.

This August, buyers will find fresh new looks on the show's redesigned floor. Offering a one-stop product resource, the show brings together hundreds of companies showcasing designs in a range of categories in the popular Point-of View: Designer Gallery, as well as the Promenade and general booth areas.



handcrafted studio

The Handcrafted Studio section returns in August, bringing together a small, intimate grouping of jewelry designers showcasing one-of-a-kind artisan pieces in a range of price points and styles. A true discovery point for unique finds and up-and-coming trends, Handcrafted Studio offers the ideal opportunity to uncover original creations that promise to position your store as the community's resource for fresh new designs.



MINGLE!

Rekindle old relationships and make new friends at the Atlanta Jewelry Show's popular Mingle networking events. As the show's popular after-hours gathering spot at the Renaissance Waverly Hotel, Mingle returns in August to give attendees and exhibitors even more opportunities to socialize and network every night of the show – on Friday, Saturday and Sunday evenings.



CAFÉ CONVERSATIONS @ THE \$5 LUNCH BUFFET

Each day of the show, buyers are invited to present their buyer badge and special coupon they receive at registration to enjoy a gourmet lunch for only \$5. What's more, you can grab your \$5 lunch and join other jewelers for one of our daily Café Conversations. This casual, open networking session gives you the chance to meet new people, share successes and listen to common challenges. These sessions promise to spark new ideas and generate practical, profitable solutions to take back to your store.

(re)DISCOVER:

Atlanta Jewelry Show Invites Texas, Louisiana Retailers to Discover New Lines, Resources, Networking Opportunities During August 9-11, 2014 Edition



ATLANTA JEWELRY SHOW U

The popular Atlanta Jewelry Show U educational series returns with a full line-up of innovative sales and marketing strategies for retailers.

COMPLIMENTARY BUYER BREAKFAST EACH MORNING

Buyers can gear up for a busy buying day by enjoying a light continental breakfast served in the registration concourse area.

PLACE AN ORDER | EARN REWARD POINTS | SJTA REWARDS

Buyers can earn valuable SJTA Reward points for simply placing orders for their best-sellers, required stock items, and other store necessities during the August Atlanta Jewelry Show, and then redeem them for hotel and travel packages, electronics, personal accessories, home goods and more. At any time during the event, buyers need only bring copies of orders placed during the show to the SJTA Rewards desk where the representative will deposit the corresponding Rewards points to their rewards account. After the show, retailers can visit the program's online catalog to see all the items they can order.

ATLANTA JEWELRY SHOW QUICK FACTS:

WHEN: Saturday, August 9 – Monday, August 11, 2014

HOURS: 10 am – 6 pm, August 8-9; 10 am – 3 pm, August 11

WHERE: Cobb Galleria Centre, Two Galleria Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30339

IIINFORMATION:

www.atlantajewelrysthshow.com or 800.241.0399 | 404.634.3434

VIP TREATMENT | ATLANTA'S ELITE BUYERS CLUB

Retailers who have earned 15,000 SJTA Reward points or more at any one of the past three shows are automatically enrolled in the Elite Buyers Club -- the exclusive club of Atlanta VIP buyers. As a member, they receive special badges signifying VIP Status; access to an exclusive registration counter just for Club Elite Members; and entry into the exclusive, member-only Club Elite lounge. To find out if they qualify for membership,

buyers should contact Fran Strauss at SJTA: 800.241.0399 or email: fstrauss@atlantajewelrysthshow.com.



COME & SHOP AND SAVE!

DISCOUNTED HOTEL RATES

SJTA has arranged for deep discounts at area hotels, which can be obtained by calling the show's host hotels directly or via the show website. Attendees can find the list and direct links to the hotels, rates and group codes to reference for discounts at www.atlantajewelrysthshow.com. When calling, attendees should tell the reservations representative that they're attending the SJTA Atlanta Jewelry Show to take advantage of the special show rates.



JEWELERS OF AMERICA JEWELERS OF AMERICA SALES & MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION ONSITE EXAMS OFFERED ON SEPTEMBER 27, 2014 AT THE TEXAS JEWELERS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

*This nationally recognized jewelry industry certification is open to all jewelry professionals!
Jewelers of America membership is not required.*

Jewelers of America is offering its renowned Sales & Management Professional Certification exams at the Texas Jewelers Association Conference. Don't miss this special opportunity to demonstrate your sales and management proficiency through this nationally recognized certification.

Sales Professional Certification and Management Professional Certification are offered in two levels. Successfully completing the first level of certification earns an individual the title of **JA Certified Sales Professional** or **JA Certified Management Professional**. Successful completion of both the first and second level tests earns the title **JA Certified Senior Sales Professional** or **JA Certified Senior Management Professional**.

