

2013 AGTA Board Elections

This year three positions are to be elected to the Board of the American Gem Trade Association. According to the AGTA By-Laws, the AGTA Firm Members will vote for the three positions to be filled by Directors, and the seated Board will elect the Officers' positions from within.

Members of the AGTA's Board whose terms of office expire in February 2013 are as follows:

Peter Bazar	Director
Sushil Goyal	Director
Cynthia Reneé (Zava)	Secretary

The following Board Members terms will continue:

Ruben Bindra	President
Robert Bentley	Vice President
Kambiz Sabouri	Vice President
John Bachman	Treasurer
Jeffrey Bilgore	Director
Bruce Bridges	Director
Betty Sue King	Director
Bill Larson	Director
Gerry Manning	Director
Niveet Nagpal	Director
Sampat Poddar	Director
Bear Williams	Director

The Nominating Committee was chaired by Past President Benjamin Hackman. The Committee Members were Jeffrey Bilgore, Neal Litman and Douglas Parker.

Candidates for Director for the 2013 AGTA Election are as follows: (Three to be elected)

Sushil Goyal	Liberty Gems, Inc.
Cyril Israeleff	ABSA USA, Inc.
Avi Raz	A & Z Pearls, Inc.
Cynthia Reneé (Zava)	Cynthia Reneé, Inc.
Simon Watt	Mayer & Watt

About AGTA Elections

WHO CAN VOTE IN AGTA ELECTIONS?

All AGTA Firm and Charter Members in good standing may vote. Ballots are enclosed for those Members.

"IN GOOD STANDING":

This means those have renewed their AGTA Membership for 2012. Members who are suspended may not vote.

FOR ALL MEMBERS' INFORMATION:

Members and Honorary Members are ineligible to vote. However, this Election Newsletter is sent to ALL Members and applicants for Membership to keep the entire organization and prospective Members informed on the election proceedings.

WHO SIGNS THE BALLOT?

Ballots MUST be signed by the designated Member of Record for each Member company. Ballots signed by persons other than the Member of Record cannot be tallied. The Member of Record for each company is the person whose name appears in the AGTA Source Directory, on all invoices and on AGTA correspondence.

VOTING DEADLINE:

In order to be counted, ballots must arrive at the AGTA office in Dallas, Texas by the close of business day, **September 10, 2012**. Ballots may be faxed to 972-620-8124.

VOTE COUNTING PROCEDURE:

Ballots will be held, sealed in their envelopes, until they are opened and counted by the Chief Executive Officer and two AGTA Members, as directed by the AGTA By-Laws. Any interested Member who wishes to observe the counting of the ballots is welcome to do so. Please contact the Chief Executive Officer for the time and location of this event. Election results will be reported to all AGTA Members shortly after the ballots are counted.

MEET YOUR 2013 AGTA BOARD IN TUCSON:

Newly-elected Board Members will be introduced at the general Membership meeting February 8, 2013 in Tucson and will take office at the Board meeting in Tucson. Please read the following pages for each candidate's views and goals before casting your votes on the enclosed ballot.



Sushil Goyal
Liberty Gems, Inc.
New York, NY

Cyril Israeleff
ASBA USA, Inc.
Sarasota, FL

Dear fellow AGTA members,

Many of you already know me from my past and current associations with IDCA, AGTA, ICA and others.

I work hard for my company, and for the integrity and promotion of the very precious products we market to our industry. In real estate, the most valuable asset is location, location, location. In our business, it is reputation, reputation, REPUTATION.

Should you give me your vote, I promise to work on three specific areas:

1. Never has it been more apparent to me the disparity between high and low end product lines offered by our membership. Our customers must be reassured, whether buying bulk calibrated or a single unheated stone, the AGTA name and reputation for disclosure stands behind every product we sell. The AGTA BRAND must remain sacrosanct.
2. Work closely with retailers to promote and create awareness of AGTA brand to consumers.
3. Make AGTA shows a better place to exhibit and buy.

