

# The Victor Valley Gem and Mineral Club

## The Bulletin for May 2025

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### Our President's Message

Greetings to all members and friends.



**Dave Duncan**

With Summer a month away, it will soon be too hot for rockhounding. So, please join us for our last field trip of the Spring. We will be heading out to Lavic Siding and the South Cady's, this Saturday (May 3<sup>rd</sup>). We will be meeting at 9AM at the Hector Rd exit of I40. This is a great opportunity to find all the rocks you need to carry you through to next fall! Scott has additional details elsewhere in this newsletter.

In case you missed it, our recent general meeting and potluck was a lot of fun, and many of us came away with some great Turquoise and other rocks. This material came from a recent donation and more great rocks from this collection will be on the silent auction table at May's meeting.

Meanwhile, sorry to say, things have been slow at the shop. So much so, the board is considering cutting back the days and hours that we are open, until things pick up. This may include not being open on either Tuesday or Thursday. So, if you have any strong feelings about either of those days, please let me know. Otherwise, please stay tuned for more info after our board meeting on May 6<sup>th</sup>.

Thanks again to all of you for making our club great!

Dave

Welcome to our new members!

Leticia Duarte

David Bradford

Doug Paul



We're glad to have you as members and we look forward to seeing you at the shop and our potluck/general meetings.

## May Field Trip

Scott says, our May field trip will be a two stop visit to Lavic Siding and one of Scott's favorite collecting sites in the South Cady mountains.

Both sites are famous for the jasper and agate that can be found in profusion there. Collecting sizable pieces at Lavic is quite possible, but will require a shovel and the necessary physique to use it. The South Cady site will have the same requirement. Smaller pieces, great for tumbling, can be found everywhere though.

The sites are easily accessible by car, with no four wheel drive or really high clearance necessary. Be sure your vehicle is in good shape and you have water and blankets. The usual collecting equipment will be needed, a hammer, bucket, and spray bottle, among other things.

The meeting place is the Hector offramp on Interstate 40 East. We will take care of all the necessary paperwork and last minute instructions. From there we will go to Lavic and in the afternoon, to the South Cadys.



Left: Some Jasper rough from Lavic Siding.

Right: Some cabs and a nice piece of rough agate from the South Cadys.



Scott Gray Wagon Master



## KOKOWEEF FIELD TRIP

by Jake Brouwer

Dave Duncan and Scott Gray met up with members of the Southern Nevada Gem and Mineral Club at the field trip to Diamond Pacific on March 22, 2025. They talked with Jonathan Tredwell who is the Field Trip Chairman. He invited a limited amount of folks to come along with them on April 5, 2025, to visit the Legendary Kokoweef Mine, near Mountain Pass, California. Scott said GREAT! I'm all for it, and I know someone who has been there before and was a shareholder in the mining and treasure-based company.

Guess what? Yep... that was me, Jake Brouwer. When Scott called me to let me know, I felt like yelling out GREAT SCOTT! It had been about 10 years since I was there last for just a stopover visit to see how things were going. I had also checked in to see Larry Hahn, President of the company at his office in Las Vegas. Anyway, I could not wait to pack. I hoped I could find a co-pilot, and did quite quickly, Ron Haufman one of VVGMC's regular members, that I have gone out with before hunting for various rocks and treasure related sites. Over the years, I had gathered information and did research on the legendary site, but never have dug in the mine dumps.

Ron and I met up near Costco off Hwy 15 in Victorville, on Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup> and made the trek out Bailey Road, at Mountain Pass, Ca. We got there a bit early. I took Ron down the paved road leading into the area for a short distance. To our left was the old KOKOWEEF CAVERNS sign with a directional marker. We both took a few photographs. I should mention that it was about 50 degrees at the time and the wind was starting to pick up a bit. Once the rest of the VVGMC group showed up I met with Scott and Sasha and, we met Jonathan Tredwell SNGMC Field Trip Chairman, and gathered everyone up in their vehicles and headed through the mountains on the 2 ½ mile long trip to Kokoweef Mountain. The rest was all dirt road, rising in elevation, and twists, turns, through the canyons. It was not long before Ron and I were commenting on the lush forest of Joshua Trees that we followed all the way to the campsite. Lots of new growth, and babies galore. Every one parked and gathered their gear to hunt for cave onyx, and aragonite. Buckets, knee pads, (very important when playing in the dirt on a hillside.) picks, shovels, gloves, water, water & more water. Most of the group was run up to the dig site in a Kubota that would hold four persons plus the driver who was Steve Bisyak, Director and Camp Manager for the company. Ron and I and some others when up first in Jonathan's pickup to a point called the "tear drop" where folks could get out and walk up the rest of the way, maybe a quarter of a mile with a steep incline, the road was not large enough for a truck to go all the way up. So, Ron and I got there, no, not first but after two loads in the Kubota passed us by as we struggled with legs, and back issues.

Steve Bisyak, introduced us to the entrance of the mine tunnel for the Kokoweef Mine. The gate was locked, but we took notice of the narrow rail track coming out of it and leading out to the drop off where ore cart would dump the tailings on the waste pile. What we were hunting was all in the waste pile. Filled with large boulder rocks, most were not able to be lifted or even moved due to size and weight. And there were also lots of bowling ball sizes rocks too. But between and underneath all that, one could just barely see, tiny flowers of the cave onyx peeking out of the dust and dirt. Mother nature then made her presence known by the wind picking up, and it was still pretty chilly. The wind would pick up the dirt and toss it right in your face if you were facing