



102nd Annual Convention

Featuring
Jewelers of America Learning Workshop



April 25-27 Birmingham, AL
www.alabamajewelers.us



Alabama Jewelers Association

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AJA President's Message



A new year is always a good excuse to sharpen the tools, clean the cases, and remind ourselves why we chose this business in the first place. In a world filled with confusion and uncertainty, jewelry is still personal, still emotional, and still one of the few things people buy to represent life's biggest moments. As we continue into 2026, my hope is that we all stay focused on craftsmanship, trust, and relationships—because those never go out of style, no matter what the market is doing.

That spirit is exactly why I'm looking forward to seeing everyone at our Annual AJA Convention, April 24-26 at the Wynfrey Hotel in Birmingham. It's three days of education, conversation, and the kind of networking you can't get from a screen. Make sure you register and book your room as soon as possible; the room block closes April 8, and if you miss it, Nancy will yell at you!

Here's to a strong start, a busy spring, and another year of Alabama Jewelers doing what we do best. Looking forward to seeing you in April.

President
Joseph Denaburg
Levy's Fine Jewelry
Birmingham, AL

Joseph Denaburg

AJA President

Welcome to the AJA Board

**Alabama
Jewelers
Association**

Associate Member



Sammy Turner
Victor Corp.
Birmingham, AL

VISIT THE AJA WEBSITE!



We've said it before and we'll say it again...
MEMBERSHIP MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

AlabamaJewelers.us

EVERY Member is listed with a link to THEIR website!

You can register online for upcoming conventions, sign-up to receive our digital newsletter, find information and photos from past conventions, and stay up-to-date on our upcoming events!

 Join Our Private Facebook Group



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2026 Convention Speakers



SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATE SKY-HIGH GOLD PRICES

PRESENTED BY *Chris Ploof*

OWNER AND DESIGNER, CHRIS PLOOF DESIGNS

SATURDAY, APRIL 25 | 1:15PM

Hailing from a small town in Massachusetts award winning master jeweler Chris Ploof was once a skinny boy lurking around the local living history museum, watching awestruck as the craftspeople manipulated what had previously seemed unyielding: glass, tin, iron.

After traveling the world trying hands-on careers that spoke to his historical influences and technical skills, Chris found himself back on his boyhood path, attempting to make a forge improvised by a 55-gallon drum, some fire bricks and hairdryer. Eventually his knowledge seeking led him to jewelry making classes. At last, he was home.

Chris studied with many well-known artists and apprenticed under a master goldsmith. He has an insatiable curiosity and drive that led him down long roads even after the challenges at hand have been met.

The Santa Fe Symposium has chosen Chris twice to receive the Industry Leader Award. He has a series of instructional videos through Interweave, his work is on the cover of Showcase 500 Rings: New Directions in Art Jewelry (Lark, 2012) and in countless other publications, and he travels frequently as a consultant to the jewelry industry. His studio is in Massachusetts, where he works with a carefully chosen, fun team of like-minded talent.



HOW TO BALANCE YOUR BUSINESS

SATURDAY, APRIL 25 | 2:15PM

PRESENTED BY *Mariel Diaz*

FOUNDER, ACCOUNTING FOR JEWELERS

Mariel Diaz founded Accounting for Jewelers in 2013 to provide accounting services to jewelry businesses in the US. Mariel oversees operations and is a trusted advisor to jewelry business owners. She is a 2nd generation jeweler and was previously a GIA Graduate Gemologist, JA Certified Bench Jeweler and German-trained Gemstone Carver before she became an Accountant.



TOP TIPS FOR MAXIMIZING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA

SUNDAY, APRIL 26 | 9:30AM

PRESENTED BY *Amanda J. Gizzi*

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS OF JEWELERS OF AMERICA

With over 20 years of industry experience, Gizzi brings a deep passion and unwavering commitment to advancing the jewelry profession. She is a nationally recognized spokesperson who actively promotes the jewelry industry and JA members nationally.

Gizzi oversees the organization's external affairs, including strategic communications, public relations, government affairs, advocacy, industry partnerships, events, and education.

Gizzi is an authority on fine jewelry and appears regularly on television, radio and podcasts showcasing the latest trends and providing consumers with fine jewelry and watch education. She also works directly with leading editors, writers and reporters to place fine jewelry and jewelry stories on a regular basis.