Why Get Certified?

- Your customers want assurance that the jewelers they shop with are educated, ethical and experienced. When certified, you clearly communicate your professionalism.
- Promoting Jewelers of America Certified Professionals on staff differentiates your store and drives consumers to it.
- There are few better ways to demonstrate to the world your commitment to ethics and professionalism than to become certified through one of JA's certification programs.
- Think of certification testing as the beginning of an exciting journey that will lead you to higher levels of professional achievement as it validates your existing knowledge and reveals areas that can benefit from further development.



You're Ready Now - No Studying Required! Simply take and pass a written exam at the Texas Jewelers Association Convention. Exams are available for two levels of skill and ability and cover procedures, terms and concepts that jewelry professionals encounter in their everyday work.

Who Should Get Certified? Recommended for jewelry store managers, assistant managers, owners and all sales associates.

Testing Times and Location: The Texas Jewelers Association Convention is being held at The St. Anthony Hotel, San Antonio, Texas. Two testing sessions will be offered on Saturday, September 27. The morning session will be held from 9:30 am - 11:30 am in the 3rd Floor testing room at the St. Anthony Hotel. The afternoon session will be held from 1:30 pm - 3:30 pm, in the 3rd Floor testing room at the St. Anthony Hotel.

Cost/Registration: Register early and save \$10.00! Pre-registered JA members can take each exam for only \$25 (\$35 on-site) and pre-registered non-members can take each exam for \$45 (regularly \$55)! On-site registration spots are limited. For more information or to register for one or both exams, contact Jewelers of America at (800) 223.0673, extension 8007 or 8003.



TJA 2014 Jewelry Design Competition Entry Form

Application, entry fee and finished piece **must arrive** by August 8, 2014



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. 2013 and Aug. 2014.
- 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 stones.

Category # 2 Materials from \$1,000 to \$3000. Pieces must be made of Silver, Gold or Platinum and may contain stones.

Category # 3 Materials over \$3,000. Pieces must be made of Silver, Gold or Platinum and may contain 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.

Deadline - August 22, 2014

Application, entry fee and finished piece must arrive by August 9th, 2014.

Judging

The entries will be judged by qualified people in the jewelry industry before this year's TJA convention in San Antonio, TX September 27-29. 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, wear-ability, 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 2014 Convention in San Antonio, Texas - September 27 - 29, 2014. Entrants are encouraged to attend. The winning piece judged "best overall" will be crowned at the end of the 2014 TJA convention.

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 22nd 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 22, 2014.

Name _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

City/ST/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

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 - Info

Student Awards Sponsored by J. Patrick Diamonds, Inc.
No entry fee. Limit to 3 items entered.

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

1st Place \$250 w/Plaque

2nd Place \$150 w/Plaque

3rd Place \$100 w/Plaque

4th Place Honorable mention with Plaque only.

(No category rules apply to Student Category)

Total Fees: _____

Mail Entries to:

TJA DESIGN CONTEST

Brad Koen

611 Congress Ave.

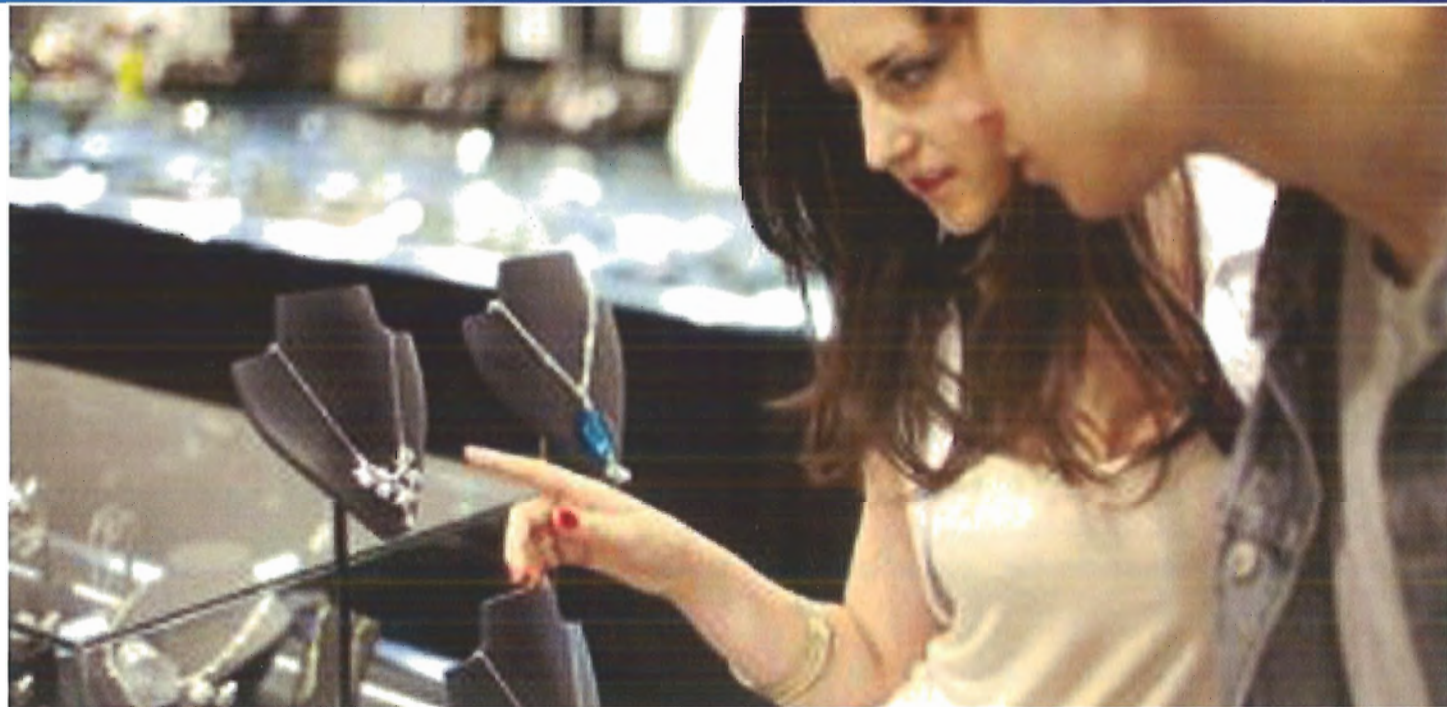
Austin, Texas 78701

(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 non-winning entries will be returned by registered mail as soon as possible. TJA assumes no liability for loss or damage to any piece entered.

THE RETAILER'S PERSPECTIVE: *mistakes, misconceptions, wives' tales and outright lies...*



By **Chuck Koehler**
Southern Jewelry News – April 2014

Throughout the years, I've heard them all; oil your opals, clean your jewelry with toothpaste, diamonds can't break. I haven't written about this stuff in a couple of years, so I thought I'd write a column for the newer members of our industry, and put a few of these rumors to bed... for a couple of years at least.

Let's start with the BIG ONE: "I don't want to let my diamond out of my sight!"

It's just an old wives' tale that a relative had told them about jewelers stealing your jewels, and advised, "don't ever let it out of your sight." I usually just hand it back to them and say, "I'm sorry, that's just not a service we offer." In reality, I've never had a customer hand me a true "if I stole this, I could actually retire on the proceeds" and tell me they wouldn't let it out of their sight. They usually just hand it to me and ask when it will be ready. Of course, I'm thinking, "Why don't you just come on back in the shop with me and watch me size your ring. You'll enjoy the process." That way there is absolutely no question they got their diamond back!

But, in reality, a jeweler handling diamonds is like a bank teller handling money. Who cares how big the deposit is if it's not going into your checking account? I've only seen one real case of a switched diamond (and it was about a half a million dollar switch) in my career.

If a customer only paid me to size their ring, I'm not going to go to all of the extra trouble to take out their diamond and set a better one in its place. Because, every... single... time... that this happens, I always want to say to the customer, "What do you think I'm gonna do, switch it with a better one, because I sure as hell don't want this I2, TLB, 1/2 carat piece of crap."

Which is why I just bite my tongue and say, "I'm sorry, but that's just not a service we offer." Plus, the reason we keep everything in the showroom under lock and key is because we think you are going to try and steal something from us.

"I've heard that you should use toothpaste to clean your jewelry."

Okay, first and foremost, the answer is YES; you can absolutely smear toothpaste on your jewelry, and then take a toothbrush and smear it around a little more. Then you can pour some water on it and smear it around even more with your toothbrush until you get it into every nook and cranny before finally giving up because now it looks worse than when you started.

So, here's the real scoop on cleaning jewelry. For starters, use a toothbrush - not toothpaste. And, with a few exceptions (emerald, opal, pearl, and coral to name a few) you can just squirt Windex on your jewelry and hit it with your toothbrush and then just rinse it off. Then, you can brush your teeth with the toothbrush... really, it's clean now.

