

# THE J REPORT

Winter 2008  
Volume 12, No. 4

## Inside

### IN THE NEWS 2

Members Holiday Strategies

### MEMBER BENEFITS 3

GIA & JA Partnership

\$500 Sweepstakes from GE Money

### EDUCATION 4-5

JA New York Winter Seminars

Bench Certification Scholarships

### PUBLIC AFFAIRS 6

Legislation Passed

JAPAC Fundraising

### INDUSTRY NEWS 7

JJC GEM Awards

Matt Runci at GIA Panel

### BONUS BENEFITS 8

Greater FedEx Discounts

## JA Members Meet the Holiday Challenge

*Across the country, jewelers are proactive for holiday 2008*

**J**ewelers of America – which has been providing daily retail tips to jewelers through its Thriving in 2008 “Tips to Thrive” microsite and weekly e-newsletter – interviewed members recently about the proactive ways they approached this challenging holiday season for all retailers.

Jewelers of America members across the country have stayed positive and have focused on strong relationships with their customers and communities.

“The reality is that Santa is still coming and people are purchasing,” says Jewelers of America Chairman John Green, owner of Lux Bond & Green, West Hartford, CT.

### CONNECTING WITH CONSUMERS & STAYING POSITIVE

While relationships are always important to the business, Jewelers of America retailers say this year they are critical. Michael Pollak, CEO of Hyde Park Jewelers, which has headquarters in Denver, CO, and locations in Phoenix, AZ, and Las Vegas, NV, says that the attitude and approach retailers take this year is key.

“It is really easy to get caught up in the negative news of the day, and it’s important for all retailers not to reflect that negativity when a client comes in the store,” he says. “We’re in the celebration business and people have many things to celebrate over the holidays; that’s where the focus needs to be.”

Pollak is also reinforcing customer relationships. He says those retailers who wait for shoppers to come into their store could have a tough time, while those

who reach out will be rewarded with a good or decent season.

“The success of the season will depend more than ever before not on the marketing that a jewelry company does, but on the one-to-one points of contact between sales associates and their clients,” he says.

Coleman Clark, president of B.C. Clark Jewelers, Oklahoma City, OK, says he’s focusing on the store’s top customers. For example, the three-store independent usually gives out a no-strings attached gift certificate to the top 5% of its customers. This year, Clark says they expanded that to include the top 10% of customers in order to build traffic.

“We’re focusing on unit sales and encouraging people to call their best customers and get them in the store and build relationships,” he says.

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH

As in years past, Jewelers of America members are making sure to support the communities they operate in during this holiday season.

John Henne, president & CEO of Henne Jewelers, Pittsburgh, PA, says the store continues to give more than 15% of its marketing budget to support about 40 to 60 charities annually. The efforts include everything from donations of jewelry to sponsorships.

“I’m on the board of two local charities, and we understand the needs that they have and the good they do for the community,” he says. “It has been neat to hear clients say, one of the reasons I shop here is because of how much you give back to the community.”

Jewelers of America Board Member Jeff Corey, president of Day’s Jewelers, Waterville, ME,



**“Santa is still coming and people are purchasing.”**

– John Green, Jewelers of America Chairman



**“We’re encouraging people to call their best customers and get them in the store.”**

– Coleman Clark, B.C. Clark Jewelers

#### ROUTING BOX:

Be sure to initial and pass on among store staff.

## JA Members Ready To Thrive [cont.]



says his store has also emphasized giving back to the community. As part of Day’s “Diamonds for Peace” program, the store donates \$10 of every diamond sold to charity. Additionally, the store is a major sponsor of community children’s Christmas programs.

“Organizations are having a tough time finding sponsors, so our investment is much more appreciated during these tough times,” Corey says.

### PRODUCT & MARKETING MIX

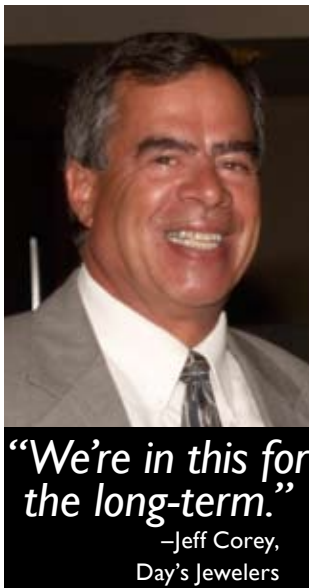
Jewelers of America jewelers recognize some customers may cut back this year, so they are making sure their inventory matches consumer need. John Green says sales staff needs to reassure customers that the store has the right merchandise in the right price ranges.

