DON'T MISS OUT!

At this time of year we turn to promoting our major event and benefit to AGA members; our Tucson conference. The conference this year will be held February 7, 8, 9th at the Hotel Park Tucson, and looks to be one of the best ever. We are featuring speakers who are tops in their respective field. Some of the topics have never been presented before. The presentation by Laurie Conner of Crystallume will deal with the process and detection of a treatment never before highlighted at any conference; coating diamond, by a vapor deposition process, over virtually any surface (including Cubic Zirconia). The possibilities in using this process are only limited by the imagination. The section on Synthetic Emerald being presented by Robert Crowningshield will deal with material brand new to the market and will provide special information on separation and identification of this as well as other major synthetics. Dr. Shigley's presentation will give definite technique to help identify the new "Sumitomo" synthetic diamond. Betty Parker Simpson will offer a system to deal with jade valuation and she will have numerous samples on hand. The discussions on heat treatment by Al Molina and treatment disclosure by Robert Crowningshield will cover a topic critical to all of us. Michelle Hallier's "Period Jewelry" will assist you in attempting to identify and appraise antique and estate jewelry. Tom Gorman's diamond discussion will highlight present market conditions as well as deal with the controversial subject of "ideal" cutting. C.R. "Cap" Beesley has returned from Pakistan having spent a great deal of time (under fire) with the UN team and has brand new information on detecting country of origin, and of course Dr. Nassau will offer a spectacular presentation on synthetics with some very surprising data on the role of synthetics in the jewelry market. This year our honored guests will be, for lunch time, Sallie Morton (of international reputation) and Virginia L. Carter (Judith Osmer requested Virginia speak on her behalf). Sunday evening we are honoring Mr. Liddicoat and have planned an evening event (for almost the same price as the "little weenie" cocktail reception), also a first.

We have made our Tucson conference a hallmark by which other conferences compare themselves. It takes alot of hard work and dedication to put these together. A special thanks to Al Molina and B.J. Caldwell for their hours and hours of work and to Dana Richardson for putting all this press material together. Thanks to Pam Abramson for her press releases and a super special thanks to my wife and kids for putting up with me during this time and, as they always do, stuffing and stamping all these letters. This year our new assistant editor, Kevin Wood will be on hand to meet and greet you and our technical video staff of Steve Wesson and Cortney Balzan will be there to tape the entire conference. The executive board meeting will be held Sunday the 7th from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m., and anyone is welcome to address the board with ideas, problems, questions, etc.. Our annual membership meeting will be Monday afternoon the 8th from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m., and this year we look forward, as always, to hearing from all of you and seeing you at the meeting. AGA exists ONLY because of your support. Won't you please join us in Tucson for a gemological event not soon to be forgotten. Time is short and we are filling up fast so call TODAY for reservations. Please contact:

Robert L. Rosenblatt
President, AGA
59 South Main Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111
(801) 364-3667

*By the way American Airlines will provide you with courtesy bookings (guaranteed lowest fares) on any airlines if they don't service your route, so use the special toll free number provided in your last update. Or if you lost it call:
American Airlines Meeting Saver Fare
1-800-433-1790 Ask For Star File # S-82231
"BLACK MONDAY ?"

Apparently "black Monday" and the stock market crash had little if any impact on the public's buying habits this last Christmas. At least that is what the national journals like "The Wall Street Journal" and other retail publications tell us. National jeweler will do a poll as will JCK no doubt. But we wanted to know for ourselves.

How did you fare this Christmas selling season? We would very much like to take a poll and ask of our members: Overall how was your holiday selling season? Did you meet your goals? Did you fall short or exceed last years sales? What was your hottest item and what simply didn't move? How will you buy for the rest of the year. What trends in fashion will you follow and stock for? How was your year overall? Please answer these specific questions and make any other comments or observations you may have and forward them to the president's office in the post paid envelope. We will publish the results in the next UPDATE.

THE CORNERSTONE IS COMING

Typically right after Tucson we start to compile the next issue of the CORNERSTONE. We will feature many highlights from Tucson but also would like to include other articles. If you have any suggestions for the upcoming issue including any change in format or content you might like to see, please send it in to the office of the president. YOU TOO CAN BE PUBLISHED! All you have to do is send it in. We look forward to hearing from you.

ACCREDITED LAB PROGRAM ALREADY A SUCCESS

Thanks to all of you who sent in the Accredited Laboratory applications so fast.