Here's what's going on from a technical perspective; most soaps are known as "surface tension reduction agents." Surface tension is what causes objects to cling to other objects. This is the same principal that causes ketchup to not want to come out of the bottle. You have to break the surface tension in order to get the ketchup to release its grip on the bottle. We all have our own trick to do this, but regardless of what method you employ, until you break the surface tension, you're eating your french fries sans ketchup.

The same holds true in cleaning most jewelry. Dirt and gunk are being held against the jewelry because of surface tension. You need to apply a surface tension reduction agent (soap), then implement a mechanical agitation method (toothbrush) to work the soap into the piece, then rinse. Repeat if necessary... which, by the way, is printed on the instruction labels of most surface tensions reduction agents, aka soap and shampoo. Yes, it's that simple.

"You need to oil your opals and emeralds."

One word; DON'T! I mean, seriously, think about this. These gemstones are millions of years old and they got to that ripe old age without the introduction of a man-made substance that's only a couple of hundred years old called petroleum distillates. Picture this; pour some oil in a cup and leave it outside in the elements for a week or two and then go back and look at it. Is it going to be as clean and as pretty as when you put it there? Or, is it going to be full of trash, dust, leaves, dirt, bugs, pollen, and bird poop? Do you really want bird poop in your opal? I think we already know the answer to that question - NO! You don't want bird poop in your opal.

So, here's the technical side of this. Emeralds and opals tend to be a more porous gemstone than most others for two reasons. Emeralds are a combination of the elements beryl and chromium oxide. These two elements do not play nice together and have fought each other for millions of years and their relationship is very fractured... and most of these fractures actually extend to the surface of the gemstone. Opals, on the other hand, have what is known as an amorphous molecular structure, which basically means lots of cracks and breaks that extend to the surface of the gemstone. So, if you soak them in oil, it will only attract dirt and gunk into the stone, so don't do it. If a stone looks dull and lifeless, it's either dirty, or it needs to be re-polished, not oiled! Of course it could just be a crappy stone.

"Diamonds can't break."

Hah! Good one. Not only can they break, but the sound of a diamond breaking is like no other sound in the world. Probably because it's coupled with the sound of your heart breaking at the exact same time. Here's the real scoop:

Gemstones are graded on two scales, hardness and toughness. Hardness is a stone's ability to resist scratching and abrasions. Toughness is a stone's ability to resist breakage or cleavage. Yes, a diamond is

the hardest material on the planet, and it will not scratch under normal (or extreme) wear and tear. In my 30+ years in the business, I don't think I've ever actually seen a diamond with a scratch on it. But, because it's so hard, it's vulnerable to breakage and cleavage. Look at any diamond that's been in its mounting for 50 years of hard wear and tear and you'll see lots of chips and breaks and cleaves along the girdle. You can chip and break diamonds all day long, you just can't scratch one.

"My diamond fell out of my ring. Do you have a laser to fix it?"

Let's dispel a rumor or two about the "laser." First of all, let me say I'm a big fan of the laser welder (its technical name). The laser welder is a wonderful piece of technology, but it is so misunderstood out there. You don't just put raw materials in the laser and turn it on and have it spit out finished beautiful jewelry. That process still requires the highly skilled people known as bench jewelers. The main function of the laser welder is to join two pieces of metal together using light instead of heat.

Yes, it is a magical machine, just not a "craftsman replacing" magical machine. Once the two pieces of metal are now joined in holy laser-welded matrimony, a craftsman still had to do the rest of the work to make it into a beautiful piece of jewelry.

Here's the technical side: there are two basic methods of joining two pieces of metal together; soldering and laser welding. Soldering requires extreme heat and you can really screw something up if you get it too hot and melt it, or catch that opal on fire because it's all full of oil.

Laser welding allows you to get into tight places that a torch just won't go, and it allows you to work around those oiled emeralds because it doesn't generate enough heat to ignite the petroleum distillates. Now don't get me wrong, you can still really screw stuff up with a laser welder. Screwing up is usually not the fault of the equipment. But in all reality, the laser welder is just a piece of shop equipment that does some things better than other pieces of equipment. You still need a talented bench jeweler to complete the job.

"I heard you can get rich in the jewelry industry."

Yeah, I heard that too.

Chuck is the owner of Anthony Jewelers in Nashville, TN. Chuck also owns CMK Co., a wholesale trade shop that specializes in custom jewelry and repair services to the jewelry industry nationwide. If you would like to contact Chuck or need a speaker or instructor for your next conference/event he can be reached at 615-354-6361, www.CMKcompany.com or send e-mail to info@southernjewelrynews.com.

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