Jewelers of America Board Vice-Chair Georgie Gleim, president of Gleim the Jeweler, which has three stores in Palo Alto, CA, says the store has a mix of price points, but is highlighting more affordable items. “I think we’ll see far more people spending \$5,000 and under,” she says. “We’re trying to strategically display pieces in our window that are under \$1,000.” Gleim is also emphasizing the store’s estate jewelry business, with product in the \$100 to \$300 range.

Coleman Clark says B.C. Clark is maintaining its advertising budget. “If anything, we’re probably going to do a little more image advertising, as opposed to product advertising, to reach people’s emotions and connections to us,” he says.

Jeff Corey says Day’s hired a photographer, copywriters and a full web team to get product live on its website, [www.daysjewelers.com](http://www.daysjewelers.com). An October promotion, where they gave away Chamilia bracelets to customers, drew 5,000 people to one of their stores over a five-day period. He acknowledges that it was a pricey promotion, but worth it to get people through the front door.

“We’re in this for the long-term,” Corey says.



## Tightening the Belt: Lee Michaels Fine Jewelry



Jewelers of America members are also taking a hard look at where they can cut costs. **Lee Berg**, president & CEO of Lee Michaels Fine Jewelry, Baton Rouge, LA, says the store, with eight locations, held an executive meeting in order to map out its business strategy for the holiday season.

Among the cost saving measures implemented were a salary and hiring freeze, and the elimination of dedicated gift wrappers and overtime. In terms of advertising, Berg says he hasn’t cut the budget, but he has renegotiated contracts – a measure that’s led to tremendous savings.

Having survived the loss of two stores to Hurricane Katrina, Berg says he’s weathered other storms and plans to make it through this one as well. “We’re going to make sure that we’re solvent when we come through this,” he says.

## JA Board of Directors

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**Matthew A. Runci**, President & CEO  
**Peggy Jo Donahue**, Director of Public Affairs  
**David Peters**, Director of Education

Susan Thea Posnock, Writer, *The J Report*  
 Lauren Thompson, Editor, *The J Report*  
 Orasa Weldon, Art Director, *The J Report*

## JA Forms Strategic Partnership with GIA

The partnership will provide JA members with greater access to top jewelry education

In November, Jewelers of America and the Gemological Institute of America (GIA) announced that they have agreed to work together on a variety of projects starting in 2009, to better fulfill the missions of both nonprofit organizations and directly benefit their constituencies.

GIA's mission to protect the public trust is closely compatible with the mission of Jewelers of America to improve consumer confidence. **The two institutions will collaborate in the following areas:**

- GIA will give **Jewelers of America members special access to GIA's highly respected professional education** in gemology, business management, sales professionalism and bench jeweler training.
- GIA is also in the process of making much of its curricula available via its **web-based eLearning platform, so that Jewelers of America members, who can no longer afford time out-of-store to attend on-site learning events, will still be able to educate themselves and their sales associates in an efficient and cost-effective manner.**

**“Jewelers of America is delighted to partner with GIA to facilitate the delivery of educational programs to our members, as well as to work on other key projects... We are certain it will benefit our 11,000 member stores.”**

- Matthew A. Runci,  
JA President & CEO

- Jewelers of America will contribute its expertise in the certification of bench jewelers. It will work with GIA's Jewelry Arts Program to assist in the **promotion and fulfillment elements of the Jewelers of America Bench Professional**

**Certification program**, which will undergo a complete overhaul in 2009.

- **GIA will continue to develop and promote consumer education materials** to explain diamond grading, the Four Cs of diamond quality, colored stones, pearls and other specialized information. These materials will support Jewelers of America members' professional image, and increase consumers' understanding of fine jewelry.
- **Jewelers of America will share its expertise in public and national government affairs with GIA** in the form of timely communications and background materials when business responsibility issues arise in the jewelry supply chain or the public sector.
- **GIA and Jewelers of America also plan to cooperate in the area of career development to attract more and better job candidates to the jewelry industry.** Both organizations have established scholarship programs, career information projects and other similar services.

