

TEXAS the publication of the
Texas Jewelers Association

SPRING 2019
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Jeweler



INSIDE:

- *Our 2018 Convention was a Hoot!*
- *TJA 100 Inaugural Inductions*

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SPRING 2019

President's Message "Rex' Corner" 4

Texas Jewelers Association Upcoming 2019 Convention..... 6

Our 2018 Convention was a Hoot!..... 7

25 Reasons to shop yourself 9

Jewelers of America update 10

Texas Retailers Making an Impact at the Texas Capitol This Session 11

Marvelous Member News 12

American Gem Trade Association Membership? Tell me more 14

Coaching Winners 15

Aging Inventory--Tired Store 16

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Cover Photo: *Blue Bonnets on RT 71* by Rex Solomon

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President's Message

Rex's Corner



As we make our industry's annual trek to the desert, I find myself reflecting on what has been accomplished over the last year. Many of our members, and their customer base have spent the year recovering and rebuilding from the historic damage caused by Hurricane Harvey in late 2017, and while we are certainly not whole again, we are recovering as a region, and an industry.

Once again, I am pleased to report that the state of the association is excellent, after yet another well-attended and informative state convention. We were pleased to conduct the induction of the inaugural class of Texas jewelry businesses into the TJA 100 Club; recognizing those businesses that are over 100 years old, and we look forward to inducting more business annually as they reach the century mark.

As an industry advocacy group the TJA has recently been active in efforts to have our industry's concerns heard in the Texas Legislature, where a number of measures that would have negative effects on our industry have been, thus far, successfully averted. We are actively encouraging the passage of legislation, which would remove tax burdens that adversely affect retailers and wholesalers with operations in Texas. As this 140 day biennial legislative marathon nears its conclusion, many measures are, as this is being written, still pending in the all important Calendars Committee, who will decide which bills will make it to the full legislature for consideration. We are cautiously optimistic that this effort will be successful.

On an industry wide level, we are encouraged, after a decade since the state associations became independent of the Jewelers of America, there is a new effort by the Jewelers of America to reach out to, and engage the various remaining state associations. This is evidenced by the start of a monthly conference call of the leaders of the associations to share ideas. This new engagement will be a net positive for the industry as we are always better together than apart.

Rex Solomon
Houston Jewelry

Rex Solomon is the President of the Texas Jewelers Association. Rex is a fifth generation Texas merchant and is President of Houston Jewelry.

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Texas Jewelers Association Upcoming 2019 Convention

The **2019 Texas Jewelers Association Convention** will be held **Saturday, October 26 through Monday October 28, 2019 at the Holiday Inn Midtown in Austin, Texas**. Every year the convention offers jewelers a great way to make friends and increase their knowledge about the jewelry industry. This year's convention chairperson is **Lucinda Rogers of Gold 'N Carats Jewelers** in Irving, Texas, assisted by her son **Steven** and daughter-in-law **Jenna Rogers**. A new venue was chosen for this year's convention and it promises to be an improved layout, with lots of interaction between participants and vendors and a great place to socialize and learn.

Last year our keynote speaker was **Shane Decker**, sponsored by **Malakan Diamonds**, and his enlightening information left us wanting more. He will be returning this year with more exciting information on how to make our businesses grow!

Our round table discussions have been one of the most popular features of our convention. This year's topics will inspire and enlighten you. More information on the round table leaders and topics will be forwarded to you soon.

A registration form is included in this magazine, so please complete it soon to be eligible for the discounts offered for registration and hotel accommodations. Please send one registration form for each attendee.

For vendors, this is a great way to meet future retailers in a relaxed atmosphere. Meeting the vendors offers exceptional quality and terms to Texas jewelers and is a chance to open new accounts with quality Texas jewelers. Vendors wishing to sign up for a booth can contact lrgnc@aol.com or send a check and the registration form to the address listed on the registration form.

Are you going to **JCK** and **AGTA**? To quick start our 2019 convention, TJA has scheduled a **“Meet and Greet” for Saturday night, June 1, 2019 from 6:00-8:00 pm** at the Las Vegas Convention Center in Room S233. This coincides with **“Texas Day” at the AGTA Show**. Immediately following the **“Meet and Greet”** our group will dine informally at a restaurant to be announced. This is a great opportunity to visit with your fellow TJA members.

For 2019, TJA will be partnering with **Jewelers of America, Jewelers Mutual Insurance**, and the **Select Jewelry Show**.

The fall kick off for the convention will be at the **Select Jewelry Show** in **Dallas** at the Ritz Carlton, **September 8-9, 2019**. It is a great way to start the holiday season and a comfortable venue to kick off our exciting 2019 convention and a great show to stock up for the upcoming holiday season. For more information on attending contact www.selectjewelryshow.com.

