



The District of Gemology

Volume 4 Issue 1

Winter 1997

This One Was Really Super!

Holiday Auction Nets Record Amount

By Bobby Mann

Our 1996 year ended on December 7th with the Annual Holiday Party and Auction at the La Mirabelle Restaurant in McLean, Virginia. The evening's festivities started at 6:30 PM with a social hour. Sixty-six colleagues and friends filled the cozy room around the fireplace, socializing, networking, and viewing the auction donations.

A delicious, multi-course French meal was served around 7:30 PM. After

dinner President Fred Ward acknowledged various members for outstanding performance during the year. The highlight of the evening was our Annual Donation Auction. Carolyn Chappell and Yours Truly alternated as auctioneers selling 78 lots. Greg Duncan served as clerk and Tom Mangan was cashier. Over \$5,400 was raised for the treasury.

I would personally like to thank all attendees, bidders, and donors who helped make this year's party and auction an overwhelming success.



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President's Letter

By Fred Ward

Welcome back, and welcome to another exciting new year with the Washington, DC Chapter of the GIA Alumni Association. We are already off with a big start and have a number of projects in the works that I want to share with you.

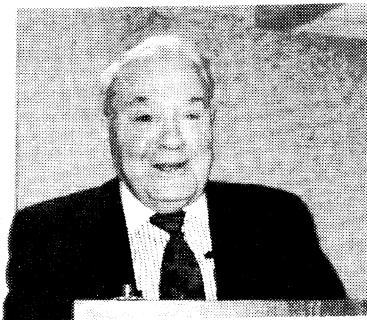
The largest single event in our year is always the December holiday party and auction. The income we receive from this important and enjoyable function pays many of the expenses we incur to bring you world-class speakers throughout the year. Two years ago we brought in the then record amount of \$1800. A year ago we made a huge leap by increasing our auction income to \$3100. In December, 1996, an enthusiastic auction committee and your loyal support gave us another huge jump, to more than \$5400! I want to thank each of you who attended and bid, and especially I want to thank Bobby Mann, Carolyn Chappell (our auctioneers), and the wonderful auction committee that went out and gathered all the items we offered.

Our very special January speaker, Chairman Richard Liddicoat from GIA, set a wonderful tone for our new year. We had a full house and spent a delightful and memorable evening with one of the legends in our field. And continuing with our annual Tucson Panel on February 27, we will again have an outstanding series of programs for you. Tell your friends they are welcome to join with us and become a part of the most dynamic and active GIA chapter in the world.

I want you to think about three things we are planning. We will again have two private classes from GIA during the April extension class period that will open just to our chapter. They always sell out, so plan early to secure your place. We also plan to offer a scholarship to someone looking for a little help toward another

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Richard T. Liddicoat Kicks Off The New Year



Richard Liddicoat speaking on the history of the GIA at our January meeting.

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

gemological class, and we are working out the details for our first jewelry design contest. There are many ways you can be involved. Talk to any chapter officer about

The largest single event in our year is always the December holiday party and auction. In December, 1996, an enthusiastic auction committee and your loyal support gave us another huge jump, to more than \$5400!

volunteering. And tell your colleagues that they can join us even though they are not GIA members or taking classes. All we ask is that you have an interest or involvement in gemology. Our diversity is truly our strength, and we want the chapter to grow.

Thank you for helping to make 1996 a record year. Help now make 1997 the best yet.



American Gem Society Conclave

The 1997 AGS Conclave is being held April 16 - 20 at the Palmer House in Chicago, Illinois. For more information call (702)255-6500. Fax: (702)255-7420

Holiday Dinner And Auction



Chancellor of the Exchequer Fuller gladly takes Visa, MasterCard, Discover, and yes, even America Express.



Bobby Mann fans the bidding to a fever pitch with Fred Ward's hot off the presses Opal books!



Carolyn Chappell works her magic again for the chapter.

Editor's Note: All photographs in this issue of The District of Gemology were taken by, or are courtesy of, Fred Ward. All captions by Caption Masters, McLean, VA.

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Past Speaker

Richard T. Liddicoat

Guest of Honor

By Martin Fuller

Dr. Liddicoat was the guest of honor at our January meeting, and I can say that if this is a harbinger of things to come, we are truly in for a banner year.

