

AVON WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS OCTOBER 16, 2018 - MINUTES

HOST: Bill Selig, Bill Selig Jewelers

30-Second Intros

SPEAKER: Bill Selig

Bill has been in the jewelry business for more than 40 years. He started in Bisbee, AZ where he learned to make jewelry. Bisbee had an artisan community that he joined thinking he wanted to be a potter but loved jewelry making and stayed with it.

His first store was in Windsor in a garage. His father cosigned a loan for \$1,500 with which he bought the microscope he still uses. Windsor had no jeweler at the time, and people would bring in items for him to fix so he had to learn the more traditional community jewelry business. Eventually he opened a real store front in Windsor which has since closed with the retirement of a family member who ran it. He has been in Simsbury 31 years, and the business is celebrating 41 years this year.

Bill emphasizes to employees that they need to put themselves into the customer's shoes. Do what the customer wants not what you think they should do. Listen to the customer to understand what he or she needs or wants.

A community jeweler needs a broad range of skills and broad general knowledge which he has built over the years and shares with his employees. They offer a wide range of jewelry and most customers spend between \$300 and \$10,000. He does a lot of bridal business and helps couples set reasonable expectations and spend appropriately.

The store features a fish tank—he's always had one in his store. Not only does Bill like keeping a fish tank, it helps entertain kids who come in with parents.

The Studio gift shop didn't work out he thinks because the location was not right. So they have brought some of the unique items into the jewelry store.

Today they use CAD in the process of designing custom pieces. A benefit is that the customer can try on the custom piece virtually before it is actually made.

Bill then went into an extensive discussion of opals—he calls himself an Opalhollic and said one disadvantage of the business is that you fall in love with gemstones. Opals are found around the world, and he carries primarily those from Australia. US opals tend to have a high water content and when they dry out they crack and crumble. Opals all contain water ranging from 5% to 15%. As a result, they should not be exposed to extremes in temperature. The rarest color is red and the rarest background color is black.

Bill talked briefly about synthetic gemstones. They have all the properties of natural stones but are made in a lab, and it can require a lab to determine whether a gem is synthetic. Synthetic gemstones are less expensive.

Store manager Robin talked about their upcoming events:

- **Thursday, October 18th** they are holding an anniversary event with \$25 off a purchase of \$100 or more.
- **Saturday, October 27th**, at the Simsbury Spooktacular Chili Challenge – they will have a digging for jewels game where you can dig for stones for \$5 which will benefit Gifts of Love their non-profit partner for the year.

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- **Thursday, November 29th** they will have Ladies Night at which guests can add items to their “wish lists.” They will be collecting toys for Gifts of Love, and guests receive a raffle ticket for each toy they donate. They will raffle off a diamond pendant.

Bill Selig Jewelers will clean jewelry for free anytime, and AWE members were able to take advantage of that at the end of the meeting. Bill also offered to show his workshop in the basement to anyone interested. They selected Gifts of Love as their charity partner for the year and also support other community non-profits with special pieces for sale. He makes a wall in the store available to local artists for free, and any proceeds of sales go to the artist.

Announcements and Member Events:

- **Friday, November 2nd, 5:30 to 7:00pm** – Holiday tasting at **Taste by Spellbound** in Avon. Reservations are required so they know how much to prepare. Call 860-284-0000 or email info@spellboundgirl.com.
- **Thursday, November 15th, 2:00 to 8:00pm, and Friday, November 16th, 11:00am to 4:00pm** – **Ruby Ribbon** will be at the holiday boutique hosted in Devonwood. A portion of sales will go to Grace Academy and Our Companions animal rescue. RSVP to Carol Tsacoyeanes or debraherr@aol.com.
 - Carol also announced:
 - Ruby Ribbon is recognizing Breast Cancer Awareness month with contributions to City of Hope
 - They have been endorsed by Oprah Winfrey
 - To learn more about the business, they hold calls 6 days a week at 5pm Monday-Thursday and 9am Friday and Saturday. Access the zoom call at rubyribbon.events/freecamicall.
- **Kristina Mozzicato, Abundant Health Massage Therapy**, announced she had written an article for *Natural Awakenings Magazine* on lipossage, and had copies with her.
- **Tim McCarthy CPA** is looking for a tax preparer with 2+ years of experience.

Upcoming Chamber Events

- **Thursday, October 18th** – **Networking Golf at Farmington Woods Golf Club**
- **Tuesday, October 23rd, 12:00 to 1:30pm, The Lunch Connection (TLC) at Cugino's of Farmington**
- **Wednesday, October 24th, VYBE** – NW Chamber young entrepreneurs will be joining Avon

AWE Business: Future Meetings:

- **November 20 – Holiday Showcase – let Lisa know if you want to show your wares**
- December 18 – Social at Apple-Rehab with \$5.00 Yankee swap
- January 15, 2019 – River Ridge – host & speaker
- February 19 – US Wealth Farmington Valley – host & speaker
- March 19 – Amanda Funchion, Edward Jones, will host and Katie Stevenson, First World Mortgage, will speak

--Joanne Beers