



The District of Gemology

Volume 8 Issue 4

Winter 2001

A Great Party! A Record-Breaking Auction!

Thanks to all for the most successful auction yet! We broke our record, bringing in over \$10,000 for the coming year, all thanks to our generous donors, our great auction team and all those generous bidders. Here's how it happened:

We received a whopping 148 auction contributions from 64 donors and enthusiastic bidding brought in a total of \$9679 for them. (In fact, we got so many contributions valued at over \$100 that we decided to add four extra pages to this issue of the newsletter to make room for all those thank-you ads!) Then in addition to the auction donations, we got another \$513 in cash

donations and we netted \$101 more from the "50/50" drawing. All in all, the best year yet.



Etta, Ira and Pat keeping the records

And boy, did we ever have a terrific time doing it. The Marco Polo restaurant did us proud again with

good food, a cheerful room and friendly service. The room was full of club members, checking out the overflowing auction tables, catching up with each other and generally having a high old time. When the auction began after dinner, our absolutely inimitable auction team of Carolyn Chappell (wearing her trademark red feather boa), Bobby Mann and Bruce Gaber kept the action fast and the laughter coming faster (especially when Bruce did his strip-poker bit!).

It all added up to a wonderful day and it'll keep our wonderful club going for another successful year of fascinating speakers and good company. See you there!



Fred Ward



Fred Ward



Fred Ward

Carolyn, Bruce and Bobby, The Three Auctioneers

President's Letter by Carolyn Chappell



Wow!!! What a way to finish the year!!!! We exceeded our past record of "auction money" this year by a BIG BUNCH..... and I send a personal thank you, THANK YOU, to all who donated and purchased at our Holiday Party on December 2nd. A good time was had by all, and we certainly had some neat items and BARGAINS to be had! Mary Ehlers deserves to have her #44 bid card laminated, for all its activity on our behalf. She was undoubtedly our "Never-ending Bidder of the Night"..... and certainly appreciated!! We sold 100.00 worth of "NOTHING" again this year..... this time to Ira Kramer (there is always SOMEONE who will buy that!)..... and one of the hot objects of the bidding evening seemed to be the Osama bin Laden dart board. Obviously, we had several people in the room with something or someone in mind for that winning bid!! But the jewelry and stones really accounted for the majority of the items..... although I saw home-baked apple pie going for \$45.00!!!! Thanks to all, for a WONDERFUL evening.

And, as my two year Presidency comes to an end, I want to tell the membership how much I have enjoyed my time "up front" at the meetings. It has been a pleasure getting to know everyone a little bit better, and I know we will continue on with great camaraderie in the future, as together we learn and are exposed to more education through our speakers. Also, I want to thank my board of directors and committee chairmen for all the time and expertise they gave these past two years. Without them, and the extra board meetings, we would not have had the "behind the scenes" planning and business part of the chapter carried out. To all of you, the members, I wish a happy, healthy, and prosperous NEW YEAR in 2002!

Carolyn Chappell

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Member Profile**John Lees**

by

Cathy Gaber

Growing up, John loved horses and thought he might like to be a cowboy, but a summer break in college working on a ranch in Wyoming convinced him he didn't like cows. However, the beauty of the mountains led him to discover geology, which was to become his true calling.

John was born in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1931 and grew up in Sewickley, PA, where he attended the Sewickley Academy. After five years in boarding school, he graduated from Brooks School in North Andover, MA, in 1950. He then earned his BA in liberal arts in 1954 from Columbia College in New York, NY. During his senior year, after Wyoming, he took a survey class in geology and was hooked.

He could not immediately pursue his interest as he was drafted into the US Army for two years. Even though he spent nine months training in electronic eavesdropping with the Army Security Agency and was supposed to be headed to Japan, he ended up as a clerk, typing reports in Korea for the remainder of his tour.

After returning to Columbia University and earning a BS in geology in 1958, he pursued his Ph.D. in geology with a minor in mineralogy, which was awarded in 1964 by the Pennsylvania State University. It was at Penn State that John met and married his wife, Alice Allan Hoyt, with whom he had three children. Alice shares his interest in gems and jewelry, but mostly as a consumer.

