



The District of Gemology

Volume 4 Issue 2

Spring 1997

Lorin Atkinson Remembered

By Martin Fuller

I remember when the meaning of the adage, "Only the good die young" dawned on me. It was when President Kennedy was shot in Dallas. I knew then, that no matter at what the age a person is when the last page is turned, if that person was an important part of your life, he or she was leaving you too soon - a friend was too young to die.

Lorin Atkinson was a pillar of our alumni chapter since its inception. She was always at the center of the decision-making and the fun. Lorin Atkinson passed away on the morning of March 16th, 1997. She was 58 years young.



Lorin Atkinson at one of our monthly chapter meetings.

This article is difficult for me to write for a number of reasons, and it is the reason this issue is late. For one, Lorin edited most of the material I've written for the newsletter. She was always available, trading faxes and phone calls in the wee hours of the night, offering insight and humor, as well as patient guidance as I struggled with the subtleties of my native tongue.

I can only share my experiences with Lorin in this humble tribute, but many of you, I'm sure, have fond memories of your own which you are welcome to share in future issues if you wish.

Lorin's presence in the alumni was never overpowering, but it was steadfast, and solid as a rock. Her temper was tempered; her smile, laughter, and wisdom were always available. Her love of the jewelry industry and her colleagues never had to be put into words; for her actions spoke more loudly. Her life was dedicated to her profession and to her children.

Paving the way with art, career, and single parenthood, well before it became the norm, Lorin became an independent gemologist-appraiser - one of the pioneering women in this field. She was probably inspired to become a gemologist when I (before I was a gemologist) misidentified her tsavorite as synthetic spinel. Somehow she never

(Continued on page 2)

President's Letter

By Fred Ward

We all mourn the loss of Lorin Atkinson, our colleague and dear friend. She was a guiding light for this chapter and one of its strongest supporters. Lorin worked tirelessly to make it grow and be better. She personally recruited many of the current members who are active in our group, including me. Her smile and her enthusiasm will be sorely missed by this GIA chapter, by her appraisal group, and by her many friends.

In honor of her memory, we have named our new chapter scholarship The Lorin Atkinson Memorial Scholarship. The deadline for receiving applications for the \$500 scholarship is July 1. Details are on page 3.

(Continued on page 2)

Inside This Issue

MARTIN FULLER

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| <i>Gary Werner</i> | <i>Pg. 6</i> |
| <i>Critical Angle</i> | <i>Pg. 7</i> |
| <i>Joyce Jonas</i> | <i>Pg. 10</i> |

JIM WALKER

| | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Tsavorite Mining</i> | <i>Pg. 4</i> |
|-------------------------|--------------|

SPOT READINGS

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Opals by Fred Ward</i> | <i>Pg. 8</i> |
|---------------------------|--------------|

DAVIA KRAMER

| | |
|---|---------------|
| <i>Amber Event at Museum of Natural History</i> | <i>Pg. 11</i> |
|---|---------------|

President's Letter*(Continued from page 1)*

On a happier note, I am pleased to report two bits of news related to long-term chapter supporter and member Howard Milliren. Howard is celebrating his 80th birthday. In honor of this event, Howard decided to give our chapter a present. He asked his closest relatives to make a donation to the DC Chapter instead of giving him a birthday present. Four have responded, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Howard and Pearl Milliren for this creative and generous gesture.

Both GIA classes that we had specially tailored for our chapter were



President Fred Ward keeps a sharp eye out on his recent trip to Burma.

sell-outs. We had a totally new synthetic diamond presentation this year as well as a made-just-for-us challenge to identify gems using only a microscope. If you have ideas on what you would like for 1998, let me know now so we can get GIA working on new classes. Our chapter field trip to the Corcoran to view the Romanov Jewels was a huge success. We plan a similar special private tour soon for the Smithsonian's big new amber exhibit.

