



The District of Gemology

Volume 7, Number 4

Winter 2000

***A Great Party!
A Successful Auction!
Another Grand Year Coming!
See you all in 2001!***

We certainly throw a terrific party. Our annual Holiday Party and Auction took place on Sunday, December 3rd, and it definitely launched the holiday in style. The bright, cheerful room at the Marco Polo restaurant in Vienna, Virginia, was filled with lively club members, high spirits and (naturally!) fabulous jewelry.

The auction, of course, is the life-blood of the chapter because it's where we get the money to bring in such great speakers every month. And it went very well indeed. The auction offerings were not only plentiful but even more varied than last year and when the bidding finally ended, we had taken in more than \$6000, including not only sales but some very generous cash donations.



Colette's "Chocolate Jewels" -- Mmmm!

lively conversation but a superb learning experience as well.

As ever, the auction featured beautiful stones and jewelry but also as ever, we got some really unusual entries. There were a couple of azalea bushes, a big sweatshirt, and Kusam Malhotra's unique cat's-eye chrysoberyl. The room burst into laughter and applause when the restaurant bartender surprised us all by bidding for and winning a pretty blue topaz pendant. But possibly the most attention-grabbing offering was Colette Fuller's scrumptious hand-made "Chocolate Jewels," mouth-watering chocolate candies topped with real gold leaf and genuine sapphires (stones courtesy of hubby Martin Fuller). This crowd uses gems everywhere!



Helen Fitzkee, Bidding Champ

That means yet another year of the wonderful speakers that make this chapter not only a great gathering of interesting people, ready laughter and

Our Amazing Auctioneers Trio of Carolyn, Bobby and Bruce moved things along briskly, cracking us up regularly with their expert patter and hilarity. All in all, the best party of the season.



Leading Ladies, Kusam and Carolyn

President's Letter by Carolyn Chappell



WOW!!! We did it again! With the help of our great membership, we raised the money to make the year 2001 another "Great Speaker" year! Thanks to all of you who sent donations for the auction.....and thanks to all of you who reached into your check-books and bought things you WANTED and things you may NOT HAVE WANTED!!! It all helped for the success of the Club!

And a special thanks to you CRAZY people, who bid on "NOTHING".....and made that bid go all the way up to \$110.00, if I remember correctly!! Just goes to show you that our club members will buy ANYTHING we put out there.....even when it is "NOTHING"!! Thanks-thanks-thanks for the support! :-))

Name Badges.....that's our thought for January and the new year. Something a little more permanent than the "stick-on things". We are having a Board Meeting in early January, and will come up with a plan.....but don't be surprised if we reach out and ask you to add \$4 or \$5 to your Meeting Fee annual cost.....getting to know each other is important! How many "new" people can you recognize and call by name???? Just try to remember the FIRST name of someone new to you, if you can. Next year (in 2002) you can worry about learning the LAST name! We have about 115 members, and it isn't easy to put all the names with the faces.

Also at our Board Meeting, we will be trying to set our speaker schedule for the year. We have some good stuff lined up.....including one or two "All Day Seminars". So, stay tuned and we'll see you at the January club meeting. A happy and healthy New Year to you! :-)

Carolyn Chappell

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It's all in the lighting." That's Chip Clark's secret to his excellent photography. As an almost 30-year veteran photographer at the Smithsonian Institution, he has been called upon to photograph almost anything, from fish collections to mummies. Starting in 1996, for two and a half years, he had the rare privilege of being able to photograph many of the Smithsonian's most important gems and minerals when they were off exhibit while the new Gem and Mineral Hall was being constructed.

Since he collected minerals as a child, Chip felt very comfortable taking photos of the minerals. Gems, however, were much more of a challenge to capture realistically. The array of priceless and rare items that he photographed reads like the Who's Who in the Gem and Jewelry World. Many are famous enough to have their own names: the Hope Diamond, the Hooker Emerald, the Hazen diamond necklace, the Maharani Cat's Eye Chrysoberyl, the DeYoung pink diamond, the Victoria Transvaal necklace, the Portuguese Diamond (at 128 carats, the largest faceted diamond at the Smithsonian), the Oppenheimer Diamond (the largest uncut diamond in the collection), the Inquisition Necklace, the Logan Sapphire, the Bismarck Sapphire, the Star of Asia, the Rosser Reeves Ruby and the Roebling Opal.