Thank you for your consideration and - hopefully - your vote.

Sushil Goyal



Avi Raz

A & Z Pearls, Inc.
Los Angeles, CA

It is an honor to be asked to serve on the board of directors for AGTA, an organization I've been a firm member of since 1982. In fact, my company, A&Z Pearls, celebrated its 30th year as an exhibitor in the Gem Hall at the AGTA GemFair in Tucson this past February.

I welcome the opportunity to give back to an organization that I've belonged to for so long. Throughout my career in the jewelry business, I have served on the boards of many industry groups, including the JCK Las Vegas Show (since its inception) and the Jewelers Board of Trade.

Like most firm members of AGTA, I joined the organization to exhibit at its Tucson Gem Fair, a show that for many of us has grown to be a significant venue for revenue and new clients. The show is the bloodline of AGTA. Our association draws most of its operational revenue from the Tucson Gem Fair, and this venue is the most important event to promote our businesses. The Tucson Gem Fair is the only major gem show event in the U.S. market that belongs to its members.

We can probably all agree that the show has declined in its value to exhibitors, evident by some 60 vacant booths in the Gem Hall in Tucson this year, which I physically counted on the last day of the 2012 AGTA Gem Fair. AGTA corrected me that their record shows ONLY 46 vacant booths. We've also seen a reduction in the number and quality of qualified jewelry buyers in attendance.

While many reasons are to blame, including the economic meltdown and an overall change in the way we do business, the question remains: How do we return this show to be an essential event in a crowded, competitive marketplace?

As a board member, finding answers to this question would be my priority. I believe that we can no longer do things the way we always have. We need to reevaluate how we spend our money and target our activities, including actively courting, in person, quality jewelry stores by AGTA representatives equipped to discuss Tucson gem show-participation, assist with travel plans, and offer free gem and pearl sales training seminars to jewelry store personal. In so doing, we not only help recruit new buyers to the Tucson GemFair, we also help jewelers sell more color by expanding on a mission statement to educate the industry about gemstones and pearls.

Undoubtedly, the strength of our association is in its members. In the last seven to eight years, AGTA has experienced a serious decline in its firm membership. For our association, it is urgent that we stop this trend to recruit back members who left, as well as new ones. I propose that the annual fee for firm members be rolled back to its previous rate of \$500, with all rights and obligations of full membership.

Moreover, exhibitor booth fees should be reduced. This year's booth fees are on par with the current levels of all other shows in Tucson. They are also very similar to what Reed Exhibitions charges vendors to exhibit at the JCK show in Las Vegas. But the difference is that all other show organizers are companies that put on these shows to make hefty profits. In the past, higher exhibitor fees were justified to support the unprofitable AGTA Gem Lab. This burden no longer exists. It is projected that by the end of 2012 AGTA will enjoy nearly a million dollars of reserve. As of the day of this writings AGTA reached over \$750,000 in reserve.

Considering the economic challenges we all face today, it is time for AGTA to go to bat for its firm members. I propose AGTA reduce booth fees by at least \$500 per booth. In so doing, we can bring back exhibitors who left the show and recruit new color gem and pearl dealers to join our association and exhibit at our show. I believe this action will eliminate vacancies at the GemFair and build a healthy list of firm members on the wait list who wish to exhibit in Tucson, like we used to have in the past.

I am a big proponent of keeping members engaged in our organization, which is why I recently initiated a petition to return the vote for president of AGTA back to the firm membership. After noticing in a newsletter about the 2012 elections that members were not asked to vote for president, I discovered the board changed the bylaws where we the members no longer elect our president. The board asked the members for their approval without properly explaining to the members of the new By Laws impact. About 55% of our firm members signed the petition (186 out of 340), and the board is in the process of returning that right back to the members.

Moreover, I advocate a two-term term limit for board directors' service. If elected, I am committed to serve the maximum of two terms only. While I appreciate the time given by directors who've served for many years, we're not encouraging new blood and fresh ideas if we don't actively seek new officers.