In the early 1950's, Richard T. Liddicoat moved from the heartland of America to the wilds of Santa Monica, to work with the founder of the GIA, Mr. Shipley. Together they nurtured what has today become the foremost institution of gemological training and research in the world, the Gemological Institute of America.

Mr. Liddicoat spent the evening with us reminiscing over those early years, through the days of G.I. bill students, to the "new" GIA, boasting one of the finest correspondence study programs in

the United States, as well as a new campus in Carlsbad, CA.

Mr. Liddicoat spoke as well on the current state of the diamond industry, and the changing relationships within the cartel. Name a country or a mine and Mr. Liddicoat will tell you if it's producing and how many carats per ton. Amazing! Thank goodness he didn't put those questions on my final exam!

All in all, for many of us in attendance, it wasn't the subject matter that brought us to the meeting that night, or kept our attention rapt. It was just that Mr. Liddicoat was there - his benevolent presence taking us back through what I call the Camelot days of the GIA.

Thank you, Richard T. Liddicoat!



Chapter President Fred Ward thanks guest of honor Richard Liddicoat for a marvelous evening.

Liddicoat-lite Is A Huge Hit!

On January 14, 1997 the Alumni Breweries, heretofore little known, unveiled it's latest brew - Liddicoat-lite. Named after the venerable Richard T. Liddicoat Jr., our speaker that evening, this beer is aimed at that underpaid, overworked, and overwrought group: gemologists. The beer has a slogan that all gemologists, worldwide, can identify with: "My kind of brew after a hard day at the refractometer. It's light and refreshing, not like those heavy liquids." Mr. Liddicoat thus became the first person in this century to have both a gemstone and a beer



Fuller and Liddicoat discuss methods of lowering the SG of Liddicoat-lite.

named after him. Talks are under way in Detroit that could pave the way for a triad.

Officials of Alumni Breweries were tight-lipped about their production schedule but did say "The market potential for this beer is enormous because most of the gemologists we know are beer guzzling party animals."

What's next Mr. Fuller? Beer for rocket scientists?

The following individuals or companies were donors of \$100 or more to our Annual Holiday Auction held in December. Please patronize them whenever possible.



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Helen Serras-Herman, Andy Herman, Al and Barbara DeMilo at the Annual Holiday Dinner and Auction. We wish they could have had a little more fun.

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The Kramers having a marvelous time at the annual party.

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Under The Scope:

An Interview With Lorin Atkinson, GG.

Editor's Note: In this issue we have an interview with one of our members, Lorin Atkinson. We hope this will be a regular feature.

How did you become interested in the jewelry profession?

In 1977 I was living in Maine and my daughter and I got into gem collecting and investing. We quickly discovered investing wasn't smart but we didn't get stuck with anything big. Maine has all these great tourmalines. I had to make a living and I liked rocks and gems but I discovered I had a lack of knowledge about the subject. I took a gemstone course at the Smithsonian. The instructor was a riot, a real nut case. Then I took a casting course. While I was still deciding what I wanted to do I did what I thought was a smart thing. I went around and talked to people about each aspect of the jewelry business, selling, bench work, appraising, bookkeeping. I got a lot of

useful information and decided to do appraising. I laid out my goal to be an independent appraiser and I kept after it. I won't tell you it was easy. It was a struggle at times but it was very gratifying when I made it.

When did you get your GG?

In 1982. I did all of my paperwork lessons for my GG in nine months. I spent a summer in Boston with a friend so I could take my first one week seminar. Altogether it took me about two years to get my GG.

Have you ever worked in a retail jewelry store?

Oh, yes, several. I started out at Boone and Sons. I wore three hats there. I was selling jewelry and doing some bookkeeping and I was the assistant appraiser. The appraiser had had a heart attack so I was on my own for while. I also worked at sev-

eral other places. I went to work as the executive vice president of a company that was developing software for the old Seiko computer. Unfortunately, that system failed to catch on. Then I worked at an AGS store in Woodbridge, Virginia.

You were there at the beginning of the Alumni Association. What was the first meeting like?

The first alumni meeting was in the basement of a church. Only a few people showed up. Katherine Everhart was the one who put it all together. Bobby Mann was also there. I didn't think it was going to work. I didn't even go to the second meeting, but eventually it started to come together. I was the 3rd president from 1988 to 1990.

When did the Appraisal Group Start And What Was The Basic Concept?