John went to work for Amoco Petroleum Corp. in New Orleans, LA, as a subsurface geologist. He worked with well logs, electronic de-

vices that transmit data from the well describing the rock types and their contained fluids. The data was used to make structure maps in order to define oil prospects for drilling in the Gulf of Mexico. He frequently made trips via helicopter to the offshore rigs to witness the running of the well logs.

After a few years he went to work for the US Geological Survey in the Conservation Division in New Orleans. He evaluated offshore tracts that the oil companies were bidding on and after 10 years, he was transferred to Washington, DC. The Conservation Division was removed from the USGS and combined with part of the Bureau of Land Management as the Minerals Management Service, a separate agency within the Department of the Interior. He ended up as the Regional Supervisor for Resource Evaluation-Atlantic Region and supervised a variety of staff including geologists, paleontologists, engineers, geophysicists, technicians and clerical staff.

John took his first class in gemology at Columbia University in 1957. His professor, Brian Mason, was also the curator of minerals at the American Museum of Natural History. John's interest lay dormant for 30 years, until he attended a gem show in DC. He was soon



***Our John in full regalia
with pipes and kilt.***



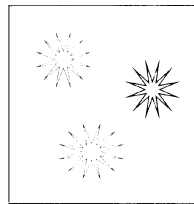
Equestrian prowess!

enrolled in Tony Bonanno's gemology classes and subsequently took the GIA and FGA home study courses. He received a PG from Mr. Bonanno in 1990, a GG in 1989 and an FGA in 1990. After joining the Washington, DC Chapter of the GIA Alumni Association in 1990, John went on to serve as our Secretary from 1997 to 1999.

Ever willing to face a challenge, he found an unexpected talent. While they were living in New Orleans, Alice saw an ad in the paper looking for people to join a pipe band. John had never played a musical instrument before, but the leader agreed to teach him the bagpipes if he would play for a year. When John moved to DC in 1974, he joined the Washington Scottish Pipe Band and is still playing.

In 1978, John started riding horses again. For about six years he competed in combined training, a sport which consists of dressage, stadium jumping and cross country jumping. After breaking a vertebra he confined his riding to fox hunting. In time, he also broke an ankle, a collarbone and seven ribs, so he now wisely wears a crash vest when he rides. He and Alice live on a small farm north of Leesburg, where they keep and ride three horses.

John learned to facet gemstones about 10 years ago from Bill Capps. When Capps died, John lapsed, but he took up faceting again a couple of years ago. He currently deals on a part time basis in colored stones and jewelry as JAL Co. in Leesburg, VA. The horses and the farm take up much of his time, leaving less for cutting and even less for selling, but gemstones will continue to have a role in his life.



*All pictures
Fred Ward*





***Thank-You's
from
Bobby Mann***

This was a Record-Breaking Auction. A big thank you to all that made it happen. All Donation Solicitors, Auction Donors, Party Attendees and Auction Bidders. You helped make this year's Fund Raising Auction and Party a success.

SPECIAL THANK YOU S go to the following:

To *MICHELE ZABEL* and *MELANIE MARTS* for all the pre-party arrangements, too numerous to mention. A great job, Michele, on the place cards! You always add that special touch. They both also worked the sign-in desk at the door, checking in attendees, confirming reservations and signing them up for the auction. *THANKS.*

To *LOIS BERGER*, another great job this year in soliciting donations from previous year's commercial donors. *THANKS.*

To my loving wife *KITTY* for all her assistance, helping me before the party and assisting Melanie and Michele at the check in desk. *KITTY* also sold the 50/50 tickets this year, breaking all records, \$201, adding \$101 to the night's take.

To *IRA KRAMER*, *PAT SYVRUD* and *ETTA SAUDERS* who arrived early and stayed late. They received the late donations as they arrived and acted as clerks and cashiers at the auction.

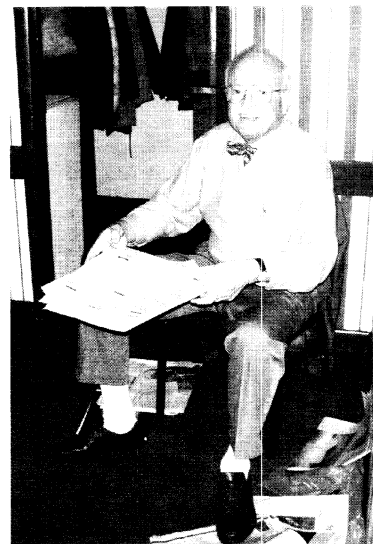
To *CAROLYN CHAPPELL* and *BRUCE GABER* for the great job they did in assisting me as auctioneers. The Three-Musketeer concept worked great again and we'll be back again next year. I hope that you will.