Alert! Steamer issue

Please be aware that the **Texas Department of Licensing & Regulation** is inspecting the steamers found in most jewelry stores in Texas. Texas has specific requirements for these steamers so don't be surprised if an inspector makes a visit to your store. Be prepared for their inspection and scrutiny. For more information contact **Susan Eisen** at orders@susaneisen.com or your jewelry insurance carrier.

Our 2018 Convention was a Hoot!

by Susan Eisen, GG, Master Gemologist Appraiser, ASA



The Texas Jewelers Association is alive and well and growing each year. With an incredible group of volunteer members and board members, the association is now the largest state jeweler association in the country with approximately 130 retail store members and vendors. The Texas Jewelers Association was founded over 119 years ago and serves jewelers throughout Texas. Members enjoy regular correspondence with up-to-date jewelry information, a magazine with information regarding members and new developments in the industry, social events at various jewelry shows, and an annual convention held in Austin.

The 2018 convention was held on October 27-29, 2018 at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Austin and included a design competition and educational seminars given by experts, including keynote speaker Shane Decker. The trade show included over 21 vendors and 78 attending retailers, an increase from the previous years.

Jewelers from all over Texas came to meet and greet their colleagues and compare notes about the success of their businesses and shared ideas about how to improve. The vendor room proved to be an exciting place where jewel-

ry and gemstone vendors educated members on new products, security, insurance, and financing.

It wasn't all about business though! We hosted the first "Texas Shootout" the Saturday before the convention started. More than 25 members got the opportunity to practice their shooting skills at a private range in Austin. Members had a variety of firearms to choose from to develop their sharp shooting skills and everyone had a fabulous time! After the shootout, the members had the chance to mingle for a dinner at the range.

On Sunday night, we hosted a Gala and Awards Ceremony, where we honored the winners of the Annual TJA Design Competition and the members of our 100 Anniversary Club, a club which consists of jewelers who have been in the jewelry business in Texas for over 100 years.

Thanks to Lucinda Rogers and her team for planning a fabulous convention! Next year we look forward to an even more exciting convention to be held October 26-28, 2019 at the Holiday Inn Midtown in Austin, Texas. More exciting news will follow!

Susan Eisen, Susan is the Vice President of the Texas Jewelers Association and is the owner of Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry and Watches, El Paso, Texas



Having a great time at the Texas Shootout



Curt Vinson & Shane Decker



Enjoying time with Malakan Diamonds

Have a great design and want to enter it into the 2019 TJA Design Competition?

Watch for the information on the upcoming 2019 TJA design competition to be held at the annual convention. Application forms can be found on our website. We would love to have you participate!

Re-cap from the Houston Chapter of the Women's Jewelry Association National Leadership Conference in Austin, Texas

The Women's Jewelry Association had their annual 3-day Leadership Conference this past March in Austin, Texas. Over 40 presidents and board members from the 30+ chapters around the nation met up in Austin to network, learn, and continue the dream of the original founders, Toni Lyn Judd and Cindy Geller. These pioneers believed that women networking with each other could change the world. They were right!

The conference is a platform that offers educational and networking initiatives to members that teach the knowledge and skills necessary to become leaders. It consisted of educational break-out sessions, a public speaking workshop, round table and panel discussions— as well as a host of networking opportunities for us to get to know one another. We shared ideas on social media trends, jewelry photography, gemstone trends, trade shows, event ideas, leadership methods, gemstone and social responsibility, and more.

The WJA has a diverse group of talented and dynamic women excelling in their professions. Here is a small sampling of some of the intriguing WJA members that I got to know: the Career Services Advisor at GIA, Carlsbad, California, the Curator of the Mineralogical and Geological Museum at Harvard University, a few jewelry press editors, consultants, appraisers, a jewelry school owner, and a number of talented designers. Among the Texas chapters were the Valuations Manager, at The RealReal, the Director of Jewelry Operations at Bachendorf's in Dallas and the store owner of Eliza Page in Austin.

Our fledging Houston Chapter won a "Membership Excellence" award since we gained more members than expected. Our chapter started about 1.5 years ago. We have been hosting an array of events: mix and mingles, fashion and jewelry trend talks at local pop-up stores, lectures on antique jewelry, gems, social media,

consulting, and accounting, as well as a tour of the Menil Collection and the Houston Museum of Natural Science Fabergé and Gem and Mineral Hall. We will have a few more Mix & Mingles this year— as well as a few educational and fun events such as an event at a local Houston art house film theater showcasing a jewelry related movie.

We have several Houston members taking part in the WJA mentor program. As a hallmark of WJA's commitment to foster the success of their future industry leaders, they offer a Mentor Program that connects experienced professionals with aspiring talent in a supportive environment. Members have the opportunity to apply real-life wisdom, gain the benefit of each participant's point-of-view, to workplace situations.

Additionally, The WJA Foundation provides scholarships and grants to female business owners, veterans and students. Recipients are awarded scholarships ranging from \$1,000 to \$7,000.

Our goal for the Houston Chapter is to continue the mission of its original founders by offering events, education, tools, and opportunities to elevate and enrich women in the jewelry related industries.