It was started in 1995. Putting together an appraisal group was an idea that we kicked around for a couple years. We wanted to get a group of appraisers together on a monthly basis so we could trade ideas and information. The formal name is the Washington Society of Jewelry Appraisers. I had talked to Martin about it but he was always so busy. Then Tom Mangan offered his store and we finally got it underway.

Would you recommend being an independent appraiser?

Not unless they get the proper training. Getting your GG isn't enough, you have to have appraisal training. It's getting tougher and tougher out there and you have to be well trained.



Lorin (seated) with Michele Zabel and Melanie Marts at the holiday dinner.



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ISA'S INVITATION TO THE DC CHAPTER OF THE GIA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Gail Brett Levine, ISA, GG, Chair of ISA's Gems and Jewelry Division, invites the members of the DC Chapter of the GIA Alumni Association to join us at our Annual Conference scheduled for April 6-9, 1997 at the Radisson Plaza Hotel at Mark Center in Alexandria, VA.

Charles A. Frey, GG, Mt. Pleasant, SC
"Liquidation Evaluation of a Jewelry Store: Three Approaches"

In this conversation the speaker will outline three methods in use today by firms in the business of liquidating entire jewelry stores through bulk sales of inventory or via controlled liquidation's to the public. These methods can be applied to business brokers, store owners looking for an exit strategy and unable to find a suitable buyer, businesses in financial distress or bankers looking to evaluate prior to foreclosure.

Lael Hagan, GG, Brooklyn, NY
"Cartier at Auction"

Cartier celebrates its 150th anniversary this year, capped by an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The phenomenon of Cartier pieces at auction will be discussed: what sells today and why, in the light of recent landmark Cartier auctions. Hallmarks, the development of period styles, materials and craftsmanship will be covered in the light of the tremendous documentation available in the Cartier Archives.

Sharon Wakefield, ISA CAPP, ISA, Boise, ID
"Synthetic Diamond Jewelry: Are You Ready?"

Whether you call them man-made, lab-grown or created: synthetic diamond jewelry is here. Will you be prepared for the first synthetic diamond that crosses your desk? Do you know how to identify one? Are there special precautions in the care and handling? How do you determine value? Where do you go for help? The time to prepare for this new product is

now - before the first lab-grown diamond appears on your desk.

James W. Coote, ISA CAPP, GG, Coronado, CA
"Report Writing for Gems and Jewelry Appraisers"

Communicating your work: ISA Report Writing Standards, USPAP standards: unique considerations for gems and jewelry reports... terms and conditions, glossaries. Observing and describing jewelry. And much more!

Howard Rubin, ISA, GG, Rego Park, NY
"Tracking Certificated Gemstones"

Description and pricing of certificated gemstones at auction. Burma and Kashmir sapphires and rubies are examined for color description, size and, price. Do not allow a certificate to mislead you as to the true quality of the gemstone.

Fred Ward, GG, Bethesda, MD,
"Pearls!"

Covering the global scene to tell what is happening today. A timely topic because more is happening today in pearls than at any time in history. The Japanese are becoming a marketing country instead of a producing one. China is soaring ahead on all fronts (freshwater, saltwater Akoya, and South Sea Pearls). Australia is making the biggest and best pearls the world has ever seen. And more and more Pacific islands are getting into black pearls production. All areas and pearl types will be shown and discuss what is happening in the market today, including thin-nacre short-culturing and the round Chinese freshwater pearl revolution.

Peggy Gottlieb, GG, Beverly Hills, CA
"French Jewelry of the 1940's and 1950's"

An in-depth discussion of the major influences on French jewelry design from

the beginning of World War II until the end of the 1950's. Prominent jewelers such as Mellerio, Cartier, Van Cleef & Arpels, Jean Schlumberger as well as Rene Boivin and Suzanne Belperron will be highlighted. Also, a brief primer on French gold and platinum marks and the importance of construction and condition.

John Weschler, PG, Washington, D. C.
"The Advantages of Buying and Selling at a Regional Auction House, Like Weschler's"

Why would an attorney or an executor choose a regional auction house over a larger national or international auction house. Learn the intricacies of marketing yourself - local address, global access!

Vivian Swift, GG, New York, NY
"Evaluating Vintage Watches"

How to spot the factors that indicate value in pocket and wristwatches by learning how to "see" the dial - no mechanical expertise necessary!

