

2011 AGTA Board Elections

This year five positions are to be elected to the Board of the American Gem Trade Association. Beginning this year, according to the newly established AGTA By-Laws, the AGTA Firm Members will vote for the five 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 2011 are as follows:

Robert Bentley	Vice President
Betty Sue King	Secretary
Jeffrey Bilgore	Director
William Larson	Director
Gerry Manning	Director

The following AGTA Officers' and Directors' terms continue through the coming year:

Benjamin Hackman	President
Kambiz Sabouri	Vice President
John Bachman	Secretary
Sampat Poddar	Treasurer
Peter Bazar	Director
Ruben Bindra	Director
Sushil Goyal	Director
Ambrish Sethi	Director
Bear Williams	Director
Cynthia Zava	Director

The **Nominating Committee** was chaired by Past President Barbara Lawrence.

Candidates for the 2010 election are as follows:

Director: (Five to be elected)

Robert Bentley, Robert Bentley Company, Inc.
Bill Gangi, Bill Gangi Multisensory Arts
Betty Sue King, King's Ransom
Bill Larson, Pala International, Inc.
Gerry Manning, Manning International, Inc.
Niveet Nagpal, Omi Gems
John Ternus, Lightning Ridge Opals

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 who have renewed their AGTA Membership for 2011. Members who are suspended may not vote.

For All Members' Information:

Associated Industry Professionals, Colored Diamond Suppliers, Estate Jewelers, Manufacturers, Retailers, Students 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, 2010**. 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 Constitution. 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 2011 AGTA Board in Tucson:

Newly elected Board Members will be introduced at the general membership meeting February 6, 2011 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.

For Director



Robert Bentley

Robert Bentley Company, Inc.
New York, NY

First Vice President 2007-2010
Executive Committee 2007-2010
Chairman Spectrum Awards 2004-2010
Co-Chair Promotions Committee 2004-2010
AGTA Board of Director 2004-2010
AGTA Member since 1994

Since 2004, I have served the Membership of the American Gem Trade Association— as First Vice President for the past three years and as a Member of the Executive Committee.

As Chairman of the Spectrum Awards, I am especially proud of our achievements in inspiring consumer press and media influentials to feature the program and the award-winning work of our participating customers that exemplifies the excitement and passion of our industry. Under my lead, Spectrum has truly become a valuable, dynamic win-win situation for all who participate and I would like to take this opportunity to urge you to encourage your customers to participate in this very effective promotional program.

As an independent colored gemstone dealer I would like to continue to ensure that the AGTA remains dedicated to the ideals and principles that our founding Members set out to achieve.

I would truly appreciate your supporting my desire to continue to make progress and provide continuity in the work that the Board and the staff do on behalf of the American colored gemstone community.

For Director



Bill Gangi

Bill Gangi Multisensory Arts
Franklin Square, NY

I have spent the last 31 years in gem exploration, and as a lapidary artist, owner of Bill Gangi Multisensory Arts.

I hold a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Syracuse University and taught art education in Massachusetts for 9 years.

I am a founding member of the Grove Street Gallery, Massachusetts's most successful artist-run co-op for 17 years.

I was a Regional Liaison for the Massachusetts Arts Lottery Council, responsible for overseeing \$5 million annually in grants to local artists.

I spent the last 20 years in Tucson, mining claims in six southwest states for unusual gemstones.

Multisensory Arts exhibits at 15 - 20 gem shows each year and I would like to put that experience towards improving and revitalizing our AGTA GemFair™ Tucson. Focus on increased attendance, better attractions to supplement the gem exhibit, better food on premises.

As a small business owner, I would like to increase the emphasis on direct Member benefits in AGTA, cost cutting to Members and mutual support with emerging technologies.

Most importantly, as a member and supporter of the Society of North American Goldsmiths (SNAG) and several local level jewelry arts programs, I want to build a bridge to student jewelry organizations and jewelry arts education programs, to ensure that new generations of jewelers and emerging designers have massive exposure to colored gemstones from the earliest stages of their careers, ensuring for us a steady stream of new consumers.

