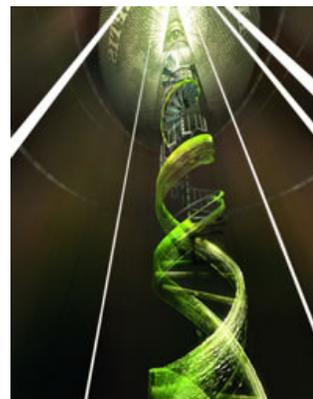


For Immediate Release
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AGA Tucson Conference to Highlight Newest Technologies and Gem Challenges

From new treatment discoveries to gemstone traceability, the Accredited Gemologists Association (AGA) annual Tucson conference will offer today's gemologist revelations and thought-provoking conversation about the direction of our trade, on February 5, 2020 at the Tucson Marriott University Park Hotel Conference Center.

AGA's program will again be a full day of gemological topics including hands on workshop opportunities followed by the evening Gala and presentation of the 2020 Bonanno Award for Excellence in Gemology.



Newly Discovered Gem Treatments

Gems historically assumed to be untreated are now being re-examined with some very interesting discoveries. Dr. Aaron Palke, Senior Research Gemologist at GIA will share ongoing research being conducted, particularly on spinels and garnets. Through its treatment of gems at various temperature levels, GIA is cataloging changes to internal features and other measured responses. This preemptive approach allows them to better determine what treatment has occurred to stones submitted to the lab. Dr. Palke earned his Ph.D. in geology from Stanford University.

Environmental Mineralogy

The ubiquitous minerals and oxides beneath our feet and in our waters have an impact on our well-being. Our interactions affect the planet as a whole and our lives, in particular. Dr. Jeffrey Post will explore this fascinating newer science with some of the tools only recently available for their complex analysis. He will also treat us to a look at some of the gem additions to our National collection at the Smithsonian. Dr. Post holds a Ph.D. from Arizona State University with a specialty in geochemistry and is Curator for the National Gem and Mineral Collection at the Smithsonian.

Gemstone DNA

Due diligence, tracking and traceability have moved to the forefront of the gem and jewelry world and Dr. Laurent Cartier of SSEF is one of the leading experts in that arena. The public, banking institutions seeking to reduce risk, and the governments of many gem-producing countries are all demanding detailed information and greater transparency at each step of the journey from the mine to the finished jewel. Dr. Cartier will explore effective testing protocols that combine existing gemological approaches like geographical origin with DNA fingerprinting to trace organic and crystalline materials. This presentation will focus on what this means for gemologists, how they can be involved in the process and contribute to making greater transparency and traceability a reality. Dr. Laurent holds his Ph.D. from Basel University, focused on pearl farming and traceability.

Prized Jade of China

A longtime AGA contributor, Richard Hughes, Lotus Gemology will provide a glimpse into the true essence of what jade means to the Asian market. Westerners look to jade's color and gemological properties, but Asians look to jade's virtues. The Hetian "mutton fat" nephrite jade of western China can have enormous value and Dick will enlighten us to this important gem and the master carvers who bring it to life. Some of the treatments to jades and their detections will also be addressed. Mr. Hughes is a foremost expert on ruby and sapphire and has been recognized world-wide for his contributions to the understanding of gemstones. He has had a long-standing interest in the history, properties and appreciation of Asian jades.

Hands-on Workshops

Two *sign-up* workshops will provide use of the spectroscope with Clair Scragg, and optionally, portable color filters with Samantha Lloyd. Scragg intends to get beginners over their spectroscope fears and veterans to advance their skills with an instrument that may reveal identity where others fail. Color filters are often overlooked by gemologists but have numerous applications in the right hands. Lloyd will educate her students on the most valuable applications and favorites of the Gem-A instructors. These workshops are limited to 20 students each. Scragg is an FGA who has instructed the world-over in gemology and instrument use. Lloyd is an FGA with Gem-A and is offering her second AGA workshop.

Those not registered for either of the above workshops will attend an in-depth look at organic materials with Eric Fritz, paying particular attention to the identification of coral and ivory and the legal implications for each. Fritz is an FGA with the University of Arizona Gem and Mineral Museum. His extensive collection of organic gems will enlighten students to the attributes of this specialty area of gemology.

Conference registration includes continental breakfast, light lunch & the AGA Annual Gala & Dinner featuring great networking opportunities, music, dance floor & the presentation of the Antonio C. Bonanno Award for Excellence in Gemology. Early registration fees through January 28, 2020 provide substantial savings online at www.accreditedgemologists.org.