## Win \$500 Visa Gift Card from JA & GE Money\*

**Jewelers of America members enrolled in GE Money's luxury financing program are eligible to win one of seven \$500 Visa Gift Cards just for previewing the GE Money Marketing Toolkit, between now and February 14, 2009.\***



GE Money website: [www.gemoney.com/marketingtoolkit](http://www.gemoney.com/marketingtoolkit).  
GE Money's marketing toolkit is an online tool that helps you create customized marketing campaigns with branded materials, like direct mail, signage and in-store displays to attract customers to your store.

### Enroll For Eligibility

If you're not already signed up for the GE Money program through JA, it's not too late to be eligible for the sweepstakes! Benefits include the ability to offer generous credit

lines and special promotions to your customers, a branded card with your store name to increase customer loyalty, and access to powerful business-building tools, like the marketing toolkit. Enroll today and start reaping the rewards (and perhaps that extra \$500 bonus).

For more information or to enroll, call 800-244-7354 or visit [www.growwithfinancing.com](http://www.growwithfinancing.com).

*\*Participants will be limited to one entry per User ID. Winners will be notified by March 1, 2009.*

### It's Easy To Enter

GE Money program participants will receive one chance to win a \$500 Visa Gift Card, when they click on the GE Marketing Toolkit link at the





## Free Seminars: 2008 JA New York Winter Show

**Don't miss any of the outstanding educational opportunities at the JA New York Winter Show, January 18 - 19, 2008.** Jewelers of America is hosting two-days of free educational seminars covering need-to-know information for every retail jewelry professional, from some of the industry's leading experts. The seminars are located in the Jewelers of America Retail Learning Center at the Jacob Javits Convention Center. No registration is required.

Sunday, January 18

**10:15 AM - 11:30 AM**  
**When the Going Gets Tough, the Tough Take Action: Strategies to Maximize Sales**

*Brad Huisken, Principal, IAS Training*

This interactive and motivational seminar focuses on how best to sell fine jewelry in a challenging economic climate. In today's retail environment, Huisken believes that when people come into a retail jewelry store, they are not necessarily looking for jewelry. What they are looking for is a place and a person from whom to buy jewelry.

With competition increasing from mass merchandisers, other retailers and the Internet, compounded by the negative perception the media promotes to the public about our industry, retailers today have to learn how to sell themselves and their store before they can effectively sell their products.

**You'll learn:**

- How salespeople can help "brand" the store
- Telephone sales campaigns
- Three key responsibilities of a salesperson
- How to handle objections
- Customer follow-up, analyzing lost sales and much more.

**11:45 AM - 1:00 PM**  
**Working with Gemstones at the Jeweler's Bench**

*Arthur Skuratowicz, President, Jewelry Training Center, Inc.*

One wrong decision in regards to working with a mounted gemstone could cost you or your store thousands of dollars. With all the new

gems, new treatments and a multitude of gem look-alikes, it's critical that the professional bench jeweler have the skills and confidence to make smart decisions when working at the bench.

This seminar is based on the popular book *Working with Gemstones: A Bench Jeweler's Guide*, co-authored by Arthur Skuratowicz and Julie Nash. It will help you better understand how to work on gem-set jewelry.

**You'll learn:**

- How various gems react to heat and pressure.
- How to modify mountings for specific stones.
- How to identify treatments and enhancements to avoid damaging often-irreplaceable gemstones.
- Tools and techniques used in jewelry shops with an emphasis on specific threats that often lead to gemstone damage.

**1:15 - 2:30 PM**  
**Jewelry Quality Control Issues**

*Arthur Skuratowicz, President, Jewelry Training Center, Inc.*

Your service department is key to your store's overall success, so it is critical that you control the quality level of jewelry that goes out on the market. This seminar will help you put a comprehensive quality control system in place to ensure high levels of customer satisfaction.

The information covered can also be easily applied to quality control issues related to new jewelry merchandise, so you will be able to institute a store-wide quality control system for both repairs and stock merchandise.