From the looks of it this program received great favor and interest from many of you. In fact we have a backlog of applications to process. PLEASE don't be impatient if your support material is a little slow in coming. In addition we had to change printers in mid-stream, so not all of the collateral is ready yet. We vow to rush this to all of you who applied and received approval for the Accredited Lab. Let us hear from you if you have questions or problems.

ELECTIONS

It won't be long before your current board of governors and board of directors will have served their two year term. This seems a distant future, but really it's just around the corner. This year at the board meeting in Tucson we will decide who the nominating committee will be and look at just how this committee should handle the elections according to the constitution. If you have someone you would like to run, or you yourself would like to be on either board, or the nominating committee, please contact me immediately. AGA is a very important organization to the industry and its future is in the hands of you. Care enough to send in a nomination and vote when the time comes. Believe me it matters!

A CHANGING INDUSTRY

I recently enrolled in the GIA's two one week classes; Gem Identification and Diamonds. It had been about seven years since I had taken these classes, and as a seller, buyer and appraiser of gems and jewelry, and admittedly using mostly GIA's grading systems, I decided to brush up. I was somewhat skeptical of the benefit considering the price of the courses, but figured at the very least, a nice break of routine and a chance to review couldn't hurt. Well believe me, I was very surprised to find just how different these courses are now.

The "NEW" Diamond course of GIA's has drawn some recent fire from groups such as AGS claiming a downgrading of attitude concerning "ideal" proportion. Also it has been two years since GIA really put their Colored Stone Grading course on the market and this should have some impact on the Gem Ident portion as well.
At the risk of sounding like an advertisement for GIA (which this is not), I thought you might like to hear some comments as to "WHAT'S NEW" in these two courses since seven years past. Also I would strongly recommend to any of you in this situation, a review only for the sake of honing in on your grading tolerance, is well worth the price.

In the Diamond Course:

It's true - no more "ideal" proportions as the "standard" by which to judge all cut. However in all fairness I must say that GIA does not stress an alternate standard or suggest a substitute. It merely shows "ideal" cut as one of many cuts that are used and focuses more on how to judge proportions as they stand rather than as a comparison to a "standard".

There are some new plotting symbols; i.e. indented natural, feather (no more cleavage), twinning whisk, grain center.

There is a real emphasis on "look at the stone" before you start to tear it apart with numbers and believe it or not, even a novice can visually estimate crown angle, table size and yes, even color, within very close tolerance by the end of class.

There are no more split grades.

The rating for polish and symmetry is changed and now requires a verbal description; i.e. very good, good, fair.

The good old "bulls eye" chart for pavilion depth percent is gone.

You now should look in three directions to judge color in a fancy shape.
If a fancy cut appears dark face up the actual body color grade may be adjusted downward.

There is a section on how to judge fancy color with the color master.

There are new charts for weight estimation.

There are verbal descriptions for color and clarity ratings on the work sheet.

There are four new tests for detecting diamond simulants: The Black Box Test, The Huff Test, The Flash Test and the Rub Test.

In The Gem Ident Course:

The way you describe the color of the stones; i.e. hue, tone modifying color goes first and in lower case; i.e. yG = yellow green.

They are trying to change the term "ALEXANDRITE LIKE" as it pertains to gems and synthetics other than chrysoberyl and instead use "CHANGE OF COLOR". So you would have change of color synthetic corundum or sapphire and not synthetic alexandrite like sapphire.

Use the word "heft" for asimulation of specific gravity.

You should always start your R.I. reading without magnification and use magnification only to determine birefringence.

The R.I. liquid is placed on the back metal part of the stage and the stone placed on the drop and drug to the hemicylinder, not lifted from the drop and placed or not placing the drop on the glass.

The manual is all new and organized by R.I. and "most commonly confused". This new manual alone is worth the price of the course.

Use of a penlight is now regular practice especially to highlight gas bubbles.

No longer is one test alone proof positive (bulls eye interference figure is proof of quartz - remember?) in testing gems. The new attitude is "Proof when present if used in conjunction with other tests".

A three phase inclusion is no longer proof of natural emerald.

Judge synthetic versus natural by using an overall observation of the senses first before you go to the instruments.

The term genuine is not the same as the term natural and genuine should not be used to indicate a gem of natural versus created origin.

These are just a few of the more obvious changes that struck me and perhaps you may already know this stuff. Many of you may be newer graduates and this might all be old hat, but to us old timers this is new stuff and well worth getting to know.

The field of gemology as a formal science is now global and changing every day. We can not afford to stagnate or lag behind if we expect to stay ahead and prosper. Don't waste any opportunity to advance your education or career.

