

# THE BULLETIN

## Victor Valley Gem and Mineral Club

### What's Up?

**The club is officially going to reopen on Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup>.**



### President's Letter – Spring Edition

Hello Members, spring has sprung. This is my favorite time of year, a time for new life and new beginnings.

This is finally the letter everyone has been waiting for... This is it! I have the pleasure of announcing that **the club is officially going to reopen on Saturday, April 17<sup>th</sup>**. It has been a challenging year for all of us and yours truly is personally excited about getting back to hanging out with you at the club more and a little less sequestered at home.

Of course, the opening comes with state and county mandates that we have to follow to remain open, so be prepared and to be very blunt, if you have personal feelings of anti-whatever, please keep it at home and not at the club. This has been a difficult year since the tailgate and is not over with quite yet. There are still people getting sick and dying from COVID-19, so, for the sake of our membership, we will be on the cautious side while we make time for some fun too. No controversies that will create division please!! It is what it is for now. This is difficult enough. To be honest, I'm not one for additional government in my life, but to reopen we have to follow the guidelines set forth or take the chance on closing again.

As of April 6<sup>th</sup>, San Bernardino County has moved into the Orange Tier giving us a little more freedom. That said, we do have to clean the club first. **While we have done some maintaining, we still need to clean the tables, floors and dust off the equipment and make sure everything is operational. We have scheduled Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup> for 9am to noon to accomplish that goal.** PLEASE, consider helping out, especially if you plan to be attending the club.

To date our membership is at 23 paid adults and 2 juniors. Dues will be payable upon coming to the club if you haven't paid already. The board gave everyone an opportunity through January to pay half price for the year, sorry that more of you didn't take advantage. Reminder: Dues are \$25 per individual, \$35 per couple and \$10 per junior member under the age of 18. It was unfortunate that the bills kept coming in this year even though we were closed.

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## Officers, Committees

President Dwana Barron (909) 234-5533  
 First Vice President Ruben Martinez  
 Secretary Lynne Bradshaw  
 Treasurer Dwayna Barron  
 Board Member Yolanda Flores

### INSTRUCTORS

Dwayna Barron, Ruben Martinez,  
 Gaylan Graves, Chris Koch,  
 Pups Joyce DeGarmo. ,

### Committee Chairpersons:

Sunshine, Displays,  
 Photographer, Dwayna Barron,  
 Newsletter, Doug Arnold,  
 CFMS Director, Ruben Martinez ,  
 Saw Maintenance , John Bradshaw.

## *President's message/*from page 1

The board agreed to lower the budget last year to what we receive from Kaman and all things considered we were able to about break even with a little to spare. I am always glad when we don't have to dip into the savings account. It takes a lot of money to run our club whether we're there or not. Insurance, taxes, utilities, landscaping and building maintenance alone takes up 2/3 of our budget. The other 1/3 goes to ancillary expenses in order to maintain functionality of the club. We had to spend additional funds for personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies in preparation to open (that was fun) but I tried to keep the costs to a minimal.

We are still saddened by Don P's passing, he was such an asset to the club, and equally a great friend, Ruben and I miss him every day. Most of us don't always realize what we have in a person until they aren't there anymore. I would ask that we all take time to appreciate people's efforts more this year, everything that is done is essential, time producing and often unnoticed and rather thankless to be honest. Don served many functions in the club, chief among them was board member and instructor. He was also responsible for the grinding room, sunshine, purchasing and displays along with many other things he volunteered for.

The board has appointed Yolanda Flores to complete Don's two- year term. I believe he would be pleased with our choice. Yolanda being the person she is has also agreed to take on sunshine and the Petrified Pups. Please welcome her when you have the chance. The board will all take turns with displays, as treasurer I will handle purchases (for now) and the grinding room? Don was absolutely the consummate pro at that! If you have the expertise to take on the responsibility, please let me know, I would love to have that conversation with you.

Also, Yolanda and her husband Enrique (Nino) have agreed to again help with food for the Tailgate. Yes, we are having a tailgate this year! The board relegated those dates to the last weekend of September, the 24<sup>th</sup> through the 26<sup>th</sup>. Flyers will be available starting our opening day. We heard from many vendors who are also excited because the weather should be stellar that time of year. We were so happy to not be out in the harsh, cold wind, rain and sometimes snow during our usual March time of year. Volunteers are absolutely needed to pull this off. Please help make our club successful by pitching in. Even if you plan to be a vendor, there are places and times where you can help out, it doesn't exempt you from being a minimally productive member of your club, it makes you more valuable and appreciated. More information will be forthcoming over the next couple months. We want to keep it as simple as possible, yet fun and exciting to all who participate! This will also be a great time to sell items for Christmas and we hope this will give everyone some time to plan. Start spreading the word! Be sure to check out the dates and times of our summer schedule.

In closing, a couple of things were brought up at the board meeting. The issue of night meetings. The area does have its problems in the evening, which shouldn't be a surprise. Then there are many people that just don't like to be out at night either. So, in consideration of this, we wanted to inquire with our membership on how you all feel about meeting earlier on Tuesday evenings such as 5:00-6:30pm or on a Saturday afternoon, closing workshop down an hour earlier on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday to have our meetings from 4:00pm to 5:30pm.