Chip shared some of the special techniques he used to make his images do justice to the gems or minerals. This was not always easy. He refers to the process as "spinning straw into gold." He got very creative for many shots. To make the large pyrite cube cluster (that was turned into a poster) look golden and to eliminate burned out highlights, he used numerous gold reflectors. He shot an opal ring on a mirror so that the play of color was shown to be different in the reflected image. Pin-point light was used to cause some cut gems to refract rainbow light for special effects. Since he knew many diamonds would fluoresce, he often checked stones for this effect and preserved it on film.

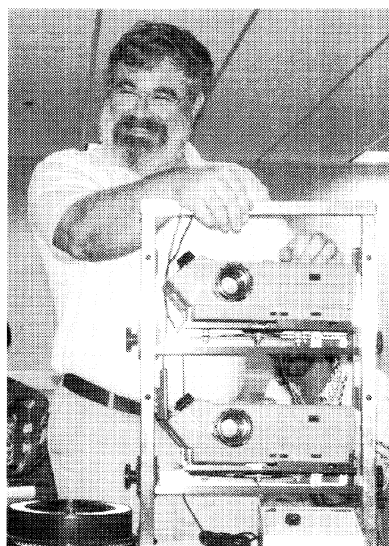
Chip Clark

Photographing Gems

by Cathy Gaber

For an especially difficult color match on an emerald, he resorted to using a green gel behind the stone. He wasn't "cheating," just trying to represent the emerald as closely to its natural color as possible. Some colors just do not reproduce accurately on film. In another experiment, he tried photographing an emerald through a Chelsea filter. The visual image was a very intense red. The final photograph, after a four minute exposure, was a sickly green with reddish overtones. He noted that Kodachrome and Ektachrome film captured the purple of an amethyst differently and recommended Fuji film for greens.

The process of some of the activities that went into putting together the new hall were also documented. The exhibits



Fred Ward

*Ready to dazzle us with his
spectacular photos.*

people were shown creating custom brackets and special fiber optic lighting for each piece, while specimens were meticulously installed by Mineral Sciences staff. Goldsmith Debbie Dubois was featured in the tale of the cleaning and repair of the Marie Louise turquoise diadem, which was completely disassembled and reconstructed before it went back on view.

While the Hope Diamond remained on exhibit throughout the renovation, devising its new home took considerable planning. To make exhibiting the necklace faster, easier and still maintain security, a special retractable case and a 360-degree rotating mounting system was devised. One day Chip was asked to make a 1:1 scale model of the Hope for the exhibit planning. While he debated how best to do that photographically, inspiration saved him several hours of work. They xeroxed the stone! In the interests of a complete record, Chip not only shot the expected photo, he even photographed the seldom seen back of the Hope's setting.

For amusement, Chip also photographed many light-hearted moments, such as staff members trying on pieces of jewelry (including the Hope). His daughter Jessica (then six years old) was shown hamming it up with two huge topaz crystals just her size. A new specimen, "exhibitite," created by gluing bits and pieces of mineral debris onto a matrix was officially numbered and photographed. Staff members in their party clothes celebrated at the grand gala thrown to celebrate the opening of the hall.

Chip's imagination let us experience not only unusual views of some of our favorite gems and jewelry but also an intimate glimpse into a memorable and historic period in the museum's history. Some of Chip's photos of Smithsonian gems and minerals can be seen on:

<<http://www.bsu.edu/teachers/academy/gems/archives>>. Many of the photos in Jeffrey Post's book, *The National Gem Collection*, are also Chip's.

An Unusual Cats-Eye Chrysoberyl

Our own VP, Kusam Malhotra of K&K International, sent this exceptional stone to GIA for analysis. This article about it by S.F. McClure, "Gem Trade Lab Notes: An Unusual Cat's-Eye Chrysoberyl," appeared in Gems & Gemology, Fall 2000, p. 254, and is reprinted here by permission.