Finally, I have mentioned upcoming elections at the Board meeting and at the April chapter meeting. I want the widest possible audience for my concern to assure we have a solid new officer slate to keep chapter momentum moving. We have to have a slate in October for a November election for the new officers' two-year terms. We need people who agree to work diligently to keep high-quality speakers coming, to maintain a smooth-running communication system between members, friends, and with GIA, to keep our membership rolls high, and to assure the chapter's future success. This is no small task. No matter what current officers do about running, we will need a new secretary and a new vice president. These are critical decisions. We need suggestions now about people who are willing to make a commitment to the DC chapter.

*(Continued from page 1)*

held that against me (but she never let me forget it, either!). Lorin's love and dedication to our field brought her rightfully to the esteemed position of leadership as the president of the G.I.A. Alumni chapter in Washington, D.C., where she was instrumental in guiding the growth of the chapter, and developing the solid relationship our chapter had with G.I.A. headquarters, then headed by Gary Roskin, now with EGL in L.A. Lorin's grooming, encouragement, and continuing support led to a succession of successful boards of officers, culminating in the award winning chapter we enjoy today.

Lorin's last official posts with our chapter were naturally as Historian, and as board Member-at-Large. We must keep in mind, that these are labors of love. She was never paid to give so freely of her time and talent. And in her copious spare time, while not serving her numerous appraisal accounts in the Washington area or helping her children through college and life, she put together the Appraisal Group - a unique concept in which competitors would come together under one roof to share their knowledge in order to better our profession.

Lorin E. Atkinson, proud mother and grandmother, is survived by her three children, their children, and our chapter - all of whom are the far better for her having been here.

**District of Gemology
Newsletter Advertising
Rates**

Rates are per issue. The District of Gemology is published four times a year. Call Bill Wise at (301)843-5617. Next submission deadline: July 15.

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Full Page Ad</i> | \$175.00 |
| <i>Half Page Ad</i> | \$100.00 |
| <i>Quarter Page Ad</i> | \$ 50.00 |
| <i>Eighth Page Ad</i> | \$ 25.00 |

Board of Directors - Contact Phone Numbers

Save for Future Reference

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| President - Fred Ward..... | (301) 983-1990 |
| Vice-President - Michele Zabel..... | (301) 365-0712 |
| Secretary - John Lees..... | (540) 882-4742 |
| Treasurer - Tom Mangan..... | (703) 780-0317 |
| Historian - Lorin Atkinson..... | |
| Newsletter Editor - Bill Wise..... | (301) 843-5617 |
| E-mail Newsletter Items To:..... | wwise@juno.com |

D.C. Chapter Announces The Lorin Atkinson Memorial Scholarship

By Fred Ward

The Washington, DC Chapter of the GIA Alumni Association is pleased to announce a new scholarship that will honor the memory of Lorin Atkinson, long a member of the chapter, as well as one of its original organizers, a past president, board member, and the chapter historian.



Lorin Atkinson at a monthly chapter meeting last year.

Starting now this chapter will give an annual \$500 scholarship to be used as partial or full payment for a GIA class or course. Eligibility is open to all with an interest in gems, gemology, and jewelry. Entry rules are simple.

To apply for this scholarship, type your application essay on one side of a single piece of 8 1/2 x 11-inch paper. In it state clearly why you want the

scholarship, what class or course you would like to take, and what your plans are for using this new education. We would like to know a little about you, your goals, and how we can help you achieve them.

All applications must be received by July 1, 1997. Mail your entry to the address below, and put the word "Scholarship" in clear letters on the outside of the envelope. The chapter board members will read all entries and declare a winner at the August meeting of the DC GIA Chapter. Over the coming years we hope to assist a number of our associates to increase



Lorin with Michele Zabel and Melanie Marts at the annual holiday auction and dinner (1996). Ira Kramer is in the background.

their gemological education and progress in the trade. This new scholarship is one step toward that goal. Tell your friends and associates in the trade about the Lorin Atkinson Scholarship, give them a copy of this announcement, and help us to help others.