To *TOBY & HELEN FITZKEE* for taking care of the charge cards, and the extra work they devoted to soliciting donations from their suppliers. It sure paid off.

To *BRENDA FORMAN* who helped get the word out in her Award Winning Newsletter.

Would like to join a winning team? The Chapter's Party & Fund Raising Auction Committee is always looking for hard-working people for our team. Join us in 2002!

Contact: Bobby Mann, Committee Chairman.



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This article is intended to serve as a guide for understanding the complexities of the creation of a gem carving, from the underlying harmony of a composition and the spirit of the design, to the difficulties of the execution of the work and the important factors of workmanship techniques.

Gem Carving Evaluation Criteria

by Helen Serras-Herman

optimum light refraction and reflection.

The gem's hardness should also be noted, as harder gems require more time for carving, sanding and polishing.

An extraordinary beauty and quality of the gem material itself, an exceptional size, or a rare natural gem occurrence will increase the eminence of the piece.

A. Concept of the Design—Quality & Rarity

1. Harmony of Composition

Gemstone carvings are a form of Sculpture and are governed by the same composition principals as any other art form. Although creative design and execution rules are broken daily by innovative designs, the principals of the underlying fundamental harmony of the composition remain the same.

Lines, forms, holes and volumes, along with color, texture and light, are the molecules of a creative composition, the core of the design. The pleasing arrangement to the eye of their proportions, directions and style, constitutes Harmony. Proportions vary with civilization, style, fashion and perspective, and can make a statement for the piece.

2. Subject Theme

The Subject Theme of a carving may be figurative [representational] or non-figurative, often metaphorical. It should be judged on the fantasy, innovation and charisma of its design to evoke emotions, dreams, empathy, awe and admiration. **No subject theme should be evaluated higher than another one.**

3. Design & Type of carving

Gem carvings may be designed as pieces of jewelry, free-standing sculptures, meditation stones, religious articles, utilitarian objects or objects of art, such as boxes, bottles or frames. They should be evaluated accordingly on their wearability, functionality and presentation qualities. The type of carving chosen may be cameo (relief), intaglio, sculpture in the full round or intarsia. **No type of carving should be evaluated higher than another one.**

Finished surfaces may be highly glossy, or have one or more complementing textures such as matte, frosty, dimpled, dotted, grooved, criss-crossed, or include unique natural textures, such as drusy and natural crystal surfaces.

4. Gem material selected

Skillful orientation of the rough material is of primary consideration. Internal features, such as inclusions, color zoning and veins, or external features, such as crystal faces, surface triangles, striations, bands and layers of color, drusy cavities, and matrix, when included in the design in a complimentary way, can stimulate the viewer's imagination and add uniqueness to the carving. **The gem should benefit from the carving, and the carving should elevate the gem.**

Gem artists today are using the finest gem materials available for the creations that best suit their vision and inspiration. Carvings and statuettes with undulating surfaces and holes are challenging and unique works of art that take advantage of nature's wealth. Fantasy cut faceted gemstones and optical illusion cuts require flawless transparent gem materials for

5. Original Design, Authenticity, Antiquity and Provenance

One-of-a kind, original carved gemstones are unique and unrivaled works that should be valued the highest, as they reflect the ingenuity and imagination of the artist. The name and caliber of the artist, a distinctive individuality in style, and accompanying certificates of authenticity or appraisals may be additional assets.

Multiple carvings (limited edition bearing the same design, usually signed) should be valued differently. Duplicate carvings (numerous pieces with the same design, unsigned) and copies created either by an artist or by machines (pantographs, ultra-sonics, lasers) should be valued the least.

Gems associated with fame and lore may be valued higher than others, as may works with proven antiquity, established previous ownership by royalty or celebrities, works that have received awards or special publicity, or that have been displayed on special exhibits.

