**Gemstones/Birthstones**

**PRECIOUS & SEMI-PRECIOUS**

There are two classifications of gemstones: Precious and Semi-Precious. Precious stones are Sapphires, Rubies, and Emeralds. These three gems are the only stones that are called precious. Semi-Precious stones are Amethyst, Aquamarine, Citrine, Garnet, Onyx, Opal, Peridot, Tanzanite, and Topaz. All gems, precious or semi-precious, are valuable. Their value depends on many elements including color, size, quality, and rarity.

**ENHANCEMENTS**

Because of the rarity of gem quality and size stones, some gemstones are enhanced. Some treatments used to enhance stones include the following:

**Heating-**

Heating is the most common treatment. It has been a common practice for many years to heat gemstones to bring out their brilliant color, simply mimicking what naturally occurs in nature.

**Oiling/waxing-**

This helps protect the stone and eliminates visible flaws like lines and marks that the stone may have. This is done mostly with emeralds, because of their common natural flaws.

**Diffusion-**

Sapphires may have their color enhanced by diffusion, which is a chemical treatment.

**Radiation-**

Another way to enhance the color is with radiation treatment, another natural process that occurs while the stone is formed and is used to bring out the color that nature did not finish.

These processes are all very common and are a standard practice in the jewelry industry. These practices are used on natural occurring stones and should not be confused with "Lab Created" stones.

A time-honored tradition that has been passed along is the birthstone. Birthstones are the gems which represent the month you were born. These birthstones are given as gifts to celebrate a person’s life.