I believe I can have a positive impact on the organization as a member of the board of directors, and hope you will give me the chance to strengthen the value of firm membership in AGTA and success of our most precious benefit, the Tucson GemFair, which would be my priority in office.

Thank you for your consideration.



Cynthia Renée (Zava)

Cynthia Renee, Inc.
Chapel Hill, NC

Firm Member since 1993

Currently serving as Board Secretary and Past Board Member (1995-1998) primary work on the Promotions Committee. Bachelor of Science in Geology, with honors thesis on a San Diego gem mine. Additional work in two other gem mines. Author, educator, seminar producer.

I serve the members. Common experience tells us that a Board member's effectiveness increases after they have spent two years learning how to operate on the Board. My re-election will give you a Board member who can hit the ground running and maximize Board effectiveness.

My qualifications, abilities and insights are unique within the gem and jewelry industry. As a Firm Member since 1993, I have the perspective of an "old" dealer originally wholesaling loose colored gemstones to jewelers, designers and manufacturers. And, for the last 13 years, my business model has been "new wave" in that I directly market to private gem and jewelry collectors, source and import colored gemstones and craft intricate award-winning jewelry. I offer experience with the high volume market from my show on QVC "Collecting Color with Cynthia Renee," and understand purchasing rough and cutting. Because of this varied background, I have a deeper understanding of all our members' needs, markets and possibilities.

AGTA, and its members, are trying to survive in an industry much different from when AGTA was founded. As originally conceived, AGTA doesn't fit our industry paradigm anymore with the original dealer of loose colored gems now offering jewelry, or selling retail. Retailers and manufacturers, our original customers, frequently source overseas. Since AGTA was founded, AGTA and its members have been tossed around in a sea of industry changes; we cannot sail towards our current goals anchored in an old mindset.

Just as our members have had to adjust over the decades since AGTA's conception, we likewise need to reengineer and redirect AGTA. We need a new association model that is more closely aligned with the realities of the current market place.

Of vital importance are the Constitution and the Show Rules as they go to the heart of running the association. The Constitution should not be frequently amended. It should be tightened up to eliminate ambiguities, conflicts and unenforceable rules. I believe we should focus our attention on improving our Tucson show - all we are stems from Tucson, and we have the ability to offer an experience enriching to our members and customers. We must be creatively proactive in maintaining our position as the greatest show in Tucson with the greatest members and exciting offerings.

We need to address our classifications of membership - they are no longer a smooth fit as most firms do many things. We need to review the classifications of membership and reconsider who are we serving, how we are benefiting our members and if our programs are directly impacting our members' business growth.

I want to help all of us build our businesses through the creative and professional implementation of cost effective promotional and educational programs. These programs must be tied to increase sales to AGTA Members, not just pave the way for overseas-based firms to harvest the fruit of our efforts.

While effectively addressing current industry issues and steering towards a new AGTA, we need to holistically deal with the patient, not slap on quick fix band-aids or make new rules that fit the moment without thinking of how they affect the whole for the present, the short term, and the future.

We are sailing in a changed sea. How do we all continue to thrive in this dynamic? What is AGTA's role, now and into the future? The answers require thoughtful consideration, an awareness of our past, our successes and our mistakes with a focus on tomorrow.

What I can promise is this: I am a visionary and creative problem solver with a critical and practical mind. I am a straight-talker - a team player while an independent thinker. I like to get things done, and I will work for the members, all of them.

We have accomplished great things in the past. We can be even better in the future. To do so, we need to have a clear vision of what we stand for as a group, and then do it.

Thank you.



Simon Watt

Mayer & Watt
Maysville, KY

I have been a member of AGTA since the mid 80's and spent 9 years serving on the board during the 90's. My passion for the natural colored gemstone business has never dimmed, but my passion for AGTA had. I was recently asked to chair a committee to review the Governing Documents of AGTA and my passion was re-ignited!