Katrina Kelly, President of the Houston Chapter of the WJA.

Katrina Kelly is a Fine Jewelry Designer, Creator, Inventor, Product Developer, Explorer, Art History Professor



25 Reasons to shop yourself

David Geller

1. Is there a salesperson up front?
'How do you feel when YOU shop and there's no one to greet you when you shop?'
 - a. Always have someone on the floor.
2. Everyone should be greeted in the first 30 seconds, with an incredible greeting.
3. If the 30 second rule is broken how long does it take to get waited on?
 - a. Find out if the customer is a hunter or a gatherer,
 - b. Practice T O,s
 - c. Customers can tell if there is teamwork.
4. Did the salesperson smile?
 - a. A smile relaxes a customer and eliminates objections ahead of time.
5. Make eye contact.
Shows trustworthiness, integrity, & confidence.
6. In the first 30 seconds, was the greeting creative?
 - a. One liners.
 - b. If they say 'just looking', ask questions.
 - c. Don't greet from behind the counter. It's a power position.
 - d. Never ask how much you want to spend.
7. Get customers name as soon as possible. Introduce yourself and ask their name.
8. When does the selling process start? How long does it take to find out if they are a hunter or a gatherer?
 - a. Do you close all the way the way through the presentation?
 - b. Serpentine
 - c. Missile
 - d. Sneak
9. Was something taken out of the case and handed to the customer?
10. Did you use a lead in line?
Starting a sale from scratch.
'Remind me to show you something before you go'
'I need your opinion'
'Wait until you see.....'
'Guess what's in the vault?'
11. Did salesperson know anatomy of the sale?
12. Did the salesperson listen?
13. Did salesperson handle objections?
 - a. If price then you need more romancing.
 - b. If integrity-(swap stones?)= not selling company enough.
 - c. If indecisiveness=customer needs more reassurance.
"You're making a smart decision"
Price-"It's cheaper down the street", a comeback might be "Do you like CHEAP cars?"
14. Was salesperson well trained?
'product knowledge'
15. Did the salesperson sell the company?
 - a. Talk about service
 - b. Talk about facts about the company.
 - c. Quality of our merchandise.
16. Did the salesperson romance the item?
 - a. You need passion
 - b. If you can't romance it, you can't close it.
17. You need momentum in your business to do well.
 - a. Showing a one carat diamond to everyone will mean you'll sell more and more each year to previous customers who viewed one.
18. Did you use closes from the beginning to the end of the presentation?
Closes are:
Helping the customer make a decision.
Being timely on what you say.
Designed close for the different personality traits of customers.
Will get the customer to say "I'll take it".
7 Closes:
 - a. Direct "Buy it!"
 - b. Compliment the customer on a good buying decision.
 - c. Whisper "I can tell by the way you're looking at it that you want it."
 - d. Indirect "She'd do it for you."
 - e. Reassurance "She'll love it. Wiser choice."
 - f. Question close "White gold or yellow?"
 - g. Assumption close
19. Did the salesperson try for an add-on?
 - a. Did you know the average "impulse" item in a jewelry store is \$300.00?
 - b. Add on at Christmas "now that we have this for your wife, how many others are on your shopping list?"
20. If you didn't close, did you try selling some other item?
21. Did you "WOW" the customer by showing them a high ticket item?
22. Did the salesperson do 3 presentations?
 - a. Clerk a sale
 - b. An add on.
 - c. Create a sale from scratch (no prior interest in the item)
23. Did the salesperson escort the customer to the door after the sale was made?
24. Did the salesperson give the customer a business card and brochure to the customers when they left?
25. Was there follow up? Thank you card.

Jewelers of America update



I would like to introduce myself as the Director of Membership at Jewelers of America. I have been in the industry over 25 years in a variety of capacities and all were partnership driven. That is my intention with the Texas Jewelers Association as well as the other state and regional associations. I will work to strengthen the relationship with Jewelers of America to help our associations better serve you, the jeweler.

First, what is Jewelers of America? We are the leading non-profit jewelry association in the US. Our members are retailers, designers, suppliers and businesses that serve our industry. We advocate for our members and consumers and aim to always improve consumer confidence in our industry. We do this by providing a forum for the issues affecting our industry, having a leadership role in government and industry affairs, providing members access to educational programs in management, sales, gemology, product knowledge and technical skills, and developing programs designed to help jewelers be more profitable.

Our state associations are important to us. They represent you on a more regional and individual level. The state associations are your voice. Having a strong relationship with the states keeps us informed of what's really happening across the United State and only then can we be a strong advocate for you and deliver you programs to help your business. The consumer marketplace is rapidly changing, but by working together, I believe we can become stronger. I will be hosting monthly calls with your state presidents and other state/regional association presidents to hear your needs, and to share ideas and best practices to help your association grow and deliver to you more benefits.