Mail your Scholarship entry to:

**Fred Ward, President,
Washington DC GIA Alumni Chapter
7106 Saunders Court
Bethesda, MD 20817**

Tsavorite Update from the Bridges' Scorpion Mine

By Jim Walker

The first thing you learn from working with Campbell Bridges is how to think on your feet; if you do not, you are quickly left behind. However, when Mr. Bridges asked me if I would like to help with his mining operations in Africa, I had no problem coming up with a rapid reply. I have always wanted to travel to Kenya, mostly to see the game, but since I have been working in the gem industry, Tsavorite has become my biggest attraction to the dark continent.

Three years ago I met Campbell and Judith Bridges at a Washington D.C. GIA meeting. Mr. Bridges was giving a talk about Tsavorite. His slides of Africa, depicting the gem treasures of his mine, the wildlife, and the adventure of being an explorer, intrigued me. Not long after that meeting, I began working for the Bridges through Mrs. Bridges' company, here in Virginia, Tsavorite USA Inc.



Campbell Bridges, discoverer of Tsavorite, feeds a friend.

I went on my first trip to the Bridges' Scorpion Mine in Kenya in January 1997 for two months. I soon realized just how undervalued Tsavorite is. This gem is not mined by the tens or



The author in the Bridges' Scorpion Tsavorite mine in Kenya.

hundreds of kilos per day, but by grams. (Cuttable material.) As I was put through a crash course in Tsavorite mining, I experienced first hand the amount of time and labor that goes into the mining of Tsavorite. It is now obvious to me that Tsavorite definitely warrants its current price.

In addition to this, the physical properties of Tsavorite make it extremely desirable to jewelers and manufacturers. Tsavorite is much more durable than emerald (enabling it to be invisibly set), has an R.I. of 1.74, a dispersion of .028, and is 100% natural. This combination is a rarity in today's gem market.

While in Bridges Exploration Ltd.'s Nairobi offices, I saw tremendous interest from the U.S., German, Japanese and Thai markets to make Tsavorite a mainstream commercial gemstone. Many of the dealers and manufacturers stated their growing disenchantment with the emerald market as their reason for moving into Tsavorite.

In the past, the lack of supply and an uncertainty for future reserves were the reasons these same dealers and manufacturers shied away from making Tsavorite a commercial gemstone. However, the Bridges' mines have been producing steadily for twenty years and show no signs of tapering off.

As the demand for Tsavorite continues to increase in the trade, we are also seeing a similar trend from the jewelry buying public. It is very apparent that Campbell and Judith Bridges' vision to make Tsavorite the preferred green gemstone of the world is on the cusp of becoming a reality.



Mining for Tsavorite in Kenya.

Tucson Panel

One of the most interesting meetings held each year is the Tucson Panel. Chapter members who attended the Tucson show reported on their findings. The panel provided six different perspectives of the show. They talked about some trends they had noted and showed a variety of cut stones, rough, carvings, and pearls they had bought. They also summarized various lectures and courses that were attended. On the panel this year were Martin Fuller, Davia Kramer, Jerry Root, Lois Berger, John Lees, and Andy Herman. Everyone was entertaining and more than one tall tale was told.



The Tucson Panel sharing their findings and observations at the February 97 meeting.



Carolyn Chappel, Bob Davis, and Melanie Marts at the Tucson Panel Meeting.



Bobby Mann and Helen Serras at the annual Tucson Panel presentation.



Jerry Root and Marty Fuller look at a piece of amber with a record number of insects squeezed inside.

Past Speaker

Turquoise Expert Gary Werner

by Martin Fuller

I don't know how to say this, but I never used to equate turquoise with "smart". Pretty, yes, even handsome, peaceful, ancient, "stabilized", imitated, Persia, Native American, nugget, beads, cabochons - many thoughts and feelings are conjured by the word turquoise, but not smart. And, sad but humanly true, I didn't expect much from our chapter meeting in April, which focused on the subject of Turquoise. That's because I forgot for a brief moment, the caliber of the board of officers that put these programs together.

"Well just how "smart" can the subject of turquoise get?" you may ask. Just spend five minutes in the presence of Gary Werner and you'll tell your friends you've just met the Stephen Hawking of the turquoise industry!