When the West Coast laboratory recently received a translucent grey chatoyant cabochon for identification from K & K International in Falls Church, Virginia, the last thing we thought it could be was chrysoberyl, even though that was how it was represented by our client. Nothing about its appearance suggested chrysoberyl, not even the appearance of the inclusions. Gemological testing revealed a spot refractive index of 1.75, a specific gravity of 3.69 (measured hydrostatically), and no visible absorption spectrum or fluo-

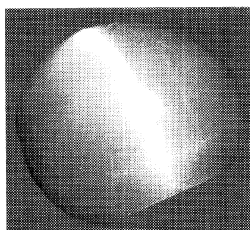


Our Club VP Kusam Malhotra

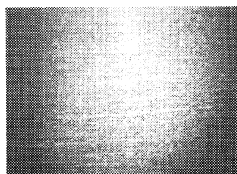
rescence. Although these properties could indicate chrysoberyl, they were also consistent with several other gems. Nevertheless, the spectrum obtained with the Raman microspectrometer was a perfect match to our reference for chrysoberyl.

This is the first grey cat's-eye chrysoberyl we have seen in the laboratory. Microscopic examination of the 7.29 ct. stone indicated that the inclusions were the probably the cause of the grey color; they looked grey in transmitted light, while the host material appeared near-colorless. Chrysoberyl is seldom colorless, especially in gem quality. Instead of the long,

Although chatoyancy is common in chrysoberyl, this 7.29 ct cabochon is the first grey cat's-eye chrysoberyl seen in the laboratory. The color in this stone appears



Maya Tannous at GIA



Shane McClure at GIA

to be caused by dense concentrations of grey platelets which are also the cause of the chatoyancy (inset, magnified 30x).

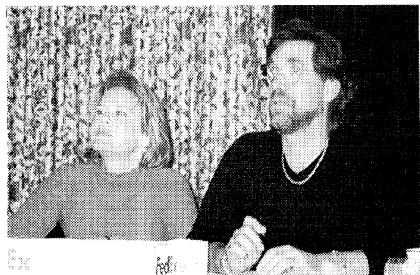
fine needles or "silk" that are normally present in cat's-eye chrysoberyl, these grey inclusions formed a dense cloud of tiny, oriented reflective platelets. Light reflection from these platelets caused the chatoyancy. Even more unusual was the presence of a weak star oriented off-center toward one end of the stone (not completely visible in the photo). We have seen only a few star chrysoberyls in the lab. The last one we reported on was greenish brown and also had the star oriented off-center (Summer 1989 Lab Notes, pg. 102). SEM

THANKYOU FROM BOBBY MANN

A BIG THANK YOU to all Donation Solicitors Auction Donors, Party Attendees and Auction Bidders for helping make this year's Fund Raising Party and Auction a success. **SPECIAL THANK YOU'S** go to the following:

- To **Michele Zabel** and **Melanie Marts** for all the pre-party arrangements.
- To **Lois Berger** for a great job soliciting donations from previous years' commercial donors, as she has done in previous years.
- To **my loving wife Kitty** for all of her assistance helping me before the party and working at the door registering bidders and assisting Melanie Marts checking reservations.
- To **Lisa Carp** for picking up the place cards from Michele Zabel and passing them out at the door. Great job on the place cards, Michele.
- To **Ira Kramer** and **Patricia Syvrud** who took in the late donations as they arrived and clerked at the auction.
- To **Etta Sauders** who clerked and assisted **Patricia Syvrud** as co-cashier at the auction's end.
- To **Carolyn Chappell** and **Bruce Gaber** for the great job they did assisting me as auctioneers. The Three Musketeer concept worked great again and we'll be back next year.
- **Helen and Toby Fitzkee** for taking care of the charge cards
- **Brenda Forman** who helped get the word out in her Award-Winning Newsletter.
- **Ira Kramer, Bob Davis, Toby Fitzkee** and the others who solicited over 100 donations for this year's auction.
- To **Chuck O'Quinn** who managed to sell \$140 of the 50 tickets for the party adding \$70 to the 50 gifts taken.

AGREAT EFFORT ALL AROUND!



What kind of tools are used for working PMC? Almost anything can be a tool to use with PMC. Any conventional clay working or wax modeling tools, wood or plastic items, cookie cutters, fabrics, and any metal except aluminum. Textured materials can be found anywhere. An awl is useful for cutting around non-straight edges and for plucking out pierced pieces. A tissue blade is excellent for cutting straight edges. Playing cards or layers of plastic can be used to make sure that rolled PMC is a uniform thickness. A small drinking straw makes a perfect hole for attaching findings.

Once PMC is air hardened, nail files or regular metal files can be used to clean up rough edges. Linoleum block cutting tools are perfect for cutting patterns into the air hardened PMC.

Considerations when working PMC. PMC will shrink about 30 percent when fired. If the finished piece needs to be a particular size, then it must be made larger. Conveniently, there is a special PMC ruler which can be used to approximate before and after sizes.