B. Execution of the Carving—Workmanship Quality

Following are the main factors of workmanship quality:

- Good visual legibility of the subject.
- Final surfaces free of saw marks, coarse grinding or slipped-tool marks, flat spots and scratches, and of undesirable flaws, fractures and cracks.
- Bases or back surfaces completely finished.
- The highest polish possible, if so intended, on all surfaces, in grooves, channels, undercutting, intaglios, concavities, and background. No fine scratches, no dull spots.
- Well finished textures.
- Precision, sharpness, clearness, and fine finish of details.
- Carefully executed protrusions and stretched out limbs, intricate 'lace' patterns, fretwork, deep undercutting and holes, that would not be susceptible to breakage.
- Well affixed seams of composite carvings and intarsia.
- Well finished rounded or sharp edges of the carving.
- Perfection of polished flat surfaces.
- Girdles and borders with crisp, uniform width, level surfaces, and efficient polish.
- Concavities with smooth and level surfaces, even depth, and homogeneous finish.
- Carefully orientated optical properties (reflection, refraction) and optical phenomena.
- Excellent metalsmith work surrounding carved gemstones used in jewelry.
- Harmonious and well finished stands and bases for free standing gem sculptures.



Pan, one of Helen's beautiful pieces.

This is a 2001-revised edition of a 1997 manuscript written for Mrs. Anna Miller, GG, for her book *Cameos Old and New*, 2nd edn., June 1998. Sections appear in Chapter 9, "Cameo Artistry," pp. 193-198. No part of this article may be used or reproduced in any way without prior permission of the author. Bibliography available upon request.

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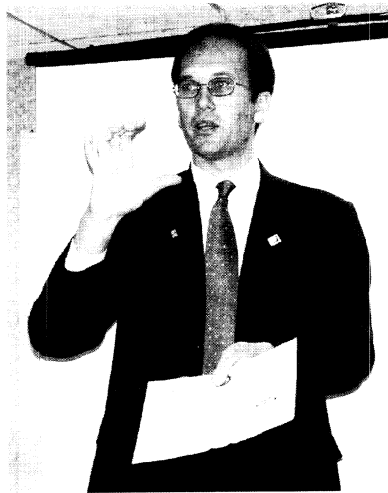
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**HPHT  
(High Pressure High  
Temperature)  
Diamonds**

**A**dd diamonds now to the lengthening list of gemstones being treated by hard-to-detect technologies in order to alter their original appearance. On November 6<sup>th</sup>, Greg Sherman and Branko Deljanin of EGL, USA, led us through recent developments in HPHT (High Pressure High Temperature) diamonds. Clearly, HPHT stones pose a new set of challenges to the modern gemologist and appraiser. The bottom line is that right now, every colored diamond is a question mark.

Tracy Hall, Sr., pioneered in the production of HPHT and synthetic diamonds but now others, e.g., GE, China



**Branko Deljanin** Fred Ward

and especially Russia, have new machines that can do this. The process begins with a low quality diamond, VS2 to SI-1. Early efforts turned brown diamonds greenish-yellow with fluorescence. The "neon" diamond was the first stone to come to EGL's lab in August of 2000. But new colors are on the market now, not just green but pure yellow, a vivid orange-yellow, and pink. Moreover, while the neon green is pretty obvious, some HPHT stones now are light yellow and those are less likely to be sent for certification.

These, therefore, may become a matter of more concern.

The process is hard to detect it because the starting material is not common and so there are fairly few samples to study. The colors are not predictable. You can control the HPHT process to some extent but you can't always predict what the resulting color will be. A IIa diamond, for example, turns either colorless or pink while a IIb turns blue. However, although some irradiated stones can fade under certain conditions, HPHT stones' color seems to be stable.

The challenge of detection is increased by the fact that a good many companies are researching how to detect these stones but some of their findings are not being published because the traders will read them and change their process to circumvent them.

Interestingly enough, far from concealing their production, some sources are encouraging marketing. For example, Belletaire is marking its girdles but they are encouraging sellers to charge 5% more than untreated diamonds! An audience member asked how such stones ought properly to be



**Greg Sherman** Fred Ward

priced. The response was that they must be worth more than irradiated stones, but less than natural ones.

Many colored diamonds now may be HPHT products and there are going to be thousands of carats on the market soon. In many such cases, the treatment will be undetectable by currently available means. So raise your awareness of what is going on and if you have any questions, consult a good gemological lab. (The certification cost about \$100/carat.) It's ok to certify them — but as speaker after speaker has emphasized of late, just be sure to disclose the treatment when you can detect it, and protect yourself with appropriate language to take account of undetectable treatments.