Here are some things we are working on at Jewelers of America:

- Member Benefits – I have been meeting with our existing partners and potential new partners to deliver

programs to help your bottom line. Those who use Synchrony Financing will see a special promotion this spring, summer and fall which will give your customer a statement credit; I am working with Jewelers Mutual to provide you a one stop solution for jewelers block insurance, worker's comp, lifetime warranty, shipping and yes, health insurance! I am also meeting with potential new partners for bankcard processing and software solutions.

- Diamond Council of America (DCA) – JA purchased DCA two years ago. With every JA membership, you are provided the first course in DCA. This teaches students HOW to sell diamonds and can be a valuable tool for many of your employees.
- Members of Texas Jewelers, who are not enrolled in JA can enroll for \$99.
- Member Meet Up – mark your calendars for Friday May, 31. We are hosting a member meet up at the JCK show and I look forward to meeting you!
- National Convention - July 28/29 in NYC. This two day education program will be forum for industry trends, keynotes and seminars. The content will provide attendees with insights on the issues shaping and influencing the jewelry industry today. We are providing a complimentary registration to your state president as well. For more information, go to our website: www.jewelers.org
- Hosted trips to India in conjunction with GJEPC for diamond and gemstone buying

Regina Ciarleglio is the Director of Membership of the Jewelers of America.

Please feel free to reach out to me at: rciarleglio@jewelers.org. I would love to hear from you and learn how JA can better partner with you.

Texas Retailers Making an Impact at the Texas Capitol This Session

By: George Kelemen, President & CEO of the Texas Retailers Association



We have made it to April, and the first few weeks have been very busy for TRA, with the rest of the month promising much more of the same. The 86th Texas Legislative session has roughly a month and a half to go and will soon be approaching key deadline dates, that will determine which bills continue to advance and which don't. Additionally, TRA's signature event during the legislative session, our biannual Texas Retailers Lobby Day at the

Texas Capitol was a big success on March 20th. Read below and see the following pages for a recap on TRA Lobby Day and information on upcoming activities, such as the annual the TRA Forum in July.

The TRA team continues to keep TRA's legislative priorities front and center this session. On March 20th we were joined by a great group of our members, representing every sector within retail, for TRA's Lobby Day. TRA Lobby Day participants walked the halls of the Texas Capitol and met with close to 100 members of the Texas Legislature on topics of importance to the retail community, including: taxes; wage & labor issues; issues related to the implementation of the Wayfair decision in Texas. Additionally, our fight to reduce or eliminate the outdated inventory tax on property continues to work

its way through the legislative process. Even if you missed TRA's Lobby Day and can't get to Austin before the end of May, you can still help our cause at the Legislature. Check out TRA's top legislative priorities on the following pages, as well as the bills associated with them. Contact your legislators and tell them you're a retailer in Texas and let them know where you stand on these key issues.

Lastly, registration for the annual Texas Retailers Forum is now open and in full swing. Join us this summer, here in Austin at the Omni Barton Creek Resort on July 29th for our annual industry showcase event, which will provide retailers with timely, topical and quality sessions and speakers. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet with and learn from retail industry leaders from across the state and country. Make plans to be there to help us honor our Federal Legislative Champion for 2019, Congressman Will Hurd, as well as state legislative champions and industry champions at networking functions such as our Awards Dinner, networking breaks, and our popular closing night party. Registration and sponsorship details, as well as information about Forum is available on TRA's website: www.txretailers.org. Secure your spot today, at this can't miss retail industry event.

George Kellerman is the President of the Texas Retailers Association, The Voice of Texas Retail. He can be reached at (512) 472-8261 www.TXRetailers.org

The Importance of Trade Show to the Independent Jeweler

By Amber Gustafson

Going to jewelry industry shows has always been an important part of my business plan. I have found that the information and education that I have acquired by attending various events over the years has far outweighed the costs. Not only have I benefited from exposure to the latest trends and technologies but my staff and clients are also inspired as well. The back story is what leads to the next story and the next sale! Isn't that what feeds our drive to get up and deliver the most beautiful work or cherished heirloom day after day?

I always go to Tucson since it's the Mecca of colored gemstones from around the world. You really do have the world of gemstones at your fingertips. It is hard to swallow that almost everything is treated or enhanced these days from an altruistic perspective. I go to learn about new gem finds, treatments and values. I compare current prices with my own inventory of loose gems. At times I make adjustments in my asking prices to reflect that change. I enjoy going to the sideshows, such as The 22nd Street show, to find fill-in gift ware and curiosities for my store. The clients love to see what is new. Unusual items like carved crystal skulls or malachite elephants create great conversation pieces. One tip that I can share is not to always go back and buy the same items year after year. But if you find a great vendor and establish a relationship then they can keep you updated on new and interesting pieces through out the year. Keeping it fresh is the name of the game.

Some of you may not have the luxury of going to many shows but if your store is in a more urban area then you may find that networking within your communities may be a great way to keep updated! Several years ago I decided to create a Houston Area Jewelers Breakfast monthly and we now have a facebook page.