Some thought also needs to go into how findings will be attached. Bails, button shanks and other findings can be built right into the piece. Sturdiness of the finished project will be to some degree determined by the thickness of the PMC. PMC is not as strong as sterling silver so very thin PMC must not be used in critical stress points. As long as the PMC has not been dried, it can be reworked until the desired product has been created.

Considerations before firing PMC. Since every detail will be retained in the firing and the piece will look exactly the same only smaller, the piece needs to be prepared to the finished look before firing. Fingerprints will show, uneven edges will still be uneven, lumps and bumps will still be there if not taken care of ahead of time.

Precious Metal Clay Part II

by
Cathy Gaber

PMC must be fully dry (30 minutes in a 250 degree oven works in a time crunch) before firing.

Firing PMC. Silver PMC needs to be fired at 1650 degrees F. for two hours to properly temper. Firing of flat pieces is best done on solderite pads. For hollow pieces or pieces that might slump, firing in a clay plant pot bottom with a supporting use of reusable vermiculite or alumina is recommended.

Pieces can be placed very close together as long as they are not actually touching each other. To keep the shape of beads and other pieces that were formed over

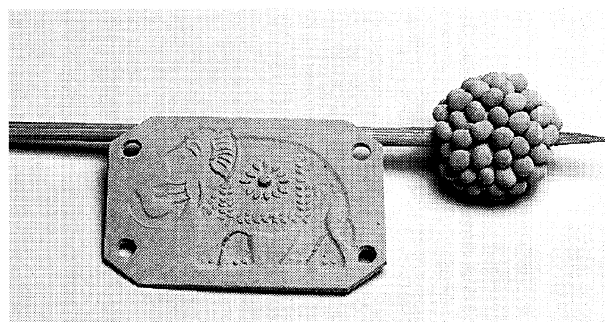
during or after firing. PMC itself can handle thermal shock, so pieces without stones or other added materials can be removed at high temperature and be quenched immediately in water.

Can any other materials be worked with PMC? Any material that can withstand the heat of the kiln, up to 1650 F, can potentially be used with PMC. Powdered enamels can be mixed in various proportions with PMC for different effects. For best control when using unmixed enamel on PMC, fire the PMC first so that the shrinking will not interfere with the setting of the enamel in the second firing.

Pottery clays can be mixed with the PMC or simply added as a second element. Other clays will shrink at significantly different rates so this should be considered in the design and construction. Many synthetic stones can be easily set in PMC before firing, but natural stones will not withstand the heat of the kiln. Proper control of temperature and multiple firings are the key to controlling the melting properties of glass for the desired effect. Fine silver and other metals have possibilities for enhancing PMC pieces.

How do you finish PMC? When the PMC comes out of the kiln, it is covered in a whitish coating. This can be left as is or brushed off with a brass brush and soap and water. This leaves a very soft silver sheen, without a high polish. PMC can then be finished the same way as any other silver. It can be burnished, tumbled with mixed steel shot, buffed and polished. It can also be blackened with liver of sulfur or other coloring agents to intensify design contrasts.

Because it is an easy-to-use and relatively inexpensive media, PMC is ideal for allowing creativity to bloom. It will soon be making a serious impact in the handmade jewelry industry.



PMC ready to fire, elephant bracelet link and blackberry bead on skewer

other materials, retain the organic armature material, which will burn off when fired. PMC is non toxic when wet and

Everything you ever wanted to know about jade — and then some. That's what Don Kay gave us in his fascinating talk on November 14th. With his dazzling slides, wide personal experience and historical knowledge, he could have spoken twice as long and still only scratched the surface of his beloved subject.

Cultures that have used jade have all appreciated its toughness first, using it first for mining implements and tools. Next, it became a ritual stone. Of the two forms of jade, nephrite has a paler palette with brownish and greyish tonalities. Jadeite, on the other hand, comes in vivid shades



Fred Ward

A fascinated audience.

of green, yellow, lavender, red, white and even black. Jadeite arrived in China about the mid-18th. Until then, nephrite had been the favored material of the imperial court.

Jade is mined in alluvial soil or in very high mountains where water once was. The boulders are very large and heavy so to bring them down, they first must be broken up. The stone is heated overnight in a fire, then cold water is poured on it in the morning to form cracks, after which wedges are driven into the cracks to break the boulder apart. This may destroy fine material but there is no other way to get the stones down to market.

