



Georgia Jewelers Association

The Official Georgia Gems Newsletter

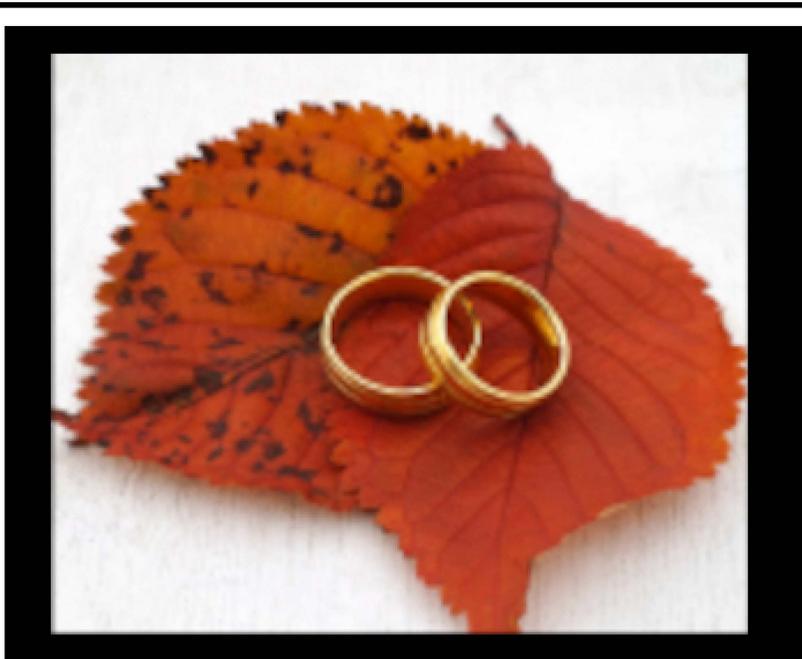
GEORGIA GEMS | THIRD QUARTER | SEPTEMBER 2025

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Mark Butler
President
K.E. Butler & Company Jewelers



SAVE THE DATE

Georgia Jewelers Association Convention
October 24-26, 2025
Atlanta Evergreen Lakeside Resort
Stone Mountain, GA

JA New York Fall
October 26-28, 2025
The Javits Center
New York, NY

GEM Awards
March 13, 2026
Cipriani 42nd Street
New York, NY



Georgia Gems is owned and operated by the Georgia Jewelers Association, an association not for profit, headquartered in Georgia. Each edition is mailed out over 200 members plus other individuals and companies who support the association.



Mark Butler
President
K E Butler & Company Jewelers
Vidalia, Ga



Greetings To All!

As your Interim President, I would like to invite each of you to the Annual Georgia Jewelers Convention, taking place from October 24th to 26th at Stone Mountain Park. Our host hotel, the Evergreen Lakeside Resort, is located within the park. Our Executive Director, Janie, and the Board of Directors have been working hard to make this convention the best! Friday night is a night of making new friends and welcoming back old ones in the Hospitality Suite. Saturday is a combination of learning and relaxing, followed by the live and silent auctions after dinner. Sunday continues our learning opportunities and wraps up with a focus on recognition at our capstone President's Lunch.

And speaking of learning, there is still time to get your staff signed up for the John W. Reed Memorial Scholarship and the Bill Rosenfeld Memorial Scholarship. These \$500 scholarships can be used to introduce or continue jewelry learning at an accredited jewelry school. The due date has been extended to October 1st, so get your applications submitted ASAP!

The Johnny Johnson Memorial Design Contest is also accepting entrants. There is an entry fee that must be paid before the convention, but the item can be brought with you. The judges are not locked away, secretly picking the winner. ALL attendants will be able to vote on their favorite item! With several categories, there are always wonderful and intriguing pieces to vote for.

If you have a Scholarship or Design Contest entrant, we would love for them to be present in case they win. This year, we are offering multiple convention options, including a Sunday-only option that includes the learning sessions and President's Lunch, where the winners will be announced. Attending the convention is also a great reward for a sales contest between staff or a manager's retreat, so they can take part in the learning sessions and become familiar with other jewelers and mentors.

Jewelers of America had graciously supported our 2025 GJA Convention by arranging all speakers and covering their fees. This is a wonderful opportunity to get some of the best information from industry leaders on a variety of topics to help your store. On behalf of the Georgia Jewelers Association, I would like to thank Jewelers of America for their generous support.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone at the Georgia Jewelers Convention. Don't forget to remind your staff that if they sell everything...they get the rest of the day off!

Mark W Butler

President of Georgia Jewelers Association
KE Butler Jewelers, Vidalia, Georgia



Robert Harbour
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Thank you loyal Sponsors!