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## BEZEL CLOSER

A bezel closer is a steel punch that makes quick work out of pushing the metal down over a round stone and burnishing it. It works with regular bezels, with tube settings, and with prong settings. Stones can be set in as little as 30 seconds.

The working end is a concave cavity that fits over the bezel or prong setting and is pushed and twisted to capture the stone. Sets can be purchased but are expensive and contain many sizes you will probably never use. If all you need is one or two sizes, here's how you can make them yourself.

Find a round steel rod or bolt a little larger in diameter than your bezel cup or prong setting. Cut a 5 inch length. File both ends flat. Locate the center of one end, centerpunch a divot, and drill a small pilot hole about 5 mm deep. Remember to use a little oil as lubricant when cutting steel.

Select a ball bur a bit larger than the bezel. Enlarge the pilot hole to a full hemispherical cavity. Test for proper fit with your bezel. Bezel should first contact the cavity about a third of the way in. When the size is correct, polish the cavity using Zam on a length of chopstick in your flexshaft. If the tool is not polished, it will leave scratches on your bezel or prongs.

When using the tool, the first step is to capture the stone correctly. I usually work by hand and push the punch straight down over the bezel or prongs. This causes the metal to start bending over the stone. Next, if it's a small stone, I inspect with a lens to be sure the

stone is staying level. This is repeated until the stone is seated on its bearing and can't move anymore.

Next you want to force the metal down onto the stone uniformly all the way around. While this can be done by

hand, I often gently tap the punch with a hammer. Finally, I burnish the bezel by twisting the punch around.

- Brad Smith  
[BradSmithJewelry@gmail.com](mailto:BradSmithJewelry@gmail.com)



## BENCH SHEARS

When cutting sheet metal, it's quicker and easier to use a set of shop shears as compared with using a hand saw. The cut is not as precise, but many times you don't need that. Shears will easily cut up to 24 gauge sheet, and some will cut 22 or even 20 gauge.

Current prices for shears run from \$13 - \$36 in jewelry catalogs, and the Joyce Chen scissors recommended on some jewelry blogs run more than \$20. But we found a cheaper alternative at the 99 Cent Store - some gardening utility scissors that were only \$1.07

I buy a half dozen of them at a time for use in my jewelry classes. They're great for cutting bezels, trimming around a bezel cup and cutting a piece off a larger sheet.





**See all of Brad's books on Amazon**

*President's message* from page 2

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Hope to see you soon!  
Dwayna Barron, President

## Club Summer Schedule

1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday – Board Meeting – 4:00pm

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday's

Petrified Pups – 9:00am to 11:45am

Workshop – Noon to 5 pm, Can possibly stay open longer if requested in advance.

2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday's

Workshop – Noon to 6pm

4<sup>th</sup> Saturday

Clean-up - 9am to Noon

No workshop following until further notice.

The following is mandated by the state, county and city for us to be open, no exceptions:

We are limiting the number of persons in the club to 10 at any given time (for now).

If you are not feeling well, please stay home.

If you have a temp of 100 degrees, you will be asked to kindly go home.

Masks are an absolute, if you are in the building, you must wear a mask. Preferably you wear your own, however we have masks on hand if you forget to bring it.

Social distancing: Set-up 6 feet from each other at the tables in the great room.

2 people in the grinding room and silver room at a time and 1 person in the saw room.

Clean the equipment and area including the chair you were using before the next person uses the space, even if the next shop day is the following week.

Clean your personal space (table and chair) before you leave.

Do not leave it for someone else, please be overly cautious and considerate of others.

Wash your hands often. Use a wipe to disinfect areas you've touched before others use the same space including bathroom doorknobs, etc.

Everything you have need of to clean has been provided and easily accessible. If something runs low, please notify the instructor on duty, or leave me a note in my basket in the office so I can repurchase asap.

Disregarding these instructions, an on-duty instructor or board member will be grounds for asking you to leave. Continual disregard will have other consequences. Please DO NOT argue over it and don't hate the messenger. I understand that people have different feelings and perspectives on this issue, however, it took a great deal of effort to get us open now rather than later and I had to agree to these guidelines for this to happen, so don't blow it for everyone else. I am strongly asking each of you to respect others regardless of personal beliefs. Keep each other safe so that we don't have to close again. I've hated the better part of this myself and if left up to me would have been different. But as they say, the buck stops with me and my responsibility is for the greater good of everyone not a few. I trust that everyone will be understanding and kind. This has been a difficult year, let's work on improving relationships rather than pointing fingers or judging one another.

Thank you all for your cooperation. Dwayna

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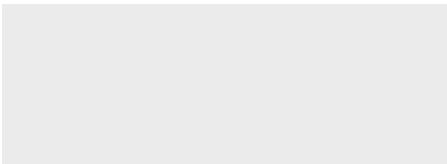
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Victor Valley Gem and Mineral Club was founded in 1947 as a 501(c)4 Non-profit education club. Visitors are always welcome...

Our Objective and Purpose is to disseminate knowledge of mineralogy and the earth sciences. To encourage study in these subjects through various programs. To arrange field trips for exploration, study, and collection of specimens. The preparation, publication and distribution of articles pertaining to these fields. The encouragement of interest of young people and fostering of classes in mineralogy and lapidary arts.



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