

A newsletter from
Joseph's Jewelry
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By Joseph Mirsky, Gemologist and Proprietor

www.jewelrynewsletter.com

Your community Jeweler since 1987

Extreme Makeover Web Edition

If you bookmarked a page of the web site a while ago but now you got that page not found message it's because I've been fooling around with the site.

I originally did the site in Microsoft FrontPage, a perfectly miserable program which, however, I got for free.

Recently it started misbehaving and there was lots of back and forth between me and the people who host the site. Microsoft had stopped supporting the program and everyone hated it, so it was time to move on.

So I redid the site with new software that I actually paid for. Being but a humble jeweler and not a web site designer, it took a lot of fiddling for me to get it right.

I fiddled with the underlying structure a lot, i.e., where the pages live. I initially put each page in its own apartment. But before, they all hung out in the lobby. That's why you would have gotten that page not found message. Your stupid computer only knows where it was and can't figure out where it went. So I switched back to everyone in the lobby.

If you have problems, just type in www.jewelrynewsletter.com, go to whatever page you want to bookmark and add it to favorites, or drag a shortcut to it onto the desktop (see below) and you'll be back in business (and so will I).

Size the browser window so you can see the desktop and drag the Internet Explorer icon next to the web address onto the desktop and the link will appear on your desktop.



If you want to e-mail the link to someone, right click on the link on your desktop and select properties. Select the Web Document tab. The address will be selected in the window. (If it's not, highlight it with the cursor). With the cursor in the window, right click and select copy. Open your e-mail program and in the body of the message right click again and select paste. The link will appear underlined in the message.

The Sound of One Hand Clapping

Part I (Fall 2000)

I sold an excellent sterling silver ring with a large opal, a nice heavy ring. A week later, the customer came in with the bottom of the ring bent out of shape. It seems that she had gone to a Broadway show and had applauded vigorously.

Silver is quite soft and even heavy pieces are easily bent.

Part II

Another opal story. A ring with two opals was too large and when the woman wearing it applauded, it spun around to the bottom of her finger and smashed into the bottom of a ring on the other hand, shattering the opal.

Practice Zen applause.

I Can't Win

I finally convinced people that, since I do work 7 days a week, I slack off Monday and Tuesday by only coming in from 2 - 4 in the afternoon. That way if you need to see me for service on those days, you can schedule your visit accordingly.

Now I'm hearing from a lot of people who think I am only there from 2 - 4 every day.

Perhaps a mnemonic will help. Lazy Joe sleeps in Monday, and Tuesday too, but rises at dawn the rest for you.

Deep Thought
Good principles make bad dogma



Hummingbird locket in 14 karat with colorful enamel. \$135. See it in color on the web.

The Latest Googles

It always restores my faith in the absurdity of life when I get my web site statistics. Here's the latest search terms that brought people to the site.

counting dollar bills fast by hand

There's an article on the site called "Finger Lickin' Bad that asks you to please not lick your thumb to count money (excused for counting hundred dollar bills).

diamond static electricity

There are anti-static floor mats with a diamond pattern on them.

explained in one page

What needed to be explained in one page isn't in the query, but the description of *Ornamentally Incorrect* (the book of the newsletters) states "In It's the Economy, Stupid, economics is handily explained in one page, so you can throw out that dense econ 101 textbook you never understood."

zirconia from your pets ashes

It's diamonds they make from your or your pet's ashes, since we are carbon-based life-forms. There is only 1 mg of zirconium in the human body (.005 carat).

symbolism in a diamond as big as the ritz

The article "A Diamond as Big as the Ritz" is mentioned in the book description but this is a course in jewelry, not literature. (Maybe I'll take it up some dark and stormy night.) By the way, that diamond is as big as the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in the 1922 F. Scott Fitzgerald fable.

what to write in a jewellery newsletter
Hey! This stuff is ©copyrighted.

Going Bust

Victoria's Secret has unveiled The 2008 Black Diamond Fantasy Miracle Bra.