Only one in 10,000 boulders turns out to be jade. To tell, you bang the boulder with a rock on the end of a stick. If it's jade, it sounds different. It used to be said that a blind man could tell fine jade. Don illustrated by striking a one-piece bangle, producing a high-pitched "ting."

Next, striking a carved bangle (i.e., made of material whose imbedded cracks are disguised by its carving); he produced a deader-sounding "ping." (Quality crystals yield a longer tone.) Then he showed us that nephrite produces almost a multi-tone "ting." Finally, polymer impregnated jade produces only a dead "tuck."

Carving always indicates that something undesirable has been removed. The best material is kept for cabochons. These must be free of cracks. The best proportions are 3L:2W:1D. Jade beads were first cut for men. They were cut in multiples of nine, all of uniform size. Graduated strands began in Europe. The idea of using jade for rings did not originate in China either; it emerged around 1900 under European influence.

After green, lavender is the second most important color in jade. Contrary to traditional wisdom, the lavender color does

Don Kay on JADE

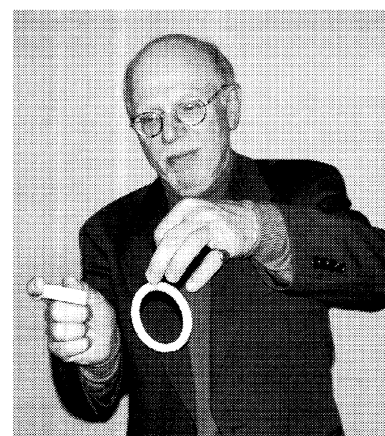
not come from manganese; it's now thought to be iron oxide transfer. Red jade is the third most important color. Red comes from the skin of the rock and results from chemical penetration over time. Black jade is usually nephrite, but black jadeite is becoming more common. Black jadeite has a strong green undertint; black nephrite does not. Most black jade now comes from Australia. "Water jade" is now called "ice jade" and "crystal jade." It is very translucent, almost like moonstone.

There are now three major categories of jade: *A-jade* (natural, untreated jade, using only wax), *B-jade* (bleached and polymer impregnated) and *C-jade* (dyed). *B-jade* is created by immersing "promising jade" in a heated solution of hydrochloric acid for several weeks. This leaches

out the color. Next, the stone is neutralized in an alkaline solution and treated with polymer to fill the little hollows left by the bleaching process which leaches out the sodium. Then the stone is washed in acetone and "cooked" in beeswax to fill the pores and keep dirt out.

After treating, *B-jade* is less tough and will break much more easily than *A-jade*. Sometimes it will crumble under pressure. Sometimes too, the alkaline process is not complete, allowing acid to work out and burn the skin. He hasn't seen any discoloration, though.

It's hard to test for *B-jade*. Both the SG and the RI are about the same as untreated jade. There is no significant difference under either optical spectroscopy or the microscope. Sometimes there's slight to moderate fluorescence under UV long wave radiation but it's not very dependable. It does sound different when struck, but what if you want to buy a cab? Powdering it will tell, but it is destructive. But



Fred Ward

Teaching us the voice of jade.

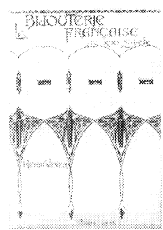
there is hope. Using FTIR (Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy) an IR beam is shone through the sample and picks up the polymer carbon through spectroscopic analysis. *B-jade's* spectrum will show two little spikes around 2950 from the wax. But two big spikes reveal polymer. The test is not destructive, and if the piece is mounted, you can probably go at it sideways. It takes practice but it can be done.

HONOR ROLL 2000

Thanks to All!

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Between 1906 and 1908, the great Parisian jeweler Henri Vever (1854-1942) wrote his famous three-volume work, *la Bijouterie française au XIX^{ème} siècle* (French Jewelry in the 19th Century). To this day, this

wonderful book remains the definitive study of the subject. Everyone cites it and everyone quotes it (although not always for attribution!) but until now, if you didn't read French, you couldn't read any more than short excerpts imbedded in other jewelry books.

But no more. Your Newsletter Editor has spent some two years translating it and now to my delight, Antiquorum Auctioneers has decided to publish my translation sometime in the year 2001. Following are a pair of my favorite excerpts from this fascinating book. Translating it has been a delight and a labor of love for me. I thought you might enjoy a taste of its pleasures here.