**Checking out samples of HPHT diamonds** Fred Ward

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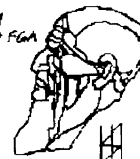
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**James V.  
Jolliff**

**Writing A  
Strong  
Appraisal**

Proper appraising, James Jolliff begins, is important to both your clients and their insurance company. So as Executive Director of the National Association of Jewelry Appraisers, "My job is to tear your appraisal apart." His frank, hard-hitting presentation on October 22<sup>nd</sup> made it clear that he takes that job

seriously. His subject for the evening was how to write a strong narrative appraisal. Guiding principles abounded:

**Don't pad your resumé.** The first thing he does is to look at the credentials on the appraisal. He checks them out with people you say you deal with and if you are using fake credentials, it's an immediate bad mark against you. He also gets the report writing standards of the organizations you say you do appraisals for and he sees if you write to those standards. Failure to do so may come back to haunt you.



*Accepting the Club's Gift*

**Be knowledgeable.** You can't depend on markings of items (e.g., 14K) so you need to be able to identify metals, manufacturing models, style, etc. He strongly recommends a solid reference library. "You may not use them all the time but books are very powerful. Knowledge can bring in work. When I need those books, they are there. Every time a new one comes out, I buy it. I have a budget for books."

**Be clear,** both to protect your client and to protect yourself. Make sure your client understands your terminology.

**Be thorough.** Your description must also include not only the stones but the whole item, including findings. "Don't just say 'Gold neck chain.' They have names! You can get them out of catalogs!" How do you get the cost of a finding? Market research — there are catalogs giving everything an identifiable name. Of a stone? Market research or the Guide. Describe literally everything. Include a list of the equipment you used. And don't hide your data; the client paid for it! Put it in the appraisal as an addendum.

**Be specific** about your appraisal's intended purpose and clearly state the restrictions on its use. Include disclaimers: terms, assumptions and any limiting conditions (e.g., bad lighting). If you are a competent gemologist working with good

pricing people, then both of you could sign the appraisal. If you own the store and are hiring an outside appraiser and you sign the appraisal, you accept full responsibility for the appraisal. Mark your report clearly so that it cannot be altered for other purposes. (This is extremely important because scam operations are proliferating. Examples include requiring you to do gemological work with stones in sealed boxes, or the stone not matching the cert, or the appraisal lab doesn't exist!)

**Be detached.** Do *not* do an appraisal intended to promote the item's sale rather than to price it. "Appraisals are not for the purpose of selling," he stated. "They are for the purpose of protecting the client well." An appraisal is "the most frequent price in a group of prices. If you just use your own store's markup, that is not value, that's an estimate to replace."

**Standardize your format.** "It only takes one screw-up to wreck a good business," he says, "so I tend to write every appraisal the same way." Make up your own forms and use them.

**Software helps** and there's excellent stuff available. "Software programs clone you." If you are just learning, they are invaluable.

**Avoid taking stones out of mounts** because the prongs don't spring back the way they are set. He recommends that clients buy the stone loose, have it set and then have the ring appraised.

**Don't try to argue with GIA no matter what you think of the cert.** It doesn't matter what you say because they are the authority. "Even if we're right, we're wrong."

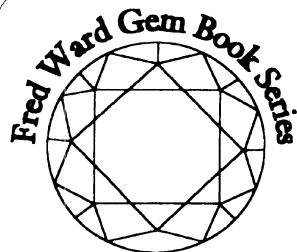
In short, he concluded, "You can make the money if you do the work to the thoroughness that the people really want."



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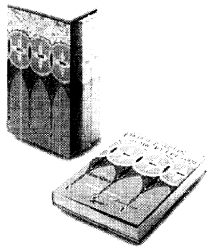
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**We re pausing in publication**

This is the last issue of the newsletter for awhile. Club finances are a little tight these days and our first spending priority is our terrific roster of speakers. We hope to get back into print later this year, so stay tuned!



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Treasurer**

**Martin Fuller  
Melanie Marts  
Lisa Carp  
Toby Fitzkee**

**Members at Large will be appointed  
by the President in January 2002.**

## **The District of Gemology**

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***Inside This Issue...***

*Holiday Party & Auction - Member Profile  
Gem-Cutting Criteria - HPHT Diamonds  
Writing A Strong Appraisal - Thank-You Ads!*

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