HOW TO LEVERAGE THE LATEST JEWELRY TRENDS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

SUNDAY, APRIL 26 | 11:15AM

PRESENTED BY *Natalie Francisco*

ASSOCIATE EDITOR, NATIONAL JEWELER

Natalie Francisco is an associate editor at National Jeweler. She covers designers, trends, and new collections in digital and print media.



Alabama Jewelers Association Convention

Featuring Jewelers of America Learning Workshop

April 24-26
Hyatt Regency Birmingham – Wynfrey Hotel – Birmingham, AL

Friday, April 24, 2026

5:00-10:00PM **Hospitality Suite**.....Presidential Suite #1523
Pick up your informational packets, eat, drink, and get to know your fellow jewelers! 15th Floor

Saturday, April 25, 2026

12:30-1:00PM **Registration/Check-in**.....Wynfrey Ballroom A, B, C

1:00PM-1:15PM **Welcome** Wynfrey Ballroom A, B, C
Alabama Jewelers and Jewelers of America Learning Workshop

1:15-2:00PM **Successfully Navigate Sky-High Gold Prices**Wynfrey Ballroom A, B, C
Presented by Chris Ploof, TK, Chris Ploof Designs - With gold prices hitting new records on an almost daily basis and analysts predicting it could soon exceed \$5,000, jewelers have had to double down on innovative design, craftsmanship and emphasizing the strong value proposition for gold jewelry. This session will cover top strategies for managing both customer expectations and your business in this volatile market.

2:00-2:15PM **Networking Break**.....Wynfrey Ballroom A, B, C

2:15-3:00PM **How to Balance Your Business**.....Wynfrey Ballroom A, B, C
Presented by Mariel Diaz, TK, Accounting for Jewelers - Having sound and consistent accounting best practices in place is more important than ever today, as the challenge of successfully running your business hits the headwinds of an increasingly volatile market. This session offers ideas for better managing everything from costs and inventory to tax compliance.

3:00-4:15PM **Networking Round Tables**.....Wynfrey Ballroom A, B, C

5:00-6:15PM **Hospitality Suite**.....Presidential Suite #1523
 15th Floor

6:30-7:00PM **President’s Cocktail Reception**.....Wynfrey Ballroom D, E

7:00-8:30PM **Dinner**.....Wynfrey Ballroom D, E

8:30-10:00PM **Hospitality Suite/Gene Callaway Poker Tournament/Bingo**.....Presidential Suite #1523
 15th Floor

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION:
 CONTACT CONVENTION COORDINATOR - NANCY DAWKINS (205) 526-5710**



Alabama Jewelers Association Convention

Featuring Jewelers of America Learning Workshop

April 24-26

Hyatt Regency Birmingham – Wynfrey Hotel – Birmingham, AL

Sunday, April 26, 2026

8:00-9:00AM	Continental BreakfastWynfrey Ballroom A, B, C <i>Breakfast Sandwiches, Muffins, Danishes, Coffee, Assorted Beverages</i>
8:00-8:30AM	Discovery Tables and Jewelry Design Set-upWynfrey Ballroom A, B, C
8:30AM-3:00PM	Discovery Tables OpenWynfrey Ballroom A, B, C
9:00-9:30AM	Welcome & “State of the Industry” PresentationWynfrey Ballroom A, B, C <i>Provided by Jewelers of America - The presentation will also include a walk-through of the top benefits offered by JA.</i>
9:30-10:15AM	Top Tips for Maximizing Your Social MediaWynfrey Ballroom A, B, C <i>Presented by Amanda Gizzi, Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs for Jewelers of America - An effective social media strategy can be a powerful tool to expand your reach, connect with customers (both new and existing) and strengthen brand identity. But the path to authentic connections that grow your business is full of pitfalls to avoid. In this session you will get actionable insights on how to successfully engage with customers across social media platforms and avoid common mistakes.</i>
10:15-11:00AM	The Best Strategies to Connect with Customers (Panel)Wynfrey Ballroom A, B, C <i>Retail panel discussion moderated by Jewelers of America - This session will look at some of the keyways to build trust, relationships and lasting loyalty with your customers. This will be retail panel discussion moderated by Jewelers of America</i>
11:00-11:15AM	Networking/Discovery Table Break
11:15-12:00AM	How to Leverage the Latest Jewelry Trends for Your Business.. Wynfrey Ballroom A, B, C <i>Presented by Natalie Fransico, Assistant Editor at National Jeweler and Amanda Gizzi, Senior Vice President of Corporate Affairs for Jewelers of America - This session will delve into the latest jewelry trends captivating consumers – from Red Carpets and Runways to Main Street-- and how your business can effectively incorporate them into your collections, marketing strategies and sales tactics. Learn how to harness the power of current style trends to drive both engagement and sales—for short and long-term gains.</i>
12:00-2:00PM	Past President’s Luncheon, Awards and Design ContestWynfrey Ballroom D, E
2:00PM	Door PrizesWynfrey Ballroom D, E
2:00-3:00PM	Discovery TablesWynfrey Ballroom A, B, C
3:00PM	AJA Board Member MeetingWynfrey Ballroom C

**IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS OR WOULD LIKE MORE INFORMATION:
CONTACT CONVENTION COORDINATOR - NANCY DAWKINS (205) 526-5710**

Begin Creating Your Designs for the

2026 AJA Design Competition



Entering a design contest is a great way to bring attention to your store and/or your jeweler(s). The PR that a winner receives is invaluable. AJA membership offers many benefits, and the publicity you'll receive as a winner far exceeds the cost of your yearly dues.

Consider an entry in every category - this not only increases your chances of winning but it also makes for a more fun and exciting competition.

For more details, contact Nancy Dawkins
at (205) 526-5710 or
visit www.AlabamaJewelers.us

These are the Categories:

- o CATEGORY 1: Materials may cost up to \$1,000
- o CATEGORY 2: Materials may cost between \$1,001 to \$3,000
- o CATEGORY 3: Materials cost \$3,001 & Over
- o PEOPLE'S CHOICE
- o BEST IN SHOW

The Official Rules of Entry are on www.AlabamaJewelers.us

The Design Competition Registration Form is on Page 26 of this Newsletter.



Discovery Tables at the Convention

Sunday, April 26th • 8:30am - 3:00pm

There will be 25 vendors displaying jewelry and services for you to visit throughout the day.

Come shop with your Alabama Sales Reps.

*It's the Perfect Time to Shop
for Mother's Day Merchandise!*





Introducing the KNOWLEDGE VAULT



A collection of article and videos to power your business success
Jewelers of America of America member can access exclusive educational content in a new section of the Member Center on jewelers.org: The Knowledge Vault.

Here you'll find webinar recordings, business articles and sessions from our Emerging Jewelers Accelerator Program—all organized by topic so you can easily find the resources you need for successful business operations.

Access all of the valuable content available in these Knowledge Vault Topics:



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Industry & Market Trends
Retail and consumer trends, market predictions and recaps, trending styles and more



Finance & Accounting
Payment processing, consumer financing, fraud prevention



Products & Sourcing
Ethical sourcing, recycled gold, jewelry forensics, trade show products, selling diamonds



Regulations & Advocacy
Tariff updates, new regulations, legislative concerns and more



Business Strategy
Selling tactics, succession planning, trade show tips

JA MEMBERS: LOG IN TO THE MEMBER CENTER ON JEWELERS.ORG TO ACCESS THE KNOWLEDGE VAULT

Not yet a member?

We'd love to have you! Visit jewelers.org/join or contact our Member Services Team at members@jewelers.org or call or text (800) 223-0673 for more information...



...OR SCHEDULE A MEETING
We'd love to talk more about your membership - scan the QR code or book a time at calendly.com/members-jewelers.

Saltwater 2025



Orange Beach AL



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 Uneek Jewelry - John Rowlett
 Virgo Star





Alabama
Jewelers
Association

The 2026 Scholarship Program

Applications are due Tuesday, March 31, 2026

*Ask not what you can do for the Alabama Jewelers Association,
but what the Alabama Jewelers Association can do for you.*

The AJA is one of the strongest State Jewelry Associations in the country, and we are adding another benefit for our members.

Since 2020, the AJA has awarded two (2) scholarships annually in the amount of \$500 each, to two AJA members to put towards their continuing education in the jewelry industry.

The scholarship will be awarded on Sunday, April 26th, 2026 at the Annual Convention in Birmingham, Alabama.