I have felt distanced from the organization over the past ten years and at times I have not been comfortable being part of this association, particularly walking the floor of our show in Tucson.

I fully understand that many, if not a majority, of our members have become part-time jewelry manufacturers and I am fully aware that the business world has shrunk significantly, due to the easy access of jet travel, the flight of American manufacturing to off-shore labor markets and the growth of the Internet. However the AMERICAN GEM TRADE ASSOCIATION was created to benefit a group of gemstone and cultured pearl dealers in Tucson and its mission is to promote those members companies.

There are a variety of Associations in the Jewelry Industry in North America dedicated to other segments, but AGTA was formed to promote and speak for gem and pearl dealers with established businesses in North America. I know that including all sectors of the jewelry industry in AGTA is important, but not as a priority.

I feel that our voice is being diluted and our reputation is being damaged.

There was a time that I could confidently refer my customer to any AGTA member exhibiting in our shows. I no longer feel that way and believe that until we enforce our Enhancement Code usage by our members, not just at shows, but throughout the whole year our reputation will continue to diminish.

There have been some tremendous achievements by AGTA during recent years. I believe that the various boards have in most cases worked for the betterment of our members. I do believe, however, that some of the board decisions have been misguided and that our direction as an association has become unfocused.

During the past four years of the recession we have all had to make sacrifices in our own companies and some of us have not survived at all. That is the nature of business, but I feel very strongly that our association has not been subject to the same austerity measures which most of us have implemented in order to weather the effects of the economic downturn. During this period of recession AGTA has managed to build a strong surplus, something I am in favor of, but why have the costs to our members not been reduced as a result? Have the payroll and other expenses of the Association been cut sufficiently? What actual benefits have you, as a member, seen improve? Are you happy to write the check for Annual dues, knowing that you are getting "real" value for money in return?

I do not claim to have all the answers to the problems that face our Trade, but I can guarantee you that if you elect me to the board of directors, I WILL ask the hard questions and you will be able to expect an answer from me.

I respectfully ask for you to think hard about what kind of future you want for our industry and if I have touched a nerve, then vote for me.

By-Laws of The American Gem Trade Association

Article VI: Standing Committees

Section 4 Nominating Committee/Election Process of the Board of Directors

The Nominating Committee shall consist of a Chairman who is the immediate past-president of the Board of Directors and at least three (3) Firm or Charter members, who shall be selected by the Chair. Other members may be added by as desired for geographical, categorical or other demographic balance.

- 1) Nominations Committee present the proposed slate at the June Board meeting;
- 2) Nominees will be announced in June
- 3) Additional nominees accepted if duly qualified (Nomination Committee or Petition)
- 4) Ballots will be sent out in August and votes tabulated in early September;
- 5) In September the new Directors will be announced;
- 6) New Directors will assume their positions in February.

By a three-fourths vote of the Board members seated and present, any name(s) submitted by the Committee may be vetoed. By a three-fourths vote of the Board members seated and present, the Board may require the Committee to submit an additional nominee in those cases where only one name was submitted.

In either such case, the Committee shall submit new and/or additional names forthwith, but not later than the first day of July so as to allow the Chief Executive Officer to prepare the mail ballot which said ballot shall be mailed to the membership no later than the 10th day of August each year.

In addition to the persons nominated in accordance with the foregoing procedure, the mail ballot shall also include the name of any person nominated by written petition signed by at least ten (10) percent of the total voting membership presented to the Chief Executive Officer not later than the first day of August.

Member signatures shall be invalid if they appear on more than one petition per officer or director position.

Mail ballots shall be returned to the AGTA office so as to be received not later than the 10th day of September. Ballots received later than said deadline shall not be counted. Ballots shall be opened and immediately tabulated by the Chief Executive Officer and at least two (2) members. The results of the vote shall be communicated by the Chief Executive Officer.



AMERICAN GEM TRADE ASSOCIATION

THE AUTHORITY IN COLOR™

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