Growing up in the high desert country of southern New Mexico, you look down a lot. Well, it's not just to avoid retinal



Gary Werner shows some of his samples to Pebbie Barnes.

damage - down is where the turquoise is! A nugget here, a nugget there, the old tailings were ripe for picking. Gary had a knack for the nugget, and his penchant for prospecting paid off.



Gary Werner, turquoise expert, spoke to our April 17th meeting. Gary explained treatments, sources, identifying enhancements, and discussed the history of this misunderstood gemstone.

Gary Werner can, by means which appear to the casual observer to be none less than extra sensorial, look at a stone and name the mine that gave it birth. I fathomed he might have a heightened sense of smell, or the tactile facility of a safe-cracker. Whatever it was, he was gifted with turquoise. But a gift is one thing, and "smart" (remember smart?) is another. When one combines a natural gift with an undaunted curiosity and the pursuit of higher learning, as well as surrounding oneself with other smart people, prosperity happens.

Mr. Werner shared his prosperity and love for turquoise with the D.C. Chapter of the G.I.A. Alumni in full force, and

to our great benefit. The collection he brought for our admiration and education was the most comprehensive I have ever seen, containing material from the four corners of the world.

Perhaps of greatest interest to many present, was his in-depth coverage of the history and current state of treatments used to fix color and "stabilize" various grades of turquoise. Gary is a driving force in the disclosure of treatments to the material within the trade and to the public. His slide show on mining in Mexico was delightful and, yes, smart!

The moral of the story could be that "smarts" is where you find it. We found it at the April alumni meeting. By the time you read this review we will also have had our May meeting with Ralph Joseph (see other report). So, I hope to see you at the June. And remember, not all ivory floats!



Gary explains some of the many ways turquoise is treated. He brought a large number of samples and had free specimens for all.

The Critical Angle

As summer approaches, it is not too soon to begin thinking about the up-coming election for a new board of offices for our chapter. Why so early, you ask? There is no time like the present, to consider the very special nature of our chapter. You should think about it - others do!

In my travels to the shows and appraisal conferences, daily I am reminded by other chapter members and non-alumni members of our industry, of the remarkable nature of the Washington, D.C. Chapter of the GIA Alumni Association. People throughout the jewelry world remark on the very interesting members we have, the numbers of meetings with extraordinary guest speakers, the special functions in conjunction with the doorstep programs, the field trips, our directory, our timely, award winning newsletter, our marvelously FUNNY secretary, our budget, and of course our annual Christmas Dinner and Auction extravaganza.

There are few chapters as active as ours, that tend so sincerely to their membership as ours, and that have as much fun as we do. Fun is important. Our business days are stressful. There seems to be less and less time to relax at home. It is important to revitalize the fun and educational aspects of our lives - sharing wit and wisdom with our peers, and this is a major function of our alumni chapter. Remember, if it isn't fun...it isn't fun!

So why think about the election? Because what will happen at the end of the year will be much like what happens to a winning college team when the seniors graduate. Things will change. New people will enter the ranks and new energies will flavor the mix. You may very well enjoy our chapter, and you may have some great ideas to share with regard to its direction and potential. The point is, we need people who want to keep the fun and success as alive as it is today.

Don't kid yourself, it's not easy volunteering - even within a field you love.

Where do you find the time? What are your obligations? Who will you be working with? And what are the rewards? As a past president, vice-president, and newsletter editor, I can tell you that you can do this, and not only survive, but thrive! Yes, therapy helps. An understanding mate is a plus. I wouldn't trade a sleepless night of it for the world. Without challenges we do not grow. Without friendships we do not thrive. Without paychecks, we do not eat, ah, well, but that's another story! The point is, working with the caliber of people that lead our alumni is a wonderful opportunity for fun and personal growth.

The bottom line is, if you, or someone you know, would like to have some fun, learn a lot, and add a wonderful new dimension to your life, do not hesitate to talk to one of the officers about the positions on the ballot. They each offer a different challenge. And there is much need for a supporting cast above and beyond the elected officers. Who knows...There maybe someone out there capable of meeting article deadlines for the newsletter!