REQUIREMENTS FOR AJA SCHOLARSHIP APPLICANTS AND RECIPIENTS:

- The AJA Scholarship Applicants and Recipient(s) must be at least 18 years old (or older) before the first day of the Annual Spring Convention.
- Each Applicant and Recipient must be currently in the jewelry industry in some form before the date of the application submission and must have at least one (1) year of experience in the jewelry industry.
- By accepting this Scholarship, the Recipient has agreed to attend one (1) Qualifying Jewelry Program (listed online)
- Applicant and Recipients must be a member of AJA and current with their yearly dues. (Applicant may be employed by a company that is a current member of AJA.)
- Application must include one (1) Letter of Recommendation for the Applicant.

The Official Rules of Entry are on www.AlabamaJewelers.us

The AJA Scholarship Program Registration Form is on Page 27 of this Newsletter.

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Roger Butler

AJA Past President 1972-1973

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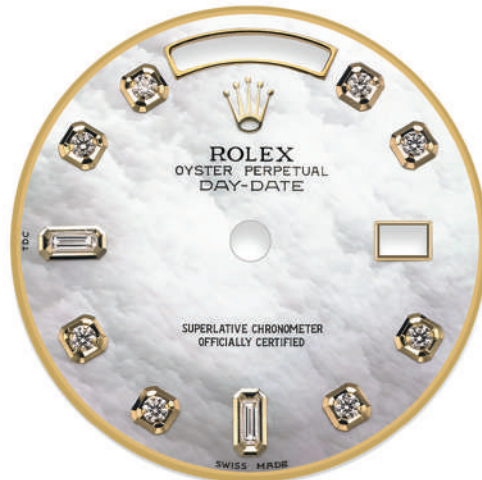
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**Alabama
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Atlanta Jewelry Show

Atlanta, GA

Saturday, March 14th & Sunday, March 15th

RJO

Phoenix, AZ

February 20 – February 23

IJO

Colorado Springs, CO
Feb 28th – March 3rd

JIS Spring

Miami Beach, FL

March 8th – March 10th

Alabama Jewelers Association Scholarship

Application Deadline

March 31st

Alabama Jewelers Association Yearbook Deadline

March 31st



2026 Calendar of Events

Alabama Jewelers Association

Design Competition Registration Deadline

March 31st

2026 AJA Annual Convention

Birmingham, AL

April 24th – April 26th

Luxury by Invitation Only

Las Vegas, NV

May 27 & May 28

JCK and Luxury for all buyers

Las Vegas, NV

May 28 – June 1

JCK and Luxury for all buyers

Las Vegas, NV

May 28 – June 1

Room Block Deadline

at Hyatt Wynfrey Hotel Birmingham, AL
for AJA Annual Convention April 8

**Alabama Jewelers Association
Summer Newsletter Deadline**

June 31st

IJO

Louisville, KY

July 25–July 28th

RJO

Lexington, KY

July 31 – August 3

Atlanta Jewelry Show

Atlanta, GA

August 22nd & August 23rd

Alabama Jewelers Association

Saltwater 2026

Orange Beach, AL

September 24th – September 27

JIS Fall

Miami, FL

October 16th – October 19th

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A vibrant, cartoon-style illustration for a jewelry convention. A pink flamingo stands in the ocean waves, wearing a crown of pearls and several necklaces. It holds a large blue diamond in a seashell. In the background, a dolphin jumps, a yellow fish wears sunglasses, and a red crab is on the beach. The text 'SALTWATER 2026 Jewelry Convention Sept 24-27' is at the top, and 'Make Waves in Jewelry!' and 'The Island House Hotel Orange Beach, AL' are at the bottom.

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2026 ALABAMA JEWELERS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

Featuring Jewelers of America Learning Workshop

Hyatt Regency Birmingham - Wynfrey Hotel, Birmingham, Alabama

Friday- Sunday, April 24th – 26th, 2026

Room Reservation: www.alabamajewelers.us or 1-800-233-1234

Special Convention Room Rate starting at \$139 (**Room Block Ends April 8, 2026**)

Name _____ Spouse or Guest(s) _____

Company _____

Phone _____ Mobile _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Email _____

Dietary Needs: _____

Convention Registration Options - Educational Classes offered by Jewelers of America

OPTION 1: \$200

Includes:
Breakfast Saturday/Sunday
Hospitality Friday/Saturday Night
Saturday & Sunday Education Classes
Saturday Night Dinner/Entertainment
Past President Luncheon Sunday
Door Prizes

_____ @ \$200 = \$ _____

OPTION 2: \$90

Includes:
Saturday Night Dinner/Entertainment

_____ @ \$90 = \$ _____

OPTION 3: \$50

Includes:
Saturday Education Classes

_____ @ \$50 = \$ _____

OPTION 4: \$75

Includes:
Sunday Education Classes
Past President Luncheon
Door Prizes

_____ @ \$75 = \$ _____

PAYMENT:

_____ **Check Enclosed**

_____ **Online Invoice**

Registration forms must be sent to AJA office by April 8.