**Attend this informative seminar and discover how to:**

- Put together a checklist of characteristics to look for when judging the quality of jewelry.

- Open up channels of communication between the bench jeweler, sales associates and managers.
- Establish an operating procedure to create the ideal environment for a trained individual to grade the jewelry leaving your service department.

**2:45 - 4:00 PM**  
**Make Your Store Stand Out: Presentation Techniques & New Trends**

*Andy Macaulay, Director of Marketing, Chippenhook, Inc.*

Product presentation plays a critical role to your store's success. And there's more to product presentation than just facilitating the buying and selling environment. Your presentation must also create an interactive sensory experience that causes the customer to return and tell their friends about the experience.

**You'll learn:**

- Time-proven techniques and the newest trends of product presentation to improve your brand's perception and give you a competitive edge.
- A creative, step-by-step method of producing windows, showcases and wall cases that stand out from the visual clutter in today's retail marketplace.
- The practical aspects of space allocation, merchandising and traffic patterns – and how they interact to increase sales.
- How to develop a winning presentation strategy that will make your store an exciting shopping environment that engages customers emotionally and leads to more closed sales.



**4:15 – 5:15 PM****If “I’m Just Looking” is the Answer, It’s Time to Change the Question!***Brad Huisken, Principal, IAS Training*

This fun and motivational session details some of the most common bad habits that salespeople develop and how to effectively overcome them.

Did you know, saying “Can I help you?” will get an “I’m Just Looking” every time? And that saying things like “Will that be all” or “To tell you the truth” will almost always lead to a negative response from customers. And sales presentations using industry jargon often confuse customers causing them to leave your store without making a purchase.

Huisken believes a critical part of the selling process is a series of questions, the **Seven Essential Questions**, that salespeople should ask in virtually all sales presentations. The Seven Essential Questions are designed to get the maximum amount of information from the customer. In addition, in every selling situation, there is always a “next best question.”

**Attend this seminar and the Seven Essential Questions will become your most effective sales tool, as you begin to close more and more sales.**

Monday, January 19

**11:45 AM – 1:00 PM****Selling in Challenging Times***David Peters, Director of Education, Jewelers of America*

Today, the media seems intent on directing us to think negatively and to accept a slow economy as a barrier to success. But with the right tools and attitude, a professional jewelry retailer can still thrive in challenging times. Our challenge is to create a philosophy that builds stronger relationships, fulfills the needs of our organization and makes customers want to buy from us.

**Topics covered include:**

- Foundations of customer care

- Acquiring and using customer information and feedback
- Improve customer communications
- Management skills for tough times
- Tough-times selling strategies
- Practical tools to create a store culture where everyone thrives and wins

Discover ways to build more connected teams, better communication, extraordinary service and greater levels of customer satisfaction and retention.

**2:30 PM – 3:45 PM****Market or Die: How to Grow Your Jewelry Sales in a Challenging Economy***Rafael Mael, Marketing Strategist, Brand Launcher*

With the economy on the rocks, the stock market in a free-fall and consumers in conservation mode, it’s a scary time to be in the jewelry business. What used to work just isn’t working anymore. What can you do to get maximum impact from your marketing budget?

At the JA New York Summer Show, jewelry marketing expert Rafael Mael rocked attendees with five powerful, proven strategies for jewelers to boost foot traffic and drive more sales in today’s economy. **Come to his riveting presentation and find out:**

- The costliest mistake even successful jewelry stores make in promoting their businesses
- How to leverage your budget by targeting only “hungry fish”
- The most successful advertisement in history – and how to copy it
- Three out-of-the-box strategies for marketing to your best customers
- The secret of “next stepping” – moving prospects from “cold” to “hot”
- The single most powerful word to use in your marketing materials (*and it’s not ‘free’ or ‘you’*)

The information you gain could be worth tens of thousands of dollars – even if you only apply a small part of what Rafael will show you.

# Scholarships for Bench Certification Still Available

**Jewelers in select southern states can take advantage of the special JA Bench Professional Certification scholarship fund established by wholesale supplier Southeastern Findings Inc. earlier this year.**

The JA Bench Professional Certification program – open to all bench jewelers – evaluates a bench jeweler’s talent based on set industry standards. There are scholarships still available for three levels of JA Bench Professional Certification: JA Certified Bench Jeweler (CBJ), JA Certified Senior Bench Jeweler (CSBJ) and JA Certified Master Bench Jeweler (CMBJ).