The underwear features 3575 black diamonds, 117 certified 1 carat white diamonds and 34 rubies. Two pear-shaped black diamond drops weighing 100 carats total hang down from the center. (It seems to me that the drops would exert a gravitational effect counter to the purpose of the garment.)

\$5 million. Size not given.

11/17/08 11/16/07 11/17/06

Gold	734	790	621
Silver	9.50	14.45	12.75
Platinum	814	1450	1160

London afternoon fix

You can get live precious metals prices on the web site.

Buried Treasure

Joseph's buys old gold for cash, so go through your stuff and pick out any dead gold or platinum jewelry. The weight of 4 pennies or 2 nickels will get you \$94 for 14 karat gold at \$734 gold. By the way, that's a good price. And you can add 10% to that for store credit instead of cash.

You can sell silver, too, but it takes a lot of it to add up. You'll need over a pound of sterling silver to get \$100. But be aware that silver candlesticks, bowls, and knife handles are hollow and filled with cement. Which has to be removed (with hammer and tongs) before weighing.

People have been asking what I do with the gold. I sell it to a refiner after I've accumulated a sufficient amount. I make a small percentage on big numbers. You get a lot, I get a little of all your lots. It's a win-win situation.

Where the Yellow Goes

Yes, your gold gets melted at a refinery but that's incidental to the refining process.

A refiner takes your 14, 10, or 18 karat and turns it back into 24 karat. This is done chemically.

The most common process bubbles chlorine gas through the molten gold scrap. This turns the other metals in the alloy, copper and silver mainly, into chlorides, which float on top of the melt and are skimmed off. This leaves at least 98% gold which is further refined by an electroplating process to 99.95% purity.

Another process refines the gold by dissolving it in aqua regia, a mixture of nitric and hydrochloric acids. (This is what I use to test your gold. It's bad stuff. Don't lick your fingers when you're done.)

The pure gold is then turned back into karat gold by adding alloying metals to make more jewelry

Attention Winos

I reported to you in the Spring issue that Liv-ex, the London International Vintners Index of 100 fine wines rose 40% in 2007; gold only went up 31%.

I guess nothing is recession-proof. The Liv-ex fell 12.4% in October. Gold fell 17%.

But that bottle of wine I buy every Saturday is still a deflation-resistant 8 bucks.

Wrap Rage

6000 people go to emergency rooms each year with injuries caused by trying cut open those sealed-in-heavy-plastic packages that let you see stuff but not steal stuff.

It's made people so mad the industry has had to give it a name: wrap rage.

Amazon has started a "frustration-free packaging" program, getting some toy and electronic manufacturers to ship their products in low-tech cardboard boxes.

Joseph's has long had frustration-free packaging. Here are the directions for opening all those holiday gifts you're going to buy here.

- A. Locate seam in gift wrap
- B. Insert finger
- C. Rip

On the Road Again

Hot Wheels, the toy car brand of Mattel, celebrated its 40th anniversary and its 4 billionth car by commissioning a diamond-encrusted muscle car.

The 1:64 scale car is cast in 18 karat white gold. 2700 white and blue diamonds weighing 22.94 carats cover the car. The hood opens to reveal black and white diamonds set in the engine. The tail lights are set with rubies.

The custom made presentation case sports 40 white diamonds. \$140,000.

I wouldn't roll it past the dog.

How It's Done — Gem Identification

The refractive index of a gem is a measure of its ability to bend light. This measurement is critical to gem identification. An instrument called a refractometer can precisely measure refractive index. A gem is placed on the glass of the instrument with a drop of contact liquid and light from a monochromatic yellow light source (not shown) enters the back of the instrument. Some of the light enters the stone and some is reflected off of it. This creates a dark/light boundary. The reflected light is directed onto a scale. The higher the refractive index, the higher up the scale is the dark/light boundary.

In this demonstration a golden tourmaline is used. Tourmaline belongs to a class of crystals that splits a beam of light which then takes two paths through the stone. Each ray has its own refractive index. A polarizing filter fitted over the lens of the instrument can pick out each ray separately when rotated slightly. The low reading of 1.62 and the high reading of 1.64 are clearly seen in the photographs and conclusively identify the gem as tourmaline. The right photo is the reading from an amethyst, quartz, at the low reading of 1.54 (the high reading is 1.55).