ACCREDITED GEMOLOGISTS ASSOCIATION
You owe it to yourself and your customer to stay at the leading edge of this newborn field in science. AGA can help! We only need input from you to find out how. Let us hear from you today.

MASTER GEMOLOGIST APPRAISER LIVES

The Master Gemologist Appraiser program now under the direction of the American Society of Appraisers is alive and well. The program is in the rewrite stage and will soon be completely revised in application and course content. The corresponding college program in Valuation Science at Lindenwood College is also drawing a lot of attention and should flourish with the right direction. ASA is offering a Master Gemologist Appraiser three day course on February 5, 6, 7th at the Hotel Park Tucson (details enclosed) as well as a one day seminar on Wednesday February 10th. Although AGA is no longer involved in the administration of these programs we do take a keen interest in their future and definitely have an interest in their success, if only for the benefit of the industry in general. If you have an inclination to become a professional appraiser, this simply is the best program around and we urge you to take the course.

You may also want to join me in giving a long deserved and just round of applause and thanks to the original designers and authors of the "MGA" program; Mr. Donald Palmieri, Mr. Joseph Tenhagen, Mr. Neil Cohen, and later followed in hard effort by Al Molina, and David Atlas as well as contributions by Anna Miller and all the graduate "MGA's". Especially we want to thank Donald Palmieri who devoted a major chunk of time and capital to the program while it was with AGA. Thank you one and all for the success of this program in the past and hopefully in its future.

WHAT'S NEXT?

As we approach a new year for AGA we look to the rank and file of our members for ideas and suggestions of what direction AGA will take. We are always on the lookout for new projects and worthwhile endeavors. We end this year in good shape financially, with a great Tucson planned, new members, our own electronic bulletin board, a great publication, new speakers bureau, a new supplier member category, a new accredited lab program, new desktop publishing capabilities, a great board and wonderful committees. There is nothing we can't accomplish with all this going for us. I would like to urge you all to write, phone or log on, and let us know how we are doing, what you would like to see, what can we do for you, what did we do right or wrong and where do we go from here? We need you to tell us what your needs are and how AGA can better serve you. I will be happy to entertain any ideas and really look forward to hearing from all of you soon. I wish you all a great and successful new year and the best to you and your families.
Mr. Beesley is president and founder of American Gemological Laboratories. He is an internationally recognized authority on colored stone identification, grading and evaluation. He is credited with developing a variety of gemological courses, instrumental techniques and training materials, including establishing GIA’s 6 month resident program on the east coast.

Mr. Beesley's lab enjoys an international reputation for country of origin determinations, treatment detection and colored stone research. He is the developer of the colored stone grading system Color Scan.

Ms. Carter is a partner/Co-Owner of the J.O. Crystal Company, engaged in the manufacture, promotion and world-wide distribution of what many believe to be the world's finest cultured rubies and emeralds. She joined the company in August of 1987.

Before becoming involved in the crystal industry, Ms. Carter was a flying officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force, performed laboratory studies into the properties of atmospheric gases, and designed and flew experiments on satellites to study the properties of the high atmosphere.

From 1973, until her merge with J.O., Ms. Carter was the Sr. Vice President, Drama, Embassy Television.

Ms. Conner, Sales and Marketing Manager at Crystallume in Palo Alto, CA, is currently responsible for all marketing activities at Crystallume in connection with the exciting new thin-film diamond technology. One of her activities is to identify, assess and pursue the various market opportunities for thin-film diamond with potential military, industrial and scientific users. Prior to Crystallume, Ms. Conner spent six years in sales and marketing management at Raychem, involved primarily in the introduction of new materials-based technologies to various markets.

Ms. Conner holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from Duke University, a Master of Science in Engineering from Stanford University and an MBA from Harvard University. She has admittedly little experience in the field of gemology but confesses to a high degree of interest in acquiring gems, especially of the larger sizes!
Mr. Crowningshield is a native of Colorado Springs, Co. and later moved to California where he was graduated from San Diego State College in 1942 with a degree in Natural Science. Immediately after graduation he was inducted into the U.S. Navy. He served as a naval navigator, visiting such gem producing countries as Ceylon, India and Australia. Upon his release from military service, Mr. Crowningshield enrolled in several courses at GIA, earning his diploma as a GG in 1948. He joined the GIA staff in 1947 and became Director of its New York branch in 1951, where he has directed gem identification services ever since. In 1977 Mr. Crowningshield was named Vice President of the GIA and its wholly-owned subsidiary Gem Trade Laboratory, Inc. Mr. Crowningshield is also a C.G. of the AGS and an FGA. As one of the U.S. delegates to the International Gemmological Conference, he has contributed numerous papers at the meetings held every two years in a different country. He is a frequent contributor to jewelry-trade publications and is widely known for his lectures and radio and television appearances. In 1983 he was co-recipient of the AGS Shipley Award.