There are wholesalers and retailers that attend regularly. There are usually 10-20 people. We share all sorts of news, ideas and tips with each other. It is a great way to get out of your box and stretch a bit. I believe there are jeweler's breakfasts in Dallas and Austin as well.

In case you are in a more rural area then I would recommend you join online groups to keep your passion for this fine but finicky business thriving! Of course, we at the Texas Jewelers Association would love for you to join us and attend our annual event this October for round table discussions, great vendors and networking. Our members are primarily just like me, and you. Small business owners who are traveling a maze of ways to provide great service, quality and value to the new retail buyers.

Amber Gustafson is the Secretary/Treasurer of the Texas Jewelers Association, President of Amber's Designs Fine Jewelry, and immediate past Chair of the Texas Retailer's Association.

Marvelous Member News

TJA Member News

By Rex Solomon, TJA President

Congratulations to the following Texas Jewelers Association Members!



Kevin Black, Tony Bradfield, Dror & Helene Zadok, Rex & Maggie Solomon, and Bradley Marks

TJA Member Stores **Tennebaum & Co**, **Zadok Jewelers**, **Houston Jewelry**, & **I.W. Marks Jewelers**, all of which sponsored elements of the 2019 Cattle Baron's Ball "City Lights & Bayou Nights" at the George Ranch Historical Park. Presented by VICTORY, an all volunteer branch of the American Cancer Society, the annual bash raised more than **\$1.5 million** to support the American Cancer Society.

"Strawberry Wine" singer **Deana Carter** serenaded guests as they enjoyed Las Vegas-style gaming, midway games, a wine pull chaired by **Victory Member Maggie Solomon** with over 200 superb bottles of wine and champagne, a whiskey pull, a fine jewelry raffle, a car raffle, pig races and VICTORY Shoppes and General Stores. Guests browsed and bid fiercely on the big-board and silent auction items from seemingly every retailer, restaurant and venue in Houston. The live auction had everyone bidding on fabulous packages and fantasy trips. The **live auction raised more than \$350,000** for the fight against cancer. The evening culminated with six-time Vocal Group of the Year, **Diamond Rio**, performing their chart-topping hits.



West Texas Jeweler Part of New Malacology Exhibit

Mark Priest, owner of **Legend Jewelers**, has donated a selection of Texas natural freshwater "concho" pearls to the Malacology Hall at the Houston Natural Science Museum. The new Malacology Hall includes mollusks from freshwater, land and marine environments.

Concho pearls are natural freshwater fancy colored pearls produced by a freshwater mussel shell found in the San Angelo area of west Texas. The Tampico shell produces spherical and baroque shaped pearls in colors ranging from soft pink to vivid purple and silvery-green.

Tina Petway, curator of the malacology hall, said in an email to **Priest** that "... we have had on exhibit one of your exquisite concho pearls that was donated in 1997. We are in the process of completely renovating that Hall. One of the exhibit cases is dedicated to just pearls from differing sources along with the type of shell in which each pearl is formed. This new hall of malacology... is going to tell more of the story of the plight of our oceans and freshwater environments. The importance of the concho pearl both locally and worldwide is a story that needs to be told.

Priest says “It is important to have a presence in this exhibit. Concho pearls are rare and difficult to find. They have had a strong impact on the history of the San Angelo area. One of the earliest written references to the concho pearl comes from the mid 1620’s when Spanish explorers came through the San Angelo area. The word “concho” comes from the Spanish word “conch” which is latin for shell. Today the area around San Angelo is known as the Concho Valley because of the mollusks and the pearls they produce.

In the email to **Priest**, Petway said that “with the advent of cool, focused light, we will be able to preserve the condition for all the objects including some of the rarest shells in the world.

Priest has donated 10 pearls for the new exhibit. The group features a large baroque, two smaller wing shape and several small half round pearls exhibiting bright metallic colors of purple, slivery-green and deep pink. Priest says only 1 in 250 pearls is of a nice enough quality to be used for jewelry.

The new Malacology Hall is scheduled to have a grand opening August 31, 2019.

Susan Eisen Fine Jewelry and Watches in El Paso for winning the Better Business Bureau “Award for Excellence- The Gold Standard of Trust” in El Paso at an award banquet held on May 15, 2019 at the El Paso Convention Center

Rex Solomon & Houston Jewelry for winning the Better Business Bureau “Award for Excellence-Winner of Distinction” for the 9th year in a row, and award over all at an BBB Awards For Excellence Luncheon held on May 15, 2019 at the Bayou City Events Center, Houston .

Texas Jewelers Association is on the move! After one year, the association has grown from 30 members to 60 associate members

and 130 paid retail members and is now the largest state jewelry organization in the US.

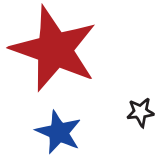


Congratulations to the Inagural Class of the Texas Jeweler Association TJA100 Club – Texas jewelry business that are at least 100 years old!