16 Ways to Stay Alert for Check & Credit Card Fraud

By: Logan Moore

Individuals looking to carry out fraud using checks or credit cards to steal jewelry will attempt to make their transactions with jewelers appear authentic. To earn your trust and get you to lower your guard, they'll spin tall tales about graduations, gifts that need to be purchased in a rush, or gifts being shipped to soldiers overseas.

Of course, you always want to provide exemplary customer service and to make sales — but it pays to remain wary. Take these precautions before accepting a check or credit card transaction:

Be suspicious of someone from out of state attempting to purchase merchandise via email over the phone with a check or credit card, especially when that individual is looking for speedy shipment of merchandise that is readily available in that individual's area.

For telephone transactions, ask the bank or credit card company that issued the card to verify the caller's home address. Ship the merchandise only to the address of record.

If you suspect a credit card or check scam, ask the credit card company or bank to contact the account holder to verify the transaction.

In cases of suspected credit card fraud, the US Secret Service has jurisdiction. Contact them if you feel you are involved in a potentially fraudulent transaction.

Be cautious of someone in a hurry using an out-of-state check. Why is that person shopping at your store? (This is more common, of course, if your store is located in an area that draws considerable tourism.)

Someone who gives you a certified, cashier's, or personal check after banks have closed or on weekends may be trying to complete a sale before you can verify funds with the institution providing them.

Anytime you believe you may have received a counterfeit cashier's check, official check, or money order from a bank, contact the issuing bank directly to report receipt of the check and verify authenticity. When contacting the bank, do not use the telephone number provided on the instrument, as this number could be associated with the scam artist. You can find the mailing address of the bank on the FDIC website.

Be wary of accepting a check that lacks a pre-printed address or that has a low check number.

The safest practice is never to let merchandise leave your store until the check has cleared and the funds are in your account.

Be aware that your bank may be required by law to make funds available to you even if the check has not yet cleared. However, it could take several weeks to know if the check will clear or not.

Always require two forms of identification for check transactions. One should be a photo ID. Keep a copy of the identification or write down its information.

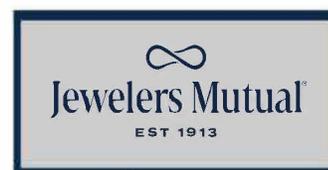
Compare all signatures carefully from all forms of identification to ensure they match.

Have a process that requires check transactions of a certain amount to receive a store manager's or owner's advance approval.

Be wary of checks that are post-dated or that have scratches, odd marks, or other changes.

Use a check-verification service, especially for transactions over a certain amount.

Consider video surveillance in your point-of-sale area, and complete transactions only in that area. Check the equipment often to ensure that it is functioning properly and obtaining quality images of customers' faces.





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The Scam we Keep Falling for

By: Janie Churchey

Crime in the jewelry industry is a problem that affects us all. At the Georgia Jewelers Association, we share these security concerns with our members. We have seen an increase in credit card fraud and want to alert our members to the tactics used and ways to avoid falling victim to this type of fraud.

According to posts in the Jewelers Helping Jewelers Crime Facebook page, the scam causing our industry problems right now is the manual entry scam. This is a type of credit card fraud where the customer tricks the retailer into entering their credit card information manually instead of swiping or tapping the card. Manually entered cards are a common method that criminals use when they obtain stolen credit card numbers.



According to WalletHub.com, stolen credit card numbers have accounted for over \$ 3.3 million in losses to the Georgia economy in 2024, and there were 449,000 cases of credit card fraud nationally in 2024, indicating a significant rise from 2023. As these cases continue to rise, the tactics used to take advantage of retailers are becoming more difficult to identify.

What can you do to protect your business?

1. **Make it a policy.** Make it a store policy to never accept manually entered credit cards under any circumstances. This will prevent employees from being fooled by the customers.
2. **Warn the customer before they begin shopping.** Place a sign on the wall of your store. This may be enough to convince a scammer that asking for a manual transaction is not worth their time. It will also serve as a reminder to your employees not to forget the policy.
3. **Train your sales team.** Be sure to train and discuss different fraud tactics with your sales associates or checkout personnel. An understanding of why you have the policy can help them catch on quickly to attempts to defraud your store.
4. **Expect it and have a plan.** Many times, we go into autopilot when interacting with customers. We may be thinking more about getting our job done than being on the lookout for a suspicious customer. Keeping your employees trained to expect fraud and knowing exactly what to say and do will help you avoid slip-ups in the moment.