Martin

Chapter Wins Awards At Tucson



At left, Fred Ward and Michele Zabel show off the plaques (and a couple of nice masks) for the Chapters awards.

Right: Martin Fuller, Helen Serras-Herman, and Andy Herman at the GIA Awards Dinner in Tucson.



Our hard working Chapter members pulled together to win three major awards at the GIA Awards Dinner in Tucson. We won:

1. Regional Member of the Year - Fred Ward for Region 7
2. Regional Chapter of the Year - for Region 7
3. Chapter Newsletter Award - this is for best in the world (not a region). We won the best newsletter award from all regions.

Spot Readings

OPALS

By J.B. Tavernier

Fred Ward. 1997, *Opals*, Illus., 64 pp. Published by Gem Books Publishers, Bethesda, MD

Opals are the best known of the "phenomenal" stones—those that display special effects through optical properties. These are "the gems that do tricks". Fred Ward takes us through the fascinating history of the geology, prospecting, mining and marketing of these remarkable gems in his latest Gem Series Book, "Opals".

Although opal artifacts from Kenya have been dated from 4000 BC, the Romans were the first to use opal as a gemstone about 100 BC. These stones were from the Hungarian mines (now part of the Slovak Republic) which operated until 1922. Other places which mined opal during ancient times were Mexico, Peru and Honduras, but this material was for domestic consumption only. Since the late 1800s, Australia has supplied about 90% of the world's opal, with about 20 other countries, including the USA, supplying the rest in various types and quality.

Opal can be classified as precious opal with play-of-color, or common opal with no play-of-color. A stone is said to have play-of-color when the various colors displayed shift hues and position as the stone is rotated or as the light source moves. Common opal is also called "potch", and occurs in a variety of colors as well as black and white.

Most of the Hungarian material with which the Europeans were familiar was white with little play of color compared to the brilliant Australian opal. British

gem dealers thought the Australian opal was fake, but Queen Victoria came to its rescue and popularized the gem. South Australia, New South Wales and Queensland are where the opal is mined from a sedimentary basin called the Great Artesian Basin. This was a slowly subsiding area underlying a shallow inland sea in which a great thickness of sands and clayey sediments accumulated during the Jurassic and Cretaceous Periods, which extended from about 200 million years ago to about 70 million years ago. Later, during the Tertiary, the area became desert. Through processes of weathering and reposition the silica was leached by rainfall and redeposited as opal. The mines are mostly located in an arc on the periphery of this basin from Mintabie on the west in South Australia, southeast to Coober Pedy and on to Andamooka. Then to the east in New South Wales is White Cliffs, and farther east, Lightning Ridge. From Lightning Ridge the mines can be found to the northwest in Queensland at Yowah, Quilpie and Opalton.

Traditionally, the trade has used the terms black, semi-black, and white to classify the main varieties of opal. The Australians, however, want to designate the colors as black, dark and light. These terms refer to the body tone, or relative darkness or lightness, once hue and play-of-color have been disregarded. Black opal is the most val-

ued of all, with some individual gems bringing over \$500,000, but it was considered worthless at the turn of the century. This material comes mainly from Lightning Ridge in New South Wales. The only other mine producing opal of similar quality is White Cliffs, 800 km SW, where 20% of the production is black opal. This opal is on a par with Lightning Ridge. Most of the fine black opal is marketed in Japan, with very little going to the USA.