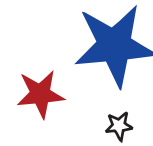
Alter’s Gem Jewelry - 1915, Ernst Jewelers - 1893, Haltom’ Jewelers - 1893, Hamilton Jewelers - 1901, Houston Jewelry - 1866, Joe Koen & Son Jewelers - 1883, Kinne’s Jewelers - 1889, Nacol Jewlery Inc - 1887, Pelz Jewelers - 1907, Storey Jewelers - 1903

Our prayers are with **Brad Koen of Koen Jewelers** in Austin for a speedy and healthy recovery.

Please send any announcements or member news for future issues to: MemberNews@TexasJewelers.org



American Gem Trade Association Membership? Tell me more.....



By David Baker, GG



Whether you are new to the jewelry industry or a seasoned veteran, you no doubt have heard of AGTA. While you may know AGTA, you may not be familiar with the extent of products and services offered. Let's take a closer look at the American Gem Trade Association. Founded in 1981 and with 1200 members, the AGTA is a not-for-profit association of United States and Canadian gemstone professionals dedicated to promoting awareness and appreciation of natural colored gemstones and cultured pearls.

Simply put, AGTA is an association of businesses with permanent offices based in North America. AGTA is a "family" of individuals and companies in love with colored gemstones and the desire to create a trading environment where business ethics, integrity, and disclosure of gemstone treatments is actually a code of conduct. This is assured through a binding written agreement that every member of the American Gem Trade Association signs annually to conduct business with integrity and ethics, and to disclose all gemstone enhancements.

If you have never attended an **AGTA GemFair*** there is nothing like the present to immerse yourself in the most significant gemstone event in the world that takes place twice a year in the United States! If you are a regular attendee at our **AGTA GemFair**, you already know why retailers and manufacturers continually cite **GemFair** as a "must attend" event!

At AGTA, we welcome you, educate you, and introduce you to what is truly a community of gemstone aficionados. This will very quickly become your community, where you meet and visit with like-minded crowd. AGTA will help you develop your colored gemstone business, build an entirely new client base, and even help you grow a category that will bring strong margins to your bottom line!

Most shoppers become customers when the sales presentation becomes an "experience". The best way for you to share the experience is to live

it by attending **AGTA GemFair** Las Vegas, May 30th to June 3rd, 2019 at the Las Vegas Convention Center, Las Vegas, NV or **AGTA GemFair** Tucson, February 4th to February 9th, 2020 at the Tucson Convention Center, Tucson, AZ. Here you will surround yourself with beauty, the legend, and the allure that are colored gemstones.

In addition to attending the **AGTA GemFair** extravaganza, your membership in the American Gem Trade Association denotes your commitment to fair business practices and ethical representation of colored gemstones. It also gains free access for you and your staff to the AGTA eLearning program and the annual **AGTA GemFair** Seminar Series, both featuring exceptional training for selling colored gemstones. Many join simply for access to our FedEx program for special member pricing and access to high value shipping insurance and entrée healthcare insurance rates.

As an AGTA member, you may submit items and images for placement on AGTA's Instagram page, with over 75,000 followers, or the AGTA Community page on Facebook. Creating exceptional exposure opportunities for your business and your product. Another exciting opportunity for AGTA members is access to our digital image library of colored gemstones where you can select and 15 images a year for use on your website or print media. Additional products available to purchase by members include point of sales materials and "gem cards by the month" for you to share with your customers at a nominal cost to you!

Are you a jewelry designer? Do you have a one of a kind jewelry design in mind? You may wish to consider entering the **AGTA Spectrum Awards** competition. Since 1984, the **AGTA Spectrum Awards** is the preeminent colored gemstone design competition, the benchmark for design excellence in the world of colored gemstones and pearls in the world. With winning a division at the **AGTA Spectrum Awards** there is significant recognition, prestige, and honor that comes winning a "category". Following the judging a day is set aside for visits from internationally renowned editors, from not only the jewelry industry but also fashion and the arts, who examine, photograph and write about not just the winners of the completion but many additional entries. They even select an editor's choice piece resulting in unparalleled recognition. One entrant revealed that the editors posted so many images of their one of a kind piece, that it received well over 100,000 impressions in the 'e' world. Your winning jewelry might even be featured on a billboard high over Times Square in New York City!

The Dallas based American Gem Trade Association offers many more wonderful tangible and intangible member benefits. By simply calling the office, we will provide whatever assistance you may need.

For Additional information, contact David Baker, AGTA Membership and Education Manager, david@agta.org or call 800-972-1162.

**GemFair is a US Registered Trademark of the AGTA*

Coaching Winners

By Brad Huisken



Retail is so competitive right now that the definitive edge is the extremely well-trained staff who can assist the customer with bringing their personal vision for their purchase clearly into the focus of reality. Bringing the customer's vision to a satisfying and enduring conclusion is similar to a riveting production on the screen or in the theater.