The limiting factor of the instrument is the refractive index of the contact liquid, which has to be higher than that of the gem. Unfortunately the only liquid that won't poison you or burst into flames has a refractive index of 1.81 and so limits the range of the instrument to that or below. This covers most gems but excludes diamond (2.417), zircon (1.96), and cubic zirconia (2.15-2.20 depending on composition).



Seiko for Him

These watches have no battery. Electricity is continuously generated by movement and is stored in the watch. A full charge will power the watch for 6 months without wearing it.



SKH640
Two-tone. 100 meter water-resistance, suitable for swimming and shallow diving. \$243.75



SKA 296
Titanium. 100 meter water-resistance, suitable for swimming and shallow diving. \$393.75

Restoration Dept.

Faceted gemstones can only be restored when they get scratched up from wear by removing the stone and sending it to a lapidary for repolishing.

But some cabochon (dome-shaped) stones I can polish for you without removing the stone.

Mother-of-pearl and malachite are soft enough to be simply buffed on a polishing wheel. Lapis, black onyx, opals, moonstones and some others I can polish with a special diamond-impregnated miniature buff.

I may be able to polish the table facet on a faceted stone if the scratches are not too deep.

Road Kill

Occasionally people bring in a ring that was annihilated by a car and expect a miracle.

Well, miracles do happen. A flattened ring without a lot of complicated stones and prongs can often be restored. The ring can be carefully rounded, cracks repaired, and polished.

But hollow earrings, squashed by a car or your pet bird – fuhgeddaboutit.

This is a rerun from Holiday 01.

Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?

Sure. A quarter, even. If you need to feed the meter and don't have change I will donate the tariff. But then you have to feel guilty and buy something.

Executive Compensation

The usual argument for giving the CEO more money than anyone could ever spend is that he did great things for the company.

But this does not address the point at issue. The point is not how great the accomplishment, but what great accomplishments are worth.

Here's the answer: nothing anybody ever did is worth that much money.

Do you think all the CEOs would quit if all they could get was a measly million a year?

After all, they're just salarymen. If they need that kind of money, let them go out and start their own businesses so they can keep it all. (Hint: it's not so easy.)

Here's a better incentive: succeed or be fired.

(Adapted from *Ornamentally Incorrect*)

Helen of Ploy

You may see "helenite" advertised, purported to be from the eruption of Mt. St. Helens in 1980. One would think that the volcano had spewed inexpensive emerald look-a-likes to atone for killing that stubborn old codger, Harry Truman (no relation), who refused to leave his cabin.

The Gemological Institute of America examined specimens of "helenite" and found it to be man-made glass, containing no volcanic ash.

(This is a re-run from Spring '03)



It's the Economy, Stupid*

Let me remind you that credit is the lifeblood of business, the lifeblood of prices and jobs.

It is just as important that business keep out of government as that government keep out of business.

Prosperity cannot be restored by raids upon the public Treasury

With impressive proof on all sides of magnificent progress, no one can rightly deny the fundamental correctness of our economic system.

Economic depression cannot be cured by legislative action or executive pronouncement. Economic wounds must be healed by the action of the cells of the economic body - the producers and consumers themselves.

— Herbert Hoover

* "The Economy, Stupid" was on a sign in Bill Clinton's Little Rock campaign office during the 1992 campaign intended to remind the staff to stay on message.

Spreading the Wealth

It is not very unreasonable that the rich should contribute to the public expense, not only in proportion to their revenue, but something more than in that proportion.

— Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 1776.

The income tax was instituted in 1913 following the ratification of the 16th amendment and was progressive – the wealthy paid more.

The 16th amendment¹ was passed because the Constitution had originally required that taxes be levied in proportion to each state's population.²

In 1895, the Supreme Court struck down a law imposing a 2% tax on incomes over \$4000 (\$98,000 today), holding that it violated the constitutional requirement of apportionment by population.

In 1909, liberals proposed attaching an income tax to a tariff bill. Conservatives pushed instead for a constitutional amendment thinking it would never pass but the strategy boomeranged.