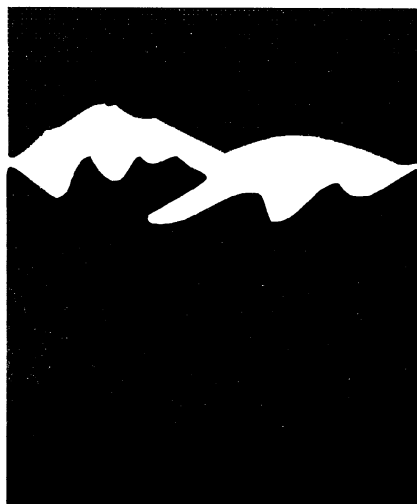
Boulder opal and sandstone opal are found in Queensland. Sandstone opal is a free forming opal in the sandstone, while boulder opal occurs as fracture filling in ironstone. The boulder opal remains attached to the ironstone and is presented as one piece. Early miners tried to separate the opal from the ironstone and were frequently unsuccessful. They did not value it highly at that time, but today it rivals black opal. Ward says boulder opal has intense color and the opaque ironstone brings out the play-of-color in the same way that black body tone or black potch does. Boulder opal offers other advantages: the ironstone makes the piece tough, and also permits it to be split through the seam, giving mirror images.

These matched opals can be very valuable. The three dimensional property of the stone gives designers freedom to customize jewelry. Other varieties of boulder opal are the Yowah nuts, which are opal-filled geodes found in the vicinity of the town of Yowah, and boulder matrix opal, which is ironstone containing precious opal distributed throughout the rock in seams too small

for gems. This makes a very nice decorative stone.

Coober Pedy in South Australia is the largest light opal field in the world, pro-

(Continued on page 9)



(Continued from page 8)

viding most of Australia's light opal production. In general, the opal consists of either large pieces which sell individually, small calibrated solid cabs for affordable jewelry, or thin, pale, fragile pieces for the least expensive jewelry. Incidentally, "Coober Pedy" does not mean "white man in a hole", despite the tradition, but rather "water hole". It is true, though, that most of the miners live and work underground to avoid the intolerable summer temperatures of 120 to 140 degrees. This is made possible because of the soft, easily worked clays of the area.

Mintabie, northwest of Coober Pedy, is an unusual mine in that it produces all three types-black, dark and light. The mining is done both by tunneling and strip mining, but it is moving more towards the latter because of the random distribution of the opal, and the hard, resistant nature of the sandstone.

Andamooka, southeast of Coober Pedy, had been noted for its light opal and crystal opal (transparency with play-of-color), but this production peaked in the 1960's and waned in the 80's. Crystal opal is also mined in several western states in the USA. The Virgin Valley in Nevada produces some spectacular stones, but, unfortunately, they are quite likely to craze. Andamooka is also noted for its matrix opal, which can be treated with sugar and sulfuric acid, or it can be smoked. Both processes darken the background and bring out the play-of-color. Andamooka has another claim which seems to be true. Its opal is not nearly as likely to craze as that from other areas. This is because crazing increases with water content, and opal from this area contains very little water.

Opalized fossils are another Australian product in which the original material has been replaced by opal. Ward's book has some very nice pictures of these critters, and he points out that a high percentage of fossils are precious opal,

some having been made into fine jewelry. Ward describes the various mining methods used from the underground works of Coober Pedy and Lightning Ridge to the surface operation at Quilpie in Queensland. He also describes the very colorful history of the Australian opal fields which reads like something out of our own wild west.

Another active source of opal today is Mexico, which produces a different type of opal; fire opal. These stones are defined by body color, not tone or play-of-color. When play-of-color is present, the stone is called precious Mexican fire opal. Other varieties from Mexico are matrix opal which forms in volcanic rocks called rhyolite, and Leopard opal, which forms in the vesicles of basalt (another volcanic rock) and therefore has the appearance of leopard skin. Caution should be taken when buying Mexican opal, for material from these volcanic rocks are much more likely to craze than opal from sedimentary rocks.

Ward goes on to describe assembled opals, synthetics and simulants, and to give pointers on the care and buying of opal. This is a beautifully illustrated book, well written and so interesting and enjoyable that the layman, jeweler and gemologist will equally value it.



Did You Know?

"A hundred laughs produce about the same aerobic benefit as 10 minutes on a rowing machine or 15 minutes on a stationary bike," says William Fry, professor emeritus of psychiatry at Stanford University.

(Submitted by Davia Kramer).

MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEET

Submitted By Cathy Gaber

Workplace Hazardous Materials
Information System

Woman - A Chemical Analysis

Element: Woman
Symbol: WO2
Discoverer: Adam
Atomic Mass: Accepted as 118 pounds, but known to vary from 100 to 550 pounds
Occurrences: Copious quantities in all urban areas

Physical Properties

1. Surface usually covered with painted film
2. Boils at nothing, freezes without reason
3. Melts if given special treatment
4. Bitter if incorrectly used
5. Found in various states, from virgin metal to common ore
6. Yields to pressure applied to correct points

Chemical Properties

1. Has a great affinity for gold, silver, platinum and precious stones
2. Absorbs great quantities of expensive substances
3. May explode spontaneously without warning and for no reason
4. Insoluble to liquids, but activity is greatly increased by saturation of alcohol
5. Most powerful money-reducing agent known to man

Common Uses

1. Highly ornamental, especially in sports cars and hot tubs
2. Can be a great aid to relaxation

Tests

1. Pure specimen turns rosy pink when discovered in its natural state
2. Turns green when placed beside a better specimen
3. Highly dangerous except in experienced hands
4. Illegal to possess more than one

March Speaker

American Society of Jewelry Historians President Joyce Jonas

by Martin Fuller

Our March meeting brought one of the most sought after speakers on the jewelry lecture circuit to Washington, D. C. Joyce Jonas is the director of the famous "jewelry camp" in Orono, Maine, as well as president of the American Society of Jewelry Historians, Adjutant Professor of Art at N.Y. University, and noted lecturer. Her presentation covered jewelry from 1925 to 1945, including Art Deco, Moderne, and The War Years. Her distinctness was to show the audience how to identify very specific differences between pieces and to place them into an accurate time frame.

Joyce Jonas is not only a passionate academician, skilled speaker and polished presenter of the facts, but she puts on a mean slide show, as well. The

pace was fast - no blinking on this journey! Joyce packed a four hour slide-show and history of jewelry and fashion time-line into a two hour meeting. I am suspended somewhere in the 1950's due to my obligation to depart the scene early,

but my sources tell me the evening was over all too soon, when it did end, at well past ten o'clock! No one likes to see a good thing close. Thanks for coming, Joyce. I kind of like the '50's.



Joyce Jonas, our March speaker, is a jewelry historian with a specialty in antique jewelry. She is the director of the "Maine Antique Jewelry Camp."

FOR SALE

One Polaroid CU-5, Close-Up Camera. The perfect camera for the jewelry industry. This camera lets you make professional quality instant close-up pictures. The camera also boosts preset reproduction ratios, auto framing and focusing, built-in light and precalculated exposure settings. The camera can be portable or stationary. Comes with a carrying case. Excellent condition. Originally \$1000; asking \$500.

One GIA Gem Instruments Polariscope. Excellent/Like New condition. Asking price: \$150.

Call Karen at (703)757-9232 for details.

Fuller & Associates

announces the addition of its

* * *

Silver Appraisal Department

* * *

specializing in

Historic Research & Valuation

of

Domestic & Foreign

Hollowware & Flatware

Sterling, Silver-Plate & Silver-on-Copper

Native American Silver Jewelry and Mexican Jewelry

by appointment

* * *

7921 Jones Branch Dr. Suite 311

McLean, Virginia 22102

(703)442-6690

AMBER:

WINDOW TO THE PAST

By Davia Kramer

A new exhibit, Amber: Window to the Past, opens June 6 at the National Museum of Natural History. There have never been so many amber specimens in any one place. Anyone interested in amber must see this once in a lifetime fabulous exhibit. It is the most comprehensive exhibition of its kind that has ever been mounted and includes 146 fossil specimens. Amber is a history of tens of millions of years. There are individual pieces of amber that have encased a cricket, lizard, scorpion, snail, moth, termites, earthworm, frog, bee, centipede, leaf, and a mushroom. There is even a specimen of a pair of craneflies preserved while mating. This exhibit blends both science and art as there are amber artifacts from the Stone Age to the 18th century.