From Volume I:

O bry opened an atelier in Paris which at one time employed a fairly large number of workmen who were his collaborators in more ways than one. Obry lived with them more as a comrade than a boss — but he was nevertheless absolutely obdurate on one particular point: he demanded that each of his pupils be an accomplished hunting horn player and he mercilessly fired those who were insufficiently devoted to that noble instrument.

Obry knew how to use the horn not merely to satisfy his musical tastes but also to publicize his name and win new customers. As we have seen, his yearning for the forest periodically took hold of him so imperiously that no human power could keep him away from the woods. At such times, he would take his pupils out with their horns dangling from their baldries, and they would spend the day practicing all manner of fanfares at top volume.... He toured the provinces and even went abroad at times, as was customary in those days. He and his band of artists would start out without much money but rich in high spirits and gaiety. And they always took along a selection of jewelry that they had made during their latest period of work....

Obry and his companions would head for one of the chateaux along their route and there, hidden in the woods (where he had earlier

ascertained the most favorable wind direction) they would begin to play the best tunes in their repertory. Since this sylvan concert was being performed by true virtuosos, the lords of the manor and their guests, surprised and delighted, would immediately send to find these wandering artists in order to bring them back in triumph to be entertained. And when they learned that they were in the presence of Obry himself, they would make a party of it, keeping him at the lord's table, for his reputation for wit and good humor was firmly established and everybody knew beforehand that he would amuse everybody with his hunting stories and his fantastical banter.

Then would come the time when they wanted to repay the musicians for their dawn serenade at which point Obry would wrap himself in his dignity as artist and a composer and answer that he had only played to please his hosts, not to receive any payment — but, he would casually add, it just happened that he could offer them a pretty selection of his work.

Vever Translated by Brenda Forman

Since these were truly little marvels, everybody was happy to buy one and to pay handsomely for it. The wandering troupe then would leave with well lined pockets and contented hearts, only to reprise the whole rather odd but highly effective process a bit further down the road as soon as they felt the need.

From Volume II:

I n 1864, after attending a performance of *La Biche au Bois*, which was enjoying a very successful run at the Theatre of the Porte Saint-Martin, the Empress was much taken by the parure worn by Mlle. Delval... an actress... with a fine figure whose waist was encircled by a magnificent belt terminating in a long front panel that fell to her feet and was completely inlaid with stones.

This was, of course, only stage jewelry, expertly made by Granger. Nevertheless, the Empress was dazzled by this orgy of stones that scintillated with a thousand fires in the light of the footlights and she immediately wanted to have one like it, but one more brilliant

than this gorgeous mass of glass. Right away, therefore, she instructed Bapst [the court jeweler] to assemble all the Crown diamonds that were still available and mount them into this new jewel. She wanted to wear it at a party scheduled for the following week and so he went to work on it that very day. His people worked without stopping... The piece was finished at the very last minute and the jeweler... arrived at the very moment when the Empress, already dressed for the ball, was becoming impatient at his delay.

The piece pleased her greatly. She found it marvelous and completely in keeping with her instructions. But alas! Nobody had thought of the fact that while Mlle. Delval looked excellent in tights on stage, nothing but formal evening dress would do for the Empress. So when the sparkling belt was placed around her waist, the weight of the long front panel on the hoops of her crinoline naturally caused the rear portion of the skirt to rise high enough to reveal the calf of her leg. Intensely annoyed, she removed the belt immediately and never wore it again.

At the sale of the Crown Diamonds, this belt (composed, incidentally, of mediocre stones) was sold in segments by auctioning its links separately. Spiteful tongues maintain that certain unscrupulous manufacturers then replicated the miracle of the loaves and fishes... and made a large number of duplicates which for a long time they continued to sell to English and American collectors of genuine royal relics. © 2000 Brenda Forman



Henri Vever in 1931

DONORS OF \$100 OR MORE TO THE 2000 HOLIDAY AUCTION. THANKS!
We couldn't thank everyone in this issue, but if you're not here now, you definitely will be soon!

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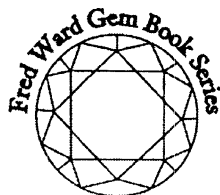
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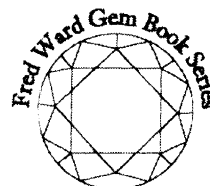
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