1. The Congress shall have power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several States, and without regard to any census or enumeration.

2. Article I, sections 2 and 9

Seiko for Her



SXGM46 – left

Two-tone. 50 meter water resistance, suitable for shower or pool. \$281.25 Also available in gold-tone.

SUJF14 – right

Goldtone. 30 meter water resistant, splashes or rain. \$187.50. Also available in black finish.

Beethoven's 10th, 11th, 12th

LifeGem, the company that will squeeze what's left of you (or your pet) after cremation into a diamond, made diamonds from Beethoven's hair.

The hair was provided by a Westport, Ct. autograph and memorabilia dealer who holds the Guinness World Record for the largest collection of famous locks, including Lincoln, Napoleon, Einstein, and (of course) Elvis.

130 mg. (.65 ct.) of carbon from this quintessential longhair's long hair were extracted from 10 strands and, with extra carbon added, were squeezed into 3 diamonds.

A .56 carat light blue diamond was listed on Ebay for \$1 million but sold for \$202,700 in September, 2007. The proceeds were donated to a charity for underprivileged children.

Of the other two diamonds, one was given to the hair collector and the other kept by LifeGem.

(This is an update from Fall '06)

Ebay Bans Ivory

Ebay will ban listings for ivory effective Jan. 1, 2009. The ban follows a report by the International Fund for Animal Welfare that tracked over 7000 Internet listings of animal products in 11 countries. The report found that three quarters of the listings were for elephant products and that the majority of the listings were on Ebay.

Ebay filters will screen listings for "ivory" or "elephant".

The elephant population has decreased from 1.3 million in 1979 to 470,00 today due to the illegal slaughter of these magnificent animals.

An excellent substitute for ivory is the tagua nut, also called vegetable ivory, the seed of a South American palm tree found in the Amazon rainforest. The seed is so hard it has to cut with a hacksaw.

The use of this material is not new. I have a gemological book published in the 1920's that discusses it and references to it have been found as early as 1750.

On the Road Again

Be careful driving to the store if you live on Breakneck Rd. In Oakland. Residents of Makemoney Ave. In Haskell are especially welcome. If you live on Sunrise Ave. in Bloomingdale, remember that the store opens at 10. If you live on Sunset Rd., check the closing hours below. Four Seasons Dr. In Wayne? I'll expect you rain or shine.

And if you live on Hard Bargain Rd. In Oak Ridge, have I got a deal for you!

Holiday Hours

**Open 10-8 Wednesday - Friday
Dec 18-20 and Monday and Tuesday
Dec. 22 - 23**

HOURS

MON - WED 10 - 6

THU - FRI 10 - 8

SAT 10 - 6

SUN 12 - 4

**Closed Sunday Memorial
Day to Labor Day**

**Open Christmas Eve until the last
desperado comes in, about 5:30.**



Olden Goldie

A 2000 year old gold earring was recently found in an archeological excavation in a parking lot in the City of David section of Jerusalem.

The earring is made of gold with pearls and emeralds and is in pristine condition.

The City of David is a hilltop from which King David dedicated Jerusalem as his capital 3,000 years ago. The earring dates from around the time of Christ in the Roman period

Findings from the Roman period are rare in Jerusalem because the city was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D.

Defense Dept.

Air Force One, the president's plane, is equipped with gold-plated reflectors. Gold reflects 99% of infrared radiation (heat). This confuses a missile's heat-seeking system.

Dessert

Here's a little tidbit to lighten your mood, from *Ornamentally Incorrect*, in a section called "Irritations"

- Decline of the fudgesicle. Fudgesicles circa 1957 lived in a dry ice freezer, the kind with the foot-thick doors on top. For a nickel, you would get a rock-hard, deep chocolate treat. It came with a wrapper with a red ball on it that stuck to it so that it was impossible to remove completely. It was so dense, it lasted for an hour. In a pinch it could be used as a hammer.

Now a fudgesicle is like frozen mousse. Why, you can actually bite off a piece! One shudders to think what they've done to the orange creamsicle.

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