Martin Rapaport, Tel Aviv, Israel
"Diamond Pricing"

The lecture will present a model for analyzing how diamond prices are established in the international markets. WE will discuss the economic and political aspects of rough diamond pricing by the De Beers CSO, the relationship between rough and polished prices and how prices are set for polished diamonds in the central markets. WE will also discuss topical issues of interest to the appraiser community such as retail markups and the pricing and disclosure requirements of treated diamonds.

Jeff Hunter, C3, Inc. Research Triangle Park, NC
"What in the World is Moissanite? The Ultimate Diamond Substitute!"

For the first time in 20 years, a new gemstone is poised to hit the market that's a visual dead ringer for diamond. Be among the first to preview and examine the newest diamond substitute, lab-grown synthetic Moissanite gemstones.

(Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8)

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Lynne Loube, GG, L. Loube and Associates, Bethesda, MD

"The Washington Jewelry at Mount Vernon"

The jewelry manufactured at the end of the 18th century is unique and very little exists today. Attribution problems inherent in a 200 year old noted jewelry collection with collateral descent will be discussed as well as the influences of the social and political pressures on the styles of jewelry available during the last decade of the 18th century. Read excerpts of our First Family's correspondence mentioning jewelry, and see a slide presentation. "Paste," "foiled" and "debased" jewelry will be seen and archaic jewelry terms will be discussed.

Color Acuity Testing

Color Vision Testing will be available at the Conference. Update your color acuity.

There are extensive pre-conference events and tours for everyone, too! For further information and registration, please contact International Society of Appraisers' headquarters at 16040 Christensen Road, Suite 320, Seattle, WA 98188-2929, (209)241-0359, fax (206)241-0436.



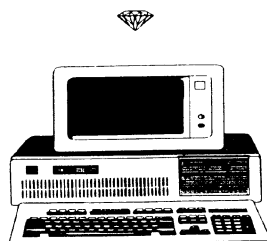
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You need at least a 386 PC, with a minimum of 4MB of RAM, and a 9600 baud modem. Call 1(800)654-JUNO to get a copy of the free software.



Registered Valuers In London Join Forces With The Master Valuer Program

The Registered Valuers of The National Association of Goldsmiths, London, England, has recently confirmed an affiliation with The Master Valuer Program, the first international jewelry appraising program to be developed for, and offered in both correspondence and residence/workshop study.

The Registered Valuers chose The Master Valuer Program jewelry appraisal education course as best suited to their member's needs, and after reorganization of materials will present the course to the members for obtaining a higher level of appraisal accreditation.

How does this affect American appraisers? Anna Miller, International Director of The Master Valuer Program says, "It means those in The Master Valuer Program have a *global network* of appraisal peers they can call upon for distance market information. Since the MV program is taught worldwide with students using the same appraisal language and sharing the same valuation concerns, a global network allows US appraisers to broaden understanding of foreign markets, economics driving the markets, and effects on the value of gems and jewelry in the U.S." For more information or a brochure, contact: Anna Miller, Telephone or Fax: (281)485-1606. Snail mail: P.O. Box 1844, Pearland, TX 77588.



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National Association of Jewelry Appraisers *Tucson Conference 1997*

By Martin Fuller

The NAJA conference at the Embassy Suites in Tucson was a concise, well planned two-day intensive program covering several points of interest for jewelry appraisers, especially those wishing to expand their knowledge into the fields of Southwest American Indian jewelry and sterling silver flatware and hollowware. Jim Jolliff gave a thorough lecture on the American Indian tribes, their materials and motifs, and the evolution of their styles from the mid 1800's to present. He also gave an impressive slide presentation which included prices for numerous items.

Joe Tenhagen, whom we have had as a guest speaker for our chapter, gave a very enlightening course in ascertaining cut class proportion grades of diamonds using only the loupe, as it is done in the diamond bourses.

Ralph Joseph, National Jeweler columnist, and Bill Hoefler, gemologist and paralegal spoke on the logistical and legal aspects of producing appraisals, providing much information on current appraisal standards and court case decisions.

Gail Levine spoke on trademarks, signatures and provenance and their effect on value in estate jewelry, and Maryanne Dolan lectured on American silver hollowware and flatware.

Color-vision testing was available to conference attendees who were interested in knowing their limits.

The next NAJA conference will be in Texas. Stay tuned for further program information.