The first section shows ambers from around the world (including New Jersey!). The amber from New Jersey is from the Cretaceous Period, 90 - 94 Million years ago, containing the oldest insects. There is also a 35 pound piece of translucent amber from Burma - the largest of its type in the world.

There is a diorama in the second section of a rainforest in the Dominican Republic - 20 million years ago. The trees are dripping with sap, there is the sound of insects and water. There are bugs and animals on the trees about to be encased - to become AMBER. There are ten cases around the diorama containing the finest preserved fossils. These have been lent by the American Museum of Natural

History and a private collection that is the finest in world.

The last section is Amber in Art. Amber was the original precious substance. There are amber carvings from the Stone Age that are on loan from Copenhagen. Amber was considered mysterious because it would gather a static charge, was extremely light weight and would burn. The ancient Etruscans considered amber more precious than gold. There are Etruscan carved amber artifacts on display. Also on display is the Drummond Collection of amber carvings from the 17th to 19th Centuries.

This section also contains original objects from the famous Russian Amber Room along with reconstructed amber panels. The Amber Room is the largest masterpiece in amber and was considered the eighth wonder of the world (at least by the Russians). The panels of the room were created between 1701 and 1712 by Polish and Danish craftsmen for the German King Frederick I of Prussia for his banquet room in his main palace in Berlin. These mosaic panels had more than 100,000 pieces of cut and polished amber inlaid into oak - to make them removable. In 1716 Peter I (the Great) visited Germany, saw the amber panels and was very impressed with them. In 1717, Frederick William (son of Frederick I) made the amber panels a gift to Russia. (Peter needed to reciprocate so he gave Frederick William, 55 tall guardsmen. Frederick William was short and Peter wanted to improve the

Germans). Peter I, put the amber panels in his study in the old Winter Palace. Empress Elizabeth moved them to her new summer residence the Ekaterinsky Palace. A room of 100 meters in the Western part of the palace was used. One of the walls was all windows, the others were hung with the amber panels and mirrors. The sunlight streaming in created a wonderful effect, the amber shimmered. In 1941 the panels were stolen by the Nazis and delivered to Konigsburg. They disappeared in 1945. The Russians opened a workshop in 1979, employing 30 craftsmen, to reconstruct the amber panels. The original amber panels are still missing but lately two chests of drawers from the amber room have surfaced in Germany. Russia hopes to have them returned.

This exhibition was extremely expensive to mount, costing half a million dollars. The entrance fee of \$4 hopefully will cover the costs. Part of the money will be given to Russia for their work in reconstructing the Amber Room. Due to the delicacy and great value of the specimens crowd control is important. All tickets for this event are timed.

There will be many programs, workshops, and demonstrations given during the show. These are free on a first come, first served basis in Baird Auditorium.

An "Amber Hotline" has been established to provide information on the exhibition and ticketing at (202)357-4577.



Around Town

By Davia Kramer

“Amber: Window to the Past”
June 6 - September 1
National Museum of Natural
History
202-357-4577
\$4.00 admission

“Amber: Window to the Past”
The Smithsonian Associates

All-Day Seminar
Sat., July 12, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
General Admission \$120
Code: 1WO-297
202-357-3030

“The Jewel and the Rose: Art
for Shah-Jahan”
May 4 - Feb.
Sackler Gallery
202-357-2700
Free
(Taj Mahal emerald, 141 carats)

Celebrating the Opening of
“Amber: Window to the Past”
The Smithsonian Associates
Private Viewing of Exhibition &
Informal Reception
Thurs., June 5, 6 p.m.
General Admission \$40
Code: 1WO-291
202-357-3030

“Images in Ivory” - Precious
Objects of the Gothic Age
June 22 - August 31
The Walters Art Gallery
410-547-ARTS
\$6.00 admission

The District of Gemology

Washington, D.C. Chapter GIA Alumni Association
c/o Bill Wise
6108 Koala Court
Waldorf, MD 20603
E-mail: wwise@juno.com

TO:

Inside This Issue...

**Joyce Jonas * Gary Werner
Martin Fuller * “Opals”
Tucson * And Much More!**