The Georgia Jewelers Association wants to know when your store is robbed or defrauded. Please reach out to one of our GJA Board Members so that we can inform jewelers in your area about signs and tactics to look out for while doing business. Crime in the jewelry industry is a top concern of everyone involved, and working together, Georgia jewelers can prevent losses and assist law enforcement in making arrests.



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- Lori Pacheco

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K E Butler & Company Celebrates it's 70th Anniversary!



Building a family owned business that lasts through the ups and downs of multiple generations is no easy task.

The Butler Family of Vidalia, Ga is one of the few families to build a lasting retail store that has operated for 70 years.

On August 8th, 1955, Alby Gay opened his watch repair business in Vidalia, Georgia. Electric shaver repairs was another skill that he offered to the rural farming community. His wife, Glenrose, ran a printing shop in the back and would help with the bookkeeping.

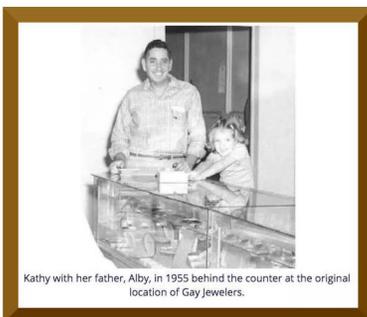
Southeastern Findings in Atlanta was one of his watch parts vendors. So, when Alby's cousin needed a diamond engagement ring in October 1955, Alby made the perilous, pre-interstate drive to Atlanta to talk to Ewing Brothers, the diamond and jewelry division of Southeastern Findings, face to face.

It was an uphill ordeal as Alby had no name recognition in the jewelry industry. But, because he carried a Standard Oil charge card, he was able to secure a 30-day credit to pay for the ring and Gay Jewelers, the precursor to K E Butler & Company Jewelers, was formed.

Throughout the years, Alby and Glenrose worked with several staff members and a few partners, but they would all come and go. When their only child, Kathy married a strapping young lad named Earl, Alby expressed to them that the store would be theirs one way or the other.

In June of 1977, when the teaching career path Earl was on fizzled out, he began to learn watch making from his father-in-law. Over the years he took many GIA courses and, following in his father-in-law's footsteps, was a graduate of the Holland School for Jewelers. He also became a Registered Jeweler and a member of several prestigious groups including Georgia Jewelers Association and the American Gem Society.

In the late 1980's, with both children in school, Kathy came to work on a full-time basis.



Kathy with her father, Alby, in 1955 behind the counter at the original location of Gay Jewelers.

K E Butler & Company Celebrates it's 70th Anniversary!



While Earl was busy on the bench repairing and creating jewelry with Alby, Kathy and Glenrose took over the sales and marketing side of the thriving family business. Again, there were many additional sales staff, of which we can never adequately thank.

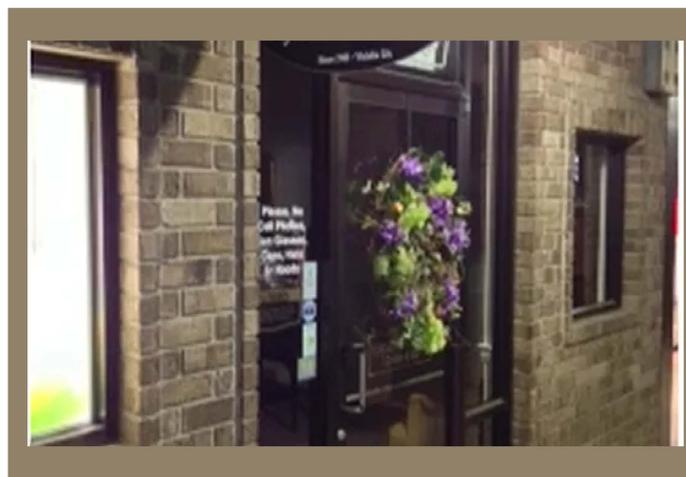
In 1994, Alby and Glenrose retired, and the business was fully Earl and Kathy's. The next year, the store moved to their 4th and current location, and, with the founder's blessing, the name was changed to K E Butler & Company Jewelers.

Growing the business was a dream that soon turned into a real job. Burnout started to creep in and in 2002, with their children graduating from college and high school, the empty nesters took a leap of faith and adjusted the work schedule. Early on, Alby made a covenant to God that he would never open on Sunday. Earl and Kathy decided that the six-day work week was wearing them out as they felt they had to be at the store each day. They decided to only open Tuesday through Friday. While this has given them more time to see their children and now grandchildren, their customers have remained loyal.

In 2015, their youngest child, Mark, joined the business and used his natural salesmanship, forged during his grade school years selling wrapping paper and fruit, to help carry on the family business. He is currently in the final push to earn his Graduate Gemologist degree from GIA.