**The Southeastern Findings Scholarship is available to jewelers located in:**

- Georgia
- Florida
- Tennessee
- North Carolina
- Virginia
- Kentucky

**How To Apply**

Bench jewelers in these states, who have yet to earn certification or are interested in advancing their current JA Bench Professional Certification level, should visit [www.jewelers.org](http://www.jewelers.org) to download a scholarship application.

To learn more about the JA Bench Professional Certification program, email Director of Education David Peters at [davidpeters@jewelers.org](mailto:davidpeters@jewelers.org) or call 310-287-1161.

Southeastern Findings, Inc. specializes in findings, mountings, tools and wedding bands. Visit [www.sefindings.com](http://www.sefindings.com).

# Depreciation on Store Improvements Passed

The legislation, passed by Congress as part of the financial rescue bill, is vital to jewelers

**I**n October, a two-year extension of the 15-year depreciation on store improvements was passed by Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush. It has been extended until the end of 2009.

**The important depreciation measure was part of a tax “extenders” package attached to the financial rescue bill.** The depreciation measure was previously only available to leaseholders, but **has now been expanded to include property owners.**

“Jewelers of America welcomes the extension of this important depreciation measure, which will help jewelers – whether they rent or own their retail space – to refurbish their stores more often to stay competitive,” says Jewelers of America President and CEO Matthew A. Runci.

## WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU

In a challenging and competitive luxury retail environment, being able to keep stores updated and refurbished – thanks to speeded-up depreciation of store improvements – is a key component to success.

**The measure enables retailers to continue to write-off improvements on stores over a period of 15**

**years, instead of the 39 years that previously had been mandated.**

Jewelers of America applauds the expansion of the rule to include property owners who are also facing challenging economic times.

## JAPAC SUPPORT

Jewelers of America had worked originally to have the store improvements depreciation measure included in an economic stimulus package passed by Congress in the aftermath of 9/11. Each time the measure has come up for an extension, the association has contacted legislators on Capitol Hill to support it.

**The association’s political action committee, JAPAC, has also focused its donations on legislators who work on legislation of vital interest to retailers, such as depreciation for store improvements.** “JAPAC has enabled jewelers to have a voice in government on the issues that are critical to jewelers’ bottom lines,” says Runci.

For more information on JAPAC, the depreciation measure and other legislative issues Jewelers of America is currently following, visit the Public Affairs section of JA’s website: [www.jewelers.org/publicaffairs/monitoring.html](http://www.jewelers.org/publicaffairs/monitoring.html).

**“This important depreciation measure will help jewelers – whether they rent or own their retail space – to refurbish their stores more often to stay competitive.”**

– Matthew A. Runci,  
President & CEO



## Support The Legislative Successes That Benefit Your Bottom Line!



**The Jewelers of America Political Action Committee (JAPAC) makes contributions to candidates at the federal level, who understand the interests of the jewelry industry.**

The next two years will be a critical period in Washington D.C., with tax issues a major concern in light of the economic downturn.

JAPAC needs your support to ensure that legislators stay focused on the issues that matter to the jewelry industry, such as the store improvements measure (above).

Individual contributions to JAPAC help us maintain a sustained and proactive voice on Capitol Hill that’s heard by influential legislators.



**To learn more, get involved or donate, visit [www.jewelers.org](http://www.jewelers.org) and click on Public Affairs.**

# JIC GEM Awards: New Host, Exciting Launch

Jewelry Information Center's annual industry gala will debut new host and JIC consumer marketing initiative

Jewelry Information Center (JIC) will officially launch a new consumer marketing initiative at its annual GEM Awards gala on January 9, 2009. The consumer marketing initiative is designed to increase consumer interest and excitement for fine jewelry and watches in the New Year.

"Launching this initiative at the GEM Awards is important," says David Bouffard, JIC Board Chairman. Like the initiative, "the GEM Awards are a celebration of achievement and a means of acknowledging those who are helping to support the continued growth of the jewelry industry."

