

GEORGIA GEMS

A Publication of the Georgia Jewelers Association

Georgia Jewelers Association | 5815 Fairwood Walk, Acworth, GA 30101

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Rock Hound Turned Jeweler

A GJA Member Chat by Judy Lince

50 years ago, C. R. Smith and his wife Ilene were at a crossroads. After 17 years in the navy being a flight instructor, recruiter and safety officer, C. R. decided he was done. But what would the young couple do? They had to make a living somehow and Ilene suggested they open a store since C. R. had been mining since he was a young teen and rocks were his passion. With some savings and a loan from family they bought a piece of property in north Cobb County and had a building with a store front built. While the location was on well-traveled route #41 in Kennesaw, everyone thought they were crazy to build "out in the sticks".

Five decades later the business is not only successful but well known for being "not your average jewelry store". I visited the store just recently and caught up with Ilene and C. R. and met some of their staff and customers. The store is filled with labeled bins of rocks and minerals for sale and situated next to equipment used for mining. On the opposite side of the store are shelves lined with rock and gem specimens of all shapes and sizes and polished geode slices – all for sale. Lapidary supplies line another wall and framed articles about the Smiths are displayed throughout.

In the 1980's C. R., a rock hound since a young teenage in Georgia, discovered



a new and previously unknown gem in Georgia and named it "Georgia Midnight". Independent metallurgist tests confirmed the uniqueness of his find: the rare combination of precious metals including gold, silver, platinum and palladium and as many as 25 other elements make up the dark gemstone. The store is the sole source for the gem and a visit to the store is both retail therapy and a museum visit rolled into one. I do not believe C. R. some 40 years later has ever disclosed the location of the find.

Traditional cases fill the floor with bridal jewelry, gemstone jewelry in gold and silver and lots of inventory created by the Smiths. Beautiful polished lapis, malachite and gemstones of every color of the rainbow are fashioned

into pendants to be worn suspended on either side from sterling necklaces designed to show them off. Customers return to collect different gemstone pendants to interchange to suit their mood.

Smith ran a bench school on site for about seven or eight years but in the end did not have the time to devote to it. Today the couple, married 57 years, know almost everyone who walks in the door and in their community. Customers come from around Georgia and many who have moved away still count on them for their personal service and integrity. Both C. R. and Ilene are certified and trained gemologists and have a staff that are clearly devoted to them – and vice versa. During the weeks the business was closed during Covid 19, the Smiths paid their staff each week and that was reflected in the attitude I witnessed during my visit.

The couple has one son, Scott who is an acoustical consulting engineer and owns his own business providing high level expertise to hotels, universities and governments with acoustic advice and implementation. Though the Smiths do not show any interest in slowing down or retiring, these Georgia Jewelers members have seen and done much. They used to exhibit for many years out in Tucson at the annual gem and mineral shows. With so much raw material on hand, they do not need to head west to sell or buy anymore and something tells me they will be turning out their custom designs for years to come.

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DEADLINES FOR RECEIPT OF ADVERTISING

1st Quarter deadline: February 15th

2nd Quarter deadline: May 15th

3rd Quarter deadline: August 15th

4th Quarter deadline: November 15th

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2020 Calendar of Events

October 13-15 JIS Show, Miami, FL

October 24-25 Atlanta Jewelry Show, Cobb Galleria Centre

October 25 GJA Board Meeting, 8:30am Cobb Galleria Centre, (room TBD)

October 25-27 JA Delivery Show, Javits Convention Center, NYC, NY

Condolences

Rolland Dicks, owner of The Safe Movers in Lawrenceville passed away June 4, 2020 after a battle with cancer. Dicks has been a long-time service provider for vaults and safes. Many owners have called on Rolland when they were in a "tight spot" and he was always there to save every situation. He will be missed by many in the industry and his daughter Chantel Dicks who will continue the business. Rolland is also survived by his grandson Logan who was born last August.

Linda Taub Campbell, a sales representative for many decades in the jewelry industry, passed away on June 23, 2020. Linda had made her home in Robertsedale, AL and Kennesaw, GA in the past few years with her husband Andy Campbell. She has been retired from the industry for the last decade but is remembered by many who knew Linda for years.



JANA BARRY
PRESIDENT

Dear Georgia Jewelers,

As Bob Dylan said, “The times they are a-changin”.

Many stores in my area have changed their business models to accommodate Covid-19 rules. Most restaurants are offering curbside pick-up and not allowing seating inside. Many local stores are requiring masks to enter and shop. Some parking lots have been turned into drive-in movie theaters. My vet comes out to the car to get my dog while I wait in the parking lot. Things are definitely different.

We are having to navigate issues we never even imagined like operating a retail store during a pandemic, closely monitoring the health of staff and customers, making decisions about personal protection equipment for not only staff but customers as well, and now do we do things different during this second wave and for how long? It has been a stressful few months.

There are many things that I can’t wait to fade into ‘just a memory’ like masks, face shields, and gloves. But there are things that I will truly miss if/when they go away. I have been able to spend a lot of time with my kids and close family. We have been able to have an actual summer with walks, pool time, and late-night movies. I will also miss grocery delivery if that goes away!