Tom Gorman, GG, CG, is Vice President of the firm founded in 1946 by Tom's grandfather, the late John Keppie, which markets Ideal Cut diamonds to the retail trade. Tom serves both as Chairman of the Diamond Standards Committee and as a director of the American Gem Society. Tom, a management-finance graduate, is involved with marketing, sales, diamond sorting and data processing for the firm.

Ms. Hallier is a GG, FGA, Senior member ASA, Master Gemologist Appraiser and Registered Jeweler from AGS. She has her Jewelry Sales Certificate from GIA. With six years of experience she is currently a professional jewelry appraiser and consultant, an Administrative Assistant Manager of Jewels by Olson, Vice-President and Appraiser of MAG International and Vice-President of Intercontinental Gemological Laboratory, Inc. Ms. Hallier appears as an invited guest speaker at seminars, is a member of many local and national jewelry organizations and Qualified Appraiser for the IRS and Expert Witness for the Better Business Bureau.
Mr. Molina is a GG, FGA, Senior Member AGA, Master Gemologist Appraiser, Registered Jeweler from AGS and has his Jewelry Sales Certificate from GIA. He spent four years as manager and buyer for the Chicago Import Export Gem Company and six years as a professional jewelry appraiser and consultant at which he is currently involved.

Mr. Molina is the Vice-President and Manager of Jewels by Olson and the President of Intercontinental Gemological Laboratory, Inc. He appears as an invited guest speaker at Gem and Jewelry trade shows, seminars and workshops on appraising gems, jewelry and discussing the latest gemological trends and developments. He assists law enforcement agencies in recovering stolen gems and jewelry, serves as an expert witness in court cases involving jewelry evaluation and appears as witness for U.S. Custom Service as Gem Authority.

Mr. Molina was the President of the GIA Alumni Association from 1985 to 1987.

Ms. Morton started out in the jewelry field in 1953 when she and her watchmaker husband opened a watch repair shop inside a grocery store in San Jose. She has been in Town and Country Village for the last twenty-four years and expects to be moving nine miles away, to Los Gatos, in February. In 1982, after several armed robberies, they assembled the first automatic two door interlocking system with a metal detector in between.

A member of AGS, Ms. Morton became an RG in 1961, a CG in 1962, President of AGS from 1977 to 1979, recipient of the AGS Robert M. Shipley Award in 1982. She was the recipient of the Women's Jewelry Assoc. "Hall of Fame" in 1986 and was on the Board of Directors of the Jewelers Vigilance Committee from 1977-85. Ms. Morton currently has a part time position with the JVC as Field Executive, speaking at conventions and shows.

Dr. Nassau is a pioneer in laser technology with twenty years' laboratory experience in crystal growth. He has 14 patents and has written over 200 technical publications and many articles. He is a fellow of the Mineralogical Association of America, serves on the executive board of the American Association of Crystal Growth, is a member of the Board of Governors of the GIA and a member of the Board of Directors of the Gem Instruments Corp.

Dr. Nassau is a frequent guest speaker for the AGS, IGA and many other groups.
Dr. Shigley is the director of research at the Gemological Institute of America in Santa Monica, California. He has a bachelor's degree in geology from the University of California, Berkeley, and a doctorate in geology from Stanford University. On the staff of GIA for the past five years, he currently directs GIA's research department in the investigation of natural, treated and synthetic gem materials. He is also one of the coordinators at GIA of a project to produce a gemstone locality atlas in conjunction with the Commission on Gem Materials of the International Mineralogical Association.

Ms. Simpson, "The Jade Lady", was originally a silversmith and teacher of jewelry design. She has taught and studied Oriental art and philosophy for over thirty years. As an antique dealer she specializes in fine jades and jewelry. She also conducts lectures and seminars. Recently she lectured at the Gemological Institute of America's jade seminar in Santa Monica, CA. As an international consultant on jade, its symbolism, and jade as an artform, Ms. Simpson publishes "The Jade Collector", a bi-monthly newsletter with an international circulation. Currently she is completing a book, also called "The Jade Collector", which is a study of jade as an artform.

Through her varied experiences and extensive research, Betty Parker Simpson has developed an individual style in combining the best of the East and West.