The new, primarily web-based initiative will generate a high level of consumer interaction by using viral marketing and web-based advertising to encourage consumers to visit a redesigned JIC website ([www.jic.org](http://www.jic.org)) to "Tell Your Jewelry Story." **JIC will offer supporting marketing materials to retailers, allowing them to tie into the campaign, and encourage their own customers to tell their jewelry stories.**

"The scale of this initiative is unprecedented for Jewelry Information Center," says Bouffard. "And, it comes at time when the jewelry industry needs it more than ever."

Bouffard adds, "We encourage those who have not yet made plans for being part of the 2009 GEM Awards to consider attending."



Samantha Harris

This has been Jewelry Information Center's mission for over 64 years," says Bouffard.

Adding to the excitement of the evening, Samantha Harris will be the new host and master of ceremonies.

## THE HONOREES & NEW HOST

The 2009 Jewelry Information Center GEM Awards gala honorees are Glenda Bailey, editor-in-chief since 2001 of *Harper's Bazaar* magazine, who will be recognized with a Gem Award for Excellence in Journalism; Chopard will be presented with the GEM Awards for Corporate Communications; Music mogul and fashion entrepreneur Russell Simmons will accept the GEM Award in the category of Jewelry Style.

"Each of the 2009 honorees adds a special dimension to our industry. In their own unique and qualified voice, each honoree raises the visibility and status of fine jewelry and watches as a gift of love directly to a wide range of consumers.

In prime time, Harris is most well-known as the co-host with Tom Bergeron of ABC's prevailing variety series *Dancing with the Stars*.

The event will be held at Cipriani 42nd Street, its long-standing location in the heart of Manhattan.

For further opportunities and ways to get involved in the exciting upcoming initiatives being introduced by Jewelry Information Center, contact Jewelry Information Center at 646-658-0240 or [info@jic.org](mailto:info@jic.org).

For more information, visit the GEM Awards on the web at [www.jic.org/aboutJIC/gemAwards.asp](http://www.jic.org/aboutJIC/gemAwards.asp)



Photo by Kevin Schumacher, courtesy of GIA

## JA at GIA Career Fair

Jewelers of America President & CEO Matthew A. Runci (right) details his career to a crowd of students and job seekers, during the "Working to Win" panel at the GIA West Coast Jewelry Career Fair in September. Runci participated in the panel as part of Jewelers of America's commitment to the expansion and diversification of professionals in the jewelry industry.

The panel was moderated by GIA President Donna Baker (far left), and included (L-R) Martin Katz, Martin Katz Ltd.; Stephen Silver, S.H. Silver Company; Edward Boehm, JOEB Enterprises; Paula Crevoshay, Mellika Co.



# Gain Greater FedEx Shipping Savings!

Jewelers of America members can now receive greater exclusive savings on FedEx Express® shipping services and the FedEx Declared Value program. New, easy online enrollment is available as well.

## Save up to 37% on Express Shipments

Save an additional 15% on FedEx Express U.S. shipping services, making the total discount for Jewelers of America members up to 37%!

## Save on the Declared Value Program

Receive a new reduced rate of 20 cents per \$100 (a 50% discount) in the FedEx Declared Exception Value Program. The FedEx Declared Value program, features enhanced surveillance measures and proactive tracking, providing added peace of mind when shipping specialty items, like jewelry, gemstones and precious metals. Eligible members can also declare a higher value, up to \$50,000 versus the standard maximum declared value of \$500.

These benefits are in addition to the exclusive discounts Jewelers of America members already receive, like:

- savings up to 15% on select FedEx Ground shipping services,
- up to 20% off select services for FedEx international shipments,
- up to 15% off select FedEx Kinko's services,
- an additional 5% discount on FedEx Express shipments processed on FedEx.com or with another approved FedEx automated shipping solution.

## Easy Online Enrollment!

Take advantage of this great member benefit at no cost! Open a new account or enroll your existing FedEx account, by visiting [www.jewelers.org](http://www.jewelers.org).

Or call 800-475-6708 and provide promotion code HOLIDAY.

For more information, contact a FedEx Association Advantage customer specialist at 800-475-6708, or contact Jewelers of America at 800-223-0673.



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