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Past Speakers

John & Gina Latendresse

American Pearl Masters

By Martin Fuller

Our November guests, John and Gina Latendresse were a powerful finale for a year of eleven notable programs, excluding of course our December party and auction. I first



John Latendresse waxes philosophic about the American pearl business.

I learned of Mr. Latendresse years ago in the pages of National Geographic, in an article which was, I might say, fairly well written and photographed, on the subject of pearling in America. Several years ago, we also had the pleasure of hearing John Latendresse speak, when our chapter was much more diminutive. But since then, a great deal of water has flowed under the bridges crossing the Tennessee rivers and tributaries, and so it was to our great pleasure that Mr. Latendresse came to update us on the world of the American Pearl Company. In fact, there was so much new informa-

tion to share, that it took two Latendresses to bring it all to Washington!

We were introduced to John's daughter, Gina, one of two daughters now taking a very active interest in the management of the company. In the early days, one of the major portions of the corporation was the harvesting of shells to be sent to Japan, where they were to be made into beads for salt water pearl culturing. I always found it amusing to know that most of the Japanese cultured pearls sold in America, were by weight, mostly made in America!

This is no longer the bulk of the business for the Latendresse family. You might say they lost their yen for shelling out so they clammed up and took a bead on a new direction, namely pearl farming. Mr. Latendresse shared with us the enjoyable

moment when the Japanese protested that he was moving in on their territory, and he had to remind them about Henry Ford, and the automobile. They were not amused.



President Fred Ward presents "Above Washington" to John and Gina.

With the help of his daughters, Mr. Latendresse has dramatically expanded the scope of his business, with a wide array of new products, many of which were brought along for the chapter members to examine. The display included natural pearls as well as cultured, fresh, and salt-water products, with such very interesting items as abalone pearls, conch pearls, and fresh water pearls of every shape imaginable. If you were unable to attend this meeting, you would do yourself a great service by calling them up and asking for a catalogue. It will put new life in the pearl portion of your program!



The gang relaxes upstairs after the show. Gina gives Martin a few pearl tips.



The Critical Angle

By Martin Fuller

Go to the Tucson panel meeting. As I write this column, I look out over the Sonoran desert to the Rincon and Santa Catalina mountains, marveling in the richness of the great American southwest desert. Tucson appeals on many levels. For one, it's warm in February - 75 degrees! Petunias perfume the desert air and remind us there will be an end to our Washington winter. On another level, this perfect weather is the canvas upon which the jewelers' muse paints every color and shape the mind and heart can imagine, in precious gems and minerals.

Many of our fellow alumni have made the trek to this gemstone Mecca, and will return to share their adventures with you at the Tucson panel. It will be a fine evening of fabulous new finds, as well as tall tales of "the ones that got away". Whether you're a veteran of the Tucson gem show or a newcomer to the world of gemology, the Tucson panel night will have something for you. And if it doesn't, ASK QUESTIONS!!!

Why is Tucson so important? Why is any trade show or professional association or continuing education so important to our craft? Why bother when just the day-to-day operation of our businesses is more than enough to handle? Why should we take precious time away from our stores or offices?

Most of us handle diamonds, rubies, emeralds, sapphires, gold, silver and platinum so mundanely that we occasionally forget that we are the fortunate professionals whose charge it is to make available to the public, treasures once reserved for royalty and the ecclesiastically empowered. Justice was swift and severe when the jeweler displeased these patrons with lack of skill, ignorance or knowing deception.

Can we afford to be casual, now that we rarely see a jeweler beheaded for over-charging, over-appraising, or misrepresenting an item they professionally handle? The two-edged sword of technology provides us with more difficult synthetics and simulants to identify or mis-identify every day, as well as new tools and education to prevent those mistakes and to further our professionalism. Today we do not need

the fear of being beheaded or pilloried as a motivator, for competition provides the ultimate justice, as the consumers we service become increasingly more savvy. We have the choice of being the jeweler who can't tell a black pearl from a hematite bead or a steel ball bearing (and though I won't name names, I can assure you they're out there) or the jeweler who knows the difference between natural and synthetic diamond or a cubic zirconia from a moissanite.

The choice of where you aspire to be in your field is yours, and your award winning local alumni chapter is a rich resource here to help you reach your goals!

Around Town

Compiled by **Davia Kramer**

Corcoran:

***Jewels of Romanovs - Treasures From
The Russian Imperial Court***
Through April 13th
(202)639-1700

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