The stage is the setting for the drama to transpire. Carefully creating outstanding displays which are current, crisp, clean and inviting prepares the physical and emotional background for the action to occur. Mood and expectation can subtly be engineered to capture the purchaser's involvement before any action begins.

As with any dramatic performance, the props (the products) are the details which refine and enhance the drama! Having the highest quality merchandise with the most desirable price-point allows the product and the merchant to engage the audience (purchaser) from the get-go!

Generating a delicate harmony between the store, the product and the purchaser is the responsibility of the sales staff. Merchants can have the best of the best in their product line and *still* struggle to be competitive. It is possible to have the most breath-taking store with the most inspiring decor and still fall flat in the staging of the stellar transaction! (Oh NO!)

The actors (the doers, the muses) are largely responsible for bringing all the dramatic elements together to a coherent, memorable and satisfying conclusion! (Bring on the Retail Oscars, please!)

Rarely are actors able to achieve an award-winning performance without training and practice and constant refinement and honing of their craft. Similarly, rarely are salespersons such natural talent that they can bring home a smooth highly satisfying purchase interaction without frequent training, role-playing, self-evaluation/manager evaluation ongoing evaluation of their words and actions to create buying comfort with their customers.

So...setting the stage for ongoing role-play among sales staff and managers makes a critical difference in keeping sales smooth and natural. Just as practice makes perfect in all of the arts, practice makes perfect in the development and growth of expert sales skills. Steps in this process that I like to see:

- Practice *before* going on the sales floor
- Interactive role modeling—manager/staff member
- Interactive role-modeling—staff member/staff member
- Staff member self-evaluation/clarification/"do-overs"

Manager evaluation/praise for comments and components which enhance the sales progression

Joint examination with the sales person for improvement of statements, movements or body-language that disrupts the flow of the sale Developing improved techniques cooperatively with the salesperson Practice, practice, practice!

To be the most effective, this improvement process **MUST** be conducted in a collaborative, non-threatening, interactive, fun (did I say FUN!?) manner! Each staff member must feel free and valued enough to devise their personalized sales strategies *within the guidelines* of best sales practices. **THIS** is where the expertise of the manager becomes evident! To be a competent instructional coach, whether in the dramatic arts, sports, or sales, being the master of the techniques is an **ABSOLUTE** necessity!

Believing in the effectiveness of material (wording/techniques/"schtick"/presentation), knowing that what is said is honest and sincere, and demonstrating that the basic steps are duplicatable creates confidence and fluidity for the sales staff. Assisting each staff member to craft *their* stories and sales scenarios equates to their sincere success; from there, each one can merely repeat their own process! Success, sales process, success, more success!

Most important of everything is to **BE** the manager you'd like to **HAVE** manage **YOUR** success as a sales person! Winners create and coach winners!

Author, trainer, consultant, and speaker Brad Huisken is President of IAS Training. Mr. Huisken authored the books I'M a salesman! Not a PhD. and Munchies For Salespeople: Selling Tips That You Can Sink Your Teeth Into and his new book Munchies For Salespeople II: More Selling Tips That You Can Sink Your Teeth Into. He developed the PMSA Relationship Selling Program, the PSMC Professional Sales Management Course, The Mystery Shoppers Kit, The Employee Hand-book and Policy & Procedures Manual, The Weekly Sales Training Meeting Series offers an entire year's worth of weekly meeting plans along with Aptitude Tests and Proficiency Exams for new hires, current sales staff and sales managers. The IAS Train the Trainer Course and IAS Training's Certified Professional Programs for Pawnbrokers or Jewelers consistently receive high acclaim in their respective industries. In addition, the IAS Training FREE weekly subscription newsletter, called "Sales Insight," is key to retailers keeping current! Contact IAS Training at 1-800-248-7703, info@iastraining.com, www.iastraining.com or fax 303-936-9581.

Aging Inventory--Tired Store

by Bob Epstein



Aging inventories, can burden even the most prosperous store. Many jewelers fail to appreciate the true financial costs of carrying inventory such as insurance, taxes, storage and the cost of money. Since these costs continue to rise, tight inventory control is still one of the best investments you can make. But there's another detriment and cost to carrying old inventory---you run the risk of being perceived as the

the store "with the same old stuff" in the eyes of the consumer. So in addition to the hard money costs of aging inventory there's an even more profound impact on your store from a marketing perspective. Don't let your aging inventory put your customers to sleep.

As an independent store owner you have the distinct advantage over the big box stores because you can offer unique and different products. Having inventory that is distinctive and new will set your business and brand apart. Stores which offer custom designs have even more of an advantage as customers love finding that unique item. Repeat customers love to stop in at their favorite store just to see what's new. Cultivate and establish yourself as the store full of surprises.

Maintaining a store full of "surprises" and new inventory can be an expensive proposition. Few store owners have the luxury of an unlimited merchandise buying account. Inventory control and buying takes discipline and planning.