Additional Guest(s) _____

(Please add additional guest on a separate piece of paper)

**Alabama Jewelers
Association**

Attn: Nancy Dawkins 205-526-5710
2802 Lurleen B. Wallace Blvd.
Northport, AL 35476

alabamajewelers@icloud.com
www.alabamajewelers.us



2026 Alabama Jewelers Association Jewelry Design Competition
Renaissance Montgomery Hotel and Spa - Montgomery, Alabama
Sunday, April 26th, 2026
Entry Form



Registration Fee \$25.00 per design, per category
 Jewelers may submit one design per category in the competition.
 Deadline for entries – Tuesday, April 21, 2026

*****Please advise AJA about your entry before Tuesday, April 21, 2026*****
*****Must have entries at the Design Competition Desk with display at 8:30am on April 26*****

Designer Name _____ Store Name _____

Email _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ Number of Years at the Bench _____

Select Your Category (based on cost of materials only – **NOT** the retail value of the finished item)

1) \$1,000 & Under ____ 2) \$1,001 to \$3,000 ____ 3) \$3,001 & Over ____

Entry #1 – Total Cost of Materials \$ _____

Detailed Description of Piece Required (if possible, include a sketch or photo) _____

Entry #2 – Total Cost of Materials \$ _____

Detailed Description of Piece Required (if possible, include a sketch or photo) _____

Entry #3 – Total Cost of Materials \$ _____

Detailed Description of Piece Required (if possible, include a sketch or photo) _____

Please contact Jerry Young about your entry: Call (334) 315-3138 or email jerry@bryanjewelry.com

****PAYMENT FOR ENTRY IS DUE BEFORE DESIGN COMPETITION BEGINS****

For Office Use Only:

Paid Date: _____ **Paid Via:** Check ____ Cash ____ Credit Card _____

Payment Accepted By: _____

ITEM DROP OFF BY: _____ **ITEM PICK UP BY:** _____



**Alabama Jewelers Association
Scholarship Requirements and Application**



Requirements for AJA Scholarship Applicants and Recipients:

- The AJA Scholarship applicants and recipient(s) must be at least 18 years old (or older) before the first day of the Annual Spring Convention.
- Each applicant and recipient must be currently in the jewelry industry in some form before the date of application submission and must have at least one (1) year of experience in the jewelry industry
- By accepting this Scholarship, the Recipient has agreed to attend a qualifying jewelry program
- Application and Recipients must be a member of AJA and current with yearly dues. (Applicant may be employed by a company that is a current member of AJA).
- Application must be sent in with one (1) letter of recommendation for applicant
- Applications are due by March 31, 2026

Upon receipt of this scholarship, recipient has 6 weeks to enroll in a course at Gemological Institute of America (GIA), New Approach Jewelry School or American Gem Society (AGS Course). Upon enrollment a scholarship check will be sent to one of the above-mentioned courses.

Alabama Jewelers Association will award two (2) scholarships in the amount of \$500 each.

Send Scholarship Application and Letter of Recommendation to:

alabamajewelers@icloud.com

Scholarship Application

Full Legal Name: _____

Employer Name: _____

Employer Address: _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Email: _____

Years in Jewelry Industry: _____ Current Position: _____

In a few short sentences, please tell us what Jewelry Experience you currently have, include how many years you have been in the jewelry industry:

In a few short sentences, please explain why you would like to receive a scholarship, including what you will do with the scholarship if received:





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The advertisement features a pair of Art Deco earrings displayed in a jewelry box. The earrings have a teardrop shape with a large central diamond, smaller diamonds along the sides, and a blue enamel or gemstone accent at the bottom. The jewelry box is lined with a light-colored material and has a dark, patterned border. The background is a blurred image of the jewelry box.

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Four social media icons are arranged horizontally at the bottom right of the advertisement: Facebook (blue diamond), Pinterest (red diamond), Instagram (blue diamond), and TikTok (black diamond).