For Director



Betty Sue King

King's Ransom
Sausalito, CA

AGTA Board of Directors 2003-2010
AGTA Charter Member since 1981
CPIA Member since 2004
GIA Associate Member since 1999
SNAG Member since 1993
GANA Professional Member from 1996-2009
WJA Member since 1992

It has been an honor to serve on the AGTA Board of Directors since 2003. I am a dedicated member of Promotions: Marketing & Education, Membership & Security and Spectrum Committees. I feel very blessed to have worked with a devoted Board of Directors, CEO and AGTA office staff. Together we have forged a remarkable team representing the interests of the natural colored gemstone, cultured and natural pearl industry in the United States and Canada.

Having been a schoolteacher, I understand the importance of fostering education and expanding the knowledge of our products. I implement this through lectures at AGTA, Jewelry Camp, articles in trade journals, publications and staff training. For the past 33 years I have been the sole proprietor of King's Ransom. I have extensive product knowledge in natural and cultured pearls and gemstones, my foundation for business and education.

The AGTA has at its core, a strong base of ethical procedures/disclosure and professionalism. To thrive in the current world economy, I believe we will succeed through the creative collective input of our Board and membership. We have strength in our diversity and unity in our values and goals. We can leverage this to change and direct our visions for long-term economic viability. As a team worker and independent thinker, I believe in a proactive, open-minded, global problem solving approach to issues.

As Secretary on the current Executive Board and a total of eight years on the Board, I have learned the complexities and workings of the organization and would be very honored to continue serving on the Board of Directors.

For Director



John Ternus

Lightning Ridge Opal
Glendora, CA

The attraction of the AGTA for me began with the Tucson Show. AGTA was widely recognized by the retailers that I talked to, as the place to go for the best of the best and that the integrity and ethics of those showing there was second to none. If there was one show to see in Tucson it was the AGTA. I still feel this way about our organization and hope if elected to the Board, to serve my fellow members with this same spirit.

I work very hard to make it in our industry, as I know most of us do in these difficult times, and it is hard to watch our customers make purchase choices based on price, not value. I feel that among the many things that we need to re-instill in our customers and in doing so their clients as well, is the benefit of quality and service. When you buy based on value you get peace of mind and satisfaction as well as enthusiasm for the industry. The excitement of a new find, the rarity and beauty of a one-of-a-kind, or an exceptional seminar. I know that I always look forward to getting recharged and inspired by all the things that are to be seen at the show, the new tools, new gems and specialty cuts. This is part of the continuing education in our industry, and we all like to share what we have learned and where we got it. I'd like to hear people talking about the amazing stones and tools they saw at AGTA not "what a cheap deal they got in a tent."

Revitalizing this interest in value and quality, and making the AGTA Show the first stop of choice and the AGTA Directory the source they will use through out the year for their gemstone needs, continues to be one of our biggest priorities and challenges that we face.

I wear many hats in my business, as a miner, a cutter, a designer, a teacher, marketer and salesman (in store and out on the road), the list goes on. This gives me a broad perspective that I would like to share and to contribute to the greater success of AGTA. I am honored to have been asked to run and to be nominated for the Board of Directors of AGTA, and would like to thank you in advance for your consideration.

For Director



Gerry Manning

Manning International
Fairfield, Connecticut

Looking back on my 30 years as an AGTA Member, the breadth of change that has impacted our organization is mirrored by the massive changes in our macro-economy. The gap between what was and what is, is widening even as I write this note.

This last term of office has been, for me, a wonderful opportunity to help re-focus AGTA's attentions on our Dealer Member realities. We've re-examined our outreach to the Trade. We're currently reviewing our mission with an eye towards quantifiable progress in achieving our prioritized goals. And our goals are, in short, to create a healthy environment for our Dealers to sell and our buyers to buy - the best FROM the best.

Technology, the speed of communication, the internet, Facebook, YouTube, ebay, TV marketing, etc...all these sales vehicles have developed in the ensuing years since I first became an AGTA Firm Member. These technological developments bring the consumer ever closer to prime sources of supply. It really doesn't matter the industry; this trend is "universally" the fact in all of our lives today.

AGTA is striving to meet the needs of today's gem trade. We've done so much already. Our website is ever more user-friendly. Our efforts to provide an on-line trade-only platform are meeting with positive response from all those involved in beta-testing. Our membership drive - to bring more qualified AGTA Retailers into the AGTA fold - have met with significant success. Our educational programs, seminars, in-store sales materials - all are meeting with increased consumption. Our GemFair Tucson remains the finest show of its kind anywhere. Our Code of Ethics attests to the fact that AGTA Members do more to bring integrity to our trade than any other such dealer organization anywhere.

