

February 2012 Chamber Article  
By Eileen R. Eichhorn

Dateline: Tucson Gem Show

I am required to accumulate continuing education credits for membership in NAJA -The National Association of Jewelry Appraisers - I am a Certified Senior Member. I can think of no better place in the USA than Tucson! In addition, every member must take the color vision 100 hue discrimination test every five years. This is an invaluable evaluation in the appraisal profession.

The past two days were spent attending lectures on cut grading fancy diamonds, understanding clarity enhancements of emeralds, identifying glass-filled rubies, the mysteries of moonstones, and colorful ammolites. However, my personal favorite: Bruce Bridges, the son of Campbell Bridges spoke on the history of Tsavorite (green) garnets. He witnessed the murder of his father in Kenya a few years ago. The mines they worked are no longer operating due to the dangerous political conditions. His father's legacy lives on the gemstones he spent years digging in the heart of Africa. Mr. Bridges is credited with the discovery of Tsavorite and for many years was a consultant to Tiffany and Company. Most of the speakers came with gems that could be examined close-up for teaching purposes. The Tsavorites were superb examples of some of the best gemstones I have ever seen close-up. Since green is my favorite color of gem I was in awe of the examples! Pricing of these gems has continued to skyrocket due the remaining availability.

Today my husband will accompany me to the AGTA show as we search for the list of gems customers have recently requested. Over the next week we will visit many of the nearly 50 additional shows about town in our quest for the unusual and fashionable. Hope you can stop in and see the treasures upon our return at Eichhorn Jewelry in The Heart of Downtown Decatur.