I am hopeful that all of us will come out of this stronger than ever with new-found insight on what our staff and customers want and need from us. There are many companies and organizations offering webinars to help with these changes and insights.

Stay healthy,

Jana Barry

Jana Barry
GJA President
Edward-Johns Jewelers



**ATLANTA
JEWELRY SHOW**

October 24-25,
Cobb Galleria Centre

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Liquidation Sale

Rebecca Shemwell, owner of Tracy Pearls, would like to let all GJA members know that due to her health, she is liquidating her inventory at this time (excludes Grandmother pearls). She is offering a sliding discount with different levels of inventory purchased. She welcomes all inquiries and is happy to hear from her past and current customers as well as those who have not had the pleasure of shopping with her over the last 35 years.

The GJA Annual Convention for 2020 has not been rescheduled.

We are looking at dates for 2021.

Please stay tuned!

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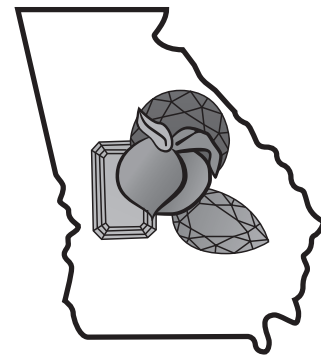
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It's Yearbook Time! Get details and ad space pricing soon, the deadline is quickly approaching!

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If you did not advertise last year we would love to invite you to give us an ad for this fall.

Our yearbook contains retail & associate member lists as well as our Jewelers Reference Guide. If you can't go out to visit stores - let us bring you and your company right into the store and our member's hands.

Judy Lince

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Call Judy or one of our members today!

How to Ship Jewelry During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Brought to you by subject matter experts at Jewelers Mutual Insurance Group

Choosing the fastest, cheapest, and most secure option to ship jewelry could be challenging before the term “Coronavirus” became part of our everyday language. In a twist of fate, shipping has now become one of the most embraced solutions for the jewelry industry.

While retailers have been forced to close their showrooms, there’s still an opportunity to keep cash flowing by selling jewelry online and shipping it to customers.

While this is great news, the risks of shipping jewelry during the COVID-19 pandemic are greater than ever. To keep you safe and your assets secure, this post will breakdown shipping best practices and health reminders.

SHIPPING BEST PRACTICES

1. Upgrade to the most secure signature service

The highest security option is commonly referred to as an “adult signature”. It ensures the carrier will not leave a package without either viewing the recipient’s ID or verbally collecting their name to record in their tracking system.

There’s usually an additional charge for this option, but it’s essential for now because procedures for obtaining a signature are being altered or omitted for standard, lower-security options.

USPS, UPS, and FedEx all have information on their operations during the era of social distancing, so do your research and don’t assume nothing has changed. Given the varying degrees of severity across the country, you may even want to contact your carrier to confirm the actions they’re taking in your area, as well as the locations you plan on shipping to.



2. Contact the Recipient

Confirm your recipient’s current address and advise that your package is on the way before you print a label and send the package. If you ship internationally, note that some countries have closed borders and shipments in or out are not permitted at this time.

3. Watch your package get scanned and obtain a receipt

This has long been a recommendation of ours, but it needs to be reiterated due to other procedural changes some carriers are making. We’ve been made aware that some are directing shippers to drop their packages into a bin to be scanned at a later time. This may suffice for low-value items, but jewelers need to recognize their situation is an exception. Because a scan is critical to shipping coverage in the event of a loss, select a carrier you know will be able to scan your package in-person and provide you a receipt with a tracking number immediately afterwards.

4. Use expedited services

It’s extremely difficult to determine what will unfold in the coming days and weeks, so deliver to your recipient as soon as possible. Two reasons for this are:

1. There’s an increased risk of lost or stolen packages the longer they are in transit
2. Your recipient’s situation or location may change

HEALTH REMINDERS

Given the need to use the “adult signature” service, you’re going to come in close contact with your courier. Also, if you’re the recipient of a package, you need to be cognizant that it will be handled by multiple parties and may come from or have passed through a “hot spot.” Here are a few suggestions for staying healthy when shipping jewelry during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Above all, follow CDC guidelines and guidelines from your local health officials
- If you have them, use a mask and gloves when handing off or receiving a package
- Wash your hands before and after handling packages
- Don’t assemble or unbox packages in common areas where you eat or rest
- Keep your assembly area clean and disinfect it often

MORE RESOURCES

We’re navigating this crisis together and our shipping experts are available to help guide you. Here are some topics they’ve helped jewelers with recently:

- Created a program with Malca Amit for transporting large amounts of stock to a secure location
- Shared the cost-saving and efficiency-gaining benefits of JM Shipping Solution
- Reviewed overall shipping costs and strategies

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To aid our members during the times ahead, we've adopted flexible payment options and extended our travel coverage. To see what these new protections mean for you, visit JewelersMutual.com/ExtraMeasures.

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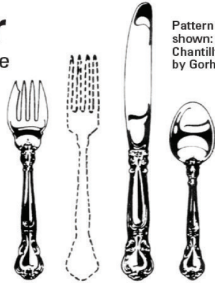
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