Yet there are those among us who remain dissatisfied with our pace of progress in creating an umbilical purchase/sales link between our Retail and our Dealer Members.

AGTA provides so much to Retailers in the form of sales tools and educational materials, yet there remains no requirement for Retail Members to support AGTA Dealers in any measurable format.

And this is where I'd like to focus the major thrust of my next term of office, should you see fit to re-elect me to the Board of Directors. My goal is to provide a measurable advantage, a "guarantee," if you will - that Retail Members shall support AGTA Dealers with real, quantifiable purchases each year they retain status as AGTA Retail Members. In our current Marketing and Promotions Committee work, we're developing a concept for just this sort of link, with measurable benefits to each side of the sales/purchase transaction relationship.

And, with our new location at the JCK Las Vegas show in 2011, I firmly believe that we'll have really exciting new programs in place for you - as Dealer Members - to market more effectively to your clients. This is, after all, one of our most basic needs - to sell more within our growing community of Retail Members who are committed to selling colored gemstones.

And, lest I forget to mention this, it's also my goal to review all programs AGTA now pursues - to ensure that your dollars are spent wisely and economically. After all, it is your (and my own) financial commitment to AGTA that allows us to exist as a Trade organization. I will do my utmost to provide us all real bang for our bucks.

For Director



Niveet Nagpal

Omi Gems
Los Angeles, CA

Bachelor of Science in Business - University of Southern California

Graduate Gemologist - Gemological Institute of America

AGTA Member and participant of Promotion Committee

ICA Member - Ambassador to U.S. and International Ambassador Liaison

24 Karat Club Board Member and Chairman of Membership Committee

AGS Member

It is an honor to be nominated for the AGTA Board. My father was on the Board for over 10 years so I have great respect and appreciation for the Board and their contributions to our industry.

My first experience in the industry was over 30 years ago at the Tucson Gem show. It was quite an experience for a 6-year-old. I remember meeting people from all over the country and the world, selling everything from boulders to the finest gemstones available. The colored gemstone industry has been my passion ever since.

I graduated from USC with a Bachelor's degree in Business, shortly thereafter I attended GIA and earned a Graduate Gemologist degree. After traveling overseas visiting various gem-producing countries and learning the trade, I joined the family business 14 years ago.

The world is becoming smaller, technology is changing every day. AGTA Members face more challenges than ever from increased competition, various gemstone treatments and the financial stability of our entire industry. There are many ways AGTA can help our industry:

The AGTA Code of Ethics is the foundation of our organization so it is more important than ever that we adhere to this Code and hold our fellow Members to the same high standards. The trust our clients have in the AGTA brand is the most important asset of being an AGTA Member. AGTA must continue to increase retail membership. Retail stores are the point of contact with consumers so it is imperative that we support them as much as possible as individual Members and as an organization.

AGTA must continue to promote colored gemstones and cultured pearls within the jewelry industry as well as to consumers. Since our products are considered a luxury, we must keep creating new markets for them.

With my background in marketing and my experience in the colored gemstone industry, I feel that I can contribute to the AGTA Board and its efforts to support and promote the colored gemstone and cultured pearl industries. I have served on various Boards and Committees within our industry and currently contribute to the AGTA Promotion Committee. Thank you for considering me for the AGTA Board.

Niveet

For Director



William F. Larson

Pala International, Inc.
Fallbrook, CA

I would like to serve another term on the AGTA Board of Directors. As a founding Member of both AGTA and ICA, I have seen many years of AGTA colored gemstone business and our gem shows. I think and feel that now in this 2010 decade is a very interesting time to come up with new and creative ways to help us as Members of this fine organization to move forward, to try to reach new customers for color and continue the fine work all the Members do.

I very much support the Cutting Edge and Spectrum Awards as a way to interest the public in colored gemstones. Also increased use of the internet, our AGTA newsletter gives us worldwide reach.

I would very much appreciate your vote.

Sincerely,

Bill Larson

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 no 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 no 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.