All that being said, we celebrated our 70th Birthday this August. We didn't have a traditional sale but rather had several pieces memoed in that gave our customers a better idea of what services we can provide them. From refurbished Rolexes to colored diamond finished goods, it was a wonderful testament to a business with a sterling reputation in the industry and among its customers.

With a strong nod to the past and a wink to the future, K E Butler & Company Jewelers has built their business on the principle of customer satisfaction, honoring the covenant Alby made with God and treating people as we would like to be treated. While no job is perfect, the jewelry industry can be very rewarding. With the third generation taking more control of the business, K E Butler is well set for the next 70 years.





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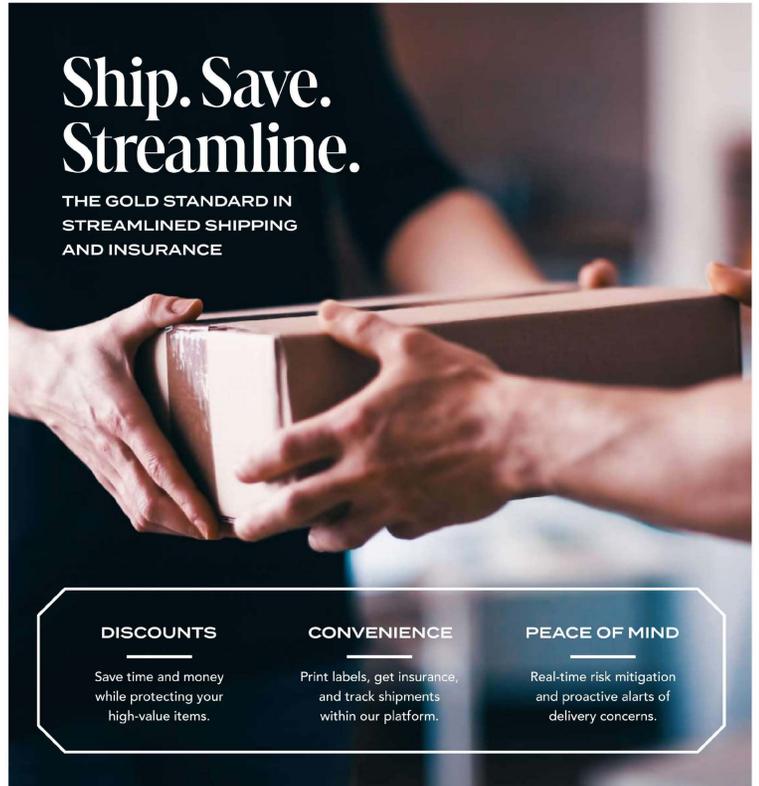
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Georgia Jewelers Association 2025 Annual Convention Registration Form

Event Address: Atlanta Evergreen Lakeside Resort @ Stone Mountain Park
4021 Lakeview Dr, Stone Mountain, GA 30083

Room reservations should be made with the hotel at (770) 879-9900
BEFORE Tuesday, September 23, 2025,
to receive our GJA discount of \$189.00.

Email

What is the name of your business?

Your Name

Phone Number

Address

Names of Spouses and Guests

Which days are you planning to attend?

- All weekend (Friday -Sunday) 180\$ per person
- Saturday Only 90\$
- Sunday Only 90\$

What type of jeweler are you?

- Retail Store Owner
- Retail Store Employee
- Vendor or Associate Business Owner
- Vendor or Associate Sales Rep
- Vendor or Associate Member Employee

If you are with a vendor/associate member business, would you like to sponsor or exhibit your products Saturday Evening?

- Yes, I would like to exhibit.
- No, I would like to make personal connections.
- I would like to sponsor but do not need an exhibitor table.
- I am employed by a retail store.

Will you be reserving a hotel room with the Atlanta Evergreen Lakeside Resort? Special group rate \$189.00

- Yes, I will be reserving a room. I will call (770) 879-9900 to reserve my room.
- I plan to make sleeping arrangements elsewhere

How many rooms will you be needing?

- 1 room
- 2 rooms
- Other

What entertainment activities would you like to participate in?

- Golf Tournament Saturday 12pm-5pm
- Poker Tournament Saturday Late Night in the Hospitality Suite
- Annual Jewelry Design Contest Sunday Morning 9am-1pm
- Annual John W. Reed and Bill Rosenfeld Scholarship Contest

How would you prefer to pay for your convention registration?

- I would like to receive an invoice through email and pay online.
- I prefer to mail a check to: P.O. Box 5 Tucker, GA 30085