



# CORNERSTONE

A publication of the

Accredited Gemologists Association

Spring 2016

Dear Fellow AGA Member,

I would like to provide you with this brief update about the AGA and also invite you to take a couple of minutes to share your feedback via the brief survey.

**Membership Growth** - First, I am pleased to report that during the past two years membership has grown at a rate of about 10% per year. This year in Tucson, AGA signed up our 200th voting member and our ranks have increased since then. The Board of Governors is dedicated to growing the association and asks that members continue to encourage colleagues to learn more about the AGA. Although the majority of AGA members reside in North America, the association does enjoy the support of members in South America, Europe, Africa, Middle East and Asia.

**Organizational Information & New Programs** - As many of you know two years ago the AGA moved its headquarters to California and incorporated as a 501c3 nonprofit organization. AGA's vice president Teri Brossmer and I worked closely with Executive Administrator Jan Giamanco during that process, reviewing and revising the documents that were presented to that newly elected Board for consideration. The documents were then filed with the State of California and IRS. Following the approval of AGA's nonprofit status, the Board of Governors approved a number of new programs inspired by the AGA mission statement. The main thrust of the association's educational efforts will continue to be achieved through gemological conferences. However, the association is also currently pursuing additional initiatives that will benefit the field of gemology, as well as further elevate AGA's standing in the international gemological community. The AGA Gemological Education Scholarships and AGA Research Grants are two such examples.

**Bonanno Award** - There is still time for nominations for the 2017 Bonanno Award. This award is voted on and funded by AGA Membership

**Educational Scholarship and Research Grant** - The committee, chaired by Heidi Harders, was charged with developing & administering the process by which financial support could be extended to qualified persons interested in a career in gemology and also independent research gemologists. Through these and similar efforts the AGA will continue to enhance its goals of promoting and supporting gemological education and critical gemological research. Scholarship applications are currently being accepted. However, details pertaining to the research grants are still being finalized. The grant qualifications and process will be announced later this year. Please visit the website or contact Jan at AGA headquarters for further details.

**2016 Tucson Conference & AGTA Booth** - This year in Tucson AGA held another successful conference. We owe thanks to the speakers: Andrew Cody, *Cody Opal*; Claire Mitchell, *Gem-A*; Dr. Daniel Nyfeler, *Gubelin Gem Lab*; Richard Hughes, *Lotus Gemology*; Shawn O'Sullivan, *Eternity Emerald* and caving expert Marc Beverly. Thanks also go out to all the members that volunteered to help throughout the day. And thanks to our Platinum sponsor Art Samuels - EstateBuyers.com, Gold sponsors *Gem-A* and *JIBNA* insurance and Bronze sponsor *The Canadian Gemmological Association*.

I hope that those of you that tried the "gem challenge" offered during the conference breaks as well as at the AGA's booth at the AGTA show enjoyed it. This year's sight id challenge featured diamond and its simulants. It was designed and funded by Board member Art Samuels. Next year we hope to offer