The first step is obviously to take a close look at your current inventory, item-by-item. If you don't have a computerized inventory system, now might be the time to consider this to help simplify the buying process by gathering a better understanding of what your customers are buying. Code your inventory with a purchase date so you can create an accurate aging report and take action on your slow moving goods.

Chances are you might still have a have several older *gold* pieces that you bought before the spike in gold prices; these are now worth more to you by melting. Take that money and invest in *new* inventory that is less expensive which will *sell*.

- Review the reports to identify your fastest sellers, and make sure you keep them in stock.
- Look specifically at your gold merchandise and determine if some pieces are candidates for melting--take that cash and reinvest some of it in silver and alternative metals.
- Review your open orders and speak to vendors about canceling orders that are for product you don't have a great command for.
- Review some of your long term vendor lines and compare them to new vendors for similar, lower priced options.
- Look at purchasing inventory from jewelers going out of business, or manufacturer close-outs.
- Consider re-merchandising your store and pair up older merchandise with newer goods. Price the older goods at great values to generate cash to use for newer faster selling goods.
- When reviewing your inventory and considering markdowns, think of it this way, better a dollar in your pocket than gathering dust as unsold merchandise.
- Review your commission structure for your salespeople, and offer additional incentives to move dated goods.

As summer approaches and temperatures rise, none of us really want to hear Christmas music or the sound of jingle bells. But by working on your inventory now and using the above inventory strategies you can improve your cash flow now and better position yourself for the jingle of *money* in your cash register and a merrier (and more profitable) holiday shopping season in 2019.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Epstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "B" and "E".

Bob Epstein is Chief Executive Officer of Eaton Hudson's Jewelry Advisory Division offering a legacy in sales strategies for jewelers. Bob provides guidance to store owners seeking to turn around a business, sell off unwanted inventory, or liquidate an entire store.

TEXAS JEWELRY INDUSTRY REGULAR NETWORKING EVENTS:

Houston Area Jewelers Breakfast

Friends in the Jewelry Business:
Second Friday Every Month, Le Peep, 4340 Westheimer Rd, Houston, TX 77027
Approx 7:30 – 9:00 A.M.

Organized by Amber Gustafson Amber@TexasJewelers.org (281) 391-6333

The Facebook Group is: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/156147236021/>
Houston Area Jewelers Breakfast

Dallas Ft. Worth Area Jewelers Breakfast

We will meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 8:15 A.M. at Denny's on Central Expressway just North of Meadow Road, South bound.

There is no agenda, just a cup of coffee or a great breakfast, and get to talk to other jewelers.

We are out of there at 9:00 A.M., time enough to get to your office!

Come see what we are about and do a little networking!

For questions call Dolores English
or For snarky comments call Jeffrey English
at [214-638-1583](tel:214-638-1583)

Austin

Breakfast every Friday at 8:00 A.M. Different locations.

We have been meeting for approximately for 35 years!

Main contact: [Robert Harrison jeweler@prodigy.net](mailto:Robert.Harrison.jeweler@prodigy.net)
(512) 266-1715

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Houston, Texas 77003





Texas Jewelers Association

611 Congress Avenue
Austin TX 78701
www.TexasJewelers.org

Business Information

New member Membership renewal Associate new member Associate renewal

Company Name: _____

Address: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Business phone: _____ Business fax: _____

Email: _____ Website: _____

Contact name: _____ Title: _____

Type of Business (Please check all that apply)

Retail Jewelry Store Leased Department Traveling Sales Person
 Supplier Manufacturer Friend of the Industry Other _____

JBT # _____ OCCC PMR # _____

Total number of outlets _____ x \$50 = Subtotal \$ _____

(Attach a list of the outlets with complete addresses & phone numbers)

Year established: _____ Do you collect sales/use tax? _____ Tax ID Number: _____

List Two Industry References (names, addresses & phone numbers)

1) _____
_____ (_____) _____

2) _____
_____ (_____) _____

I will abide by the TJA Code of Ethics & Standards of Professional Conduct

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Annual Membership Dues for Associate

\$95 + \$ _____ = Total \$ _____

Annual Membership Dues

\$135 + \$ _____ = Total \$ _____

Payment Information (Annual year starts on join date)

My check is enclosed, payable to Texas Jewelers Association
 Please invoice me by email at _____

Please mail this form and payment to:
Texas Jewelers Association - 611 Congress Ave. Austin, TX 78701



Announcing!

**"Texas Day & Annual Meet and Greet"
@ AGTA Las Vegas Convention Center
Saturday of Vegas Jewelry Week!**

**Calling all Texas Jewelers to Spend Saturday
@ The Las Vegas Convention Center & then
Join the TJA for our Annual**

MEET & GREET

**6 - 8 pm at the
Las Vegas Convention Center
Room S233**

Followed by a no host dinner at

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FLAMINGO HOTEL
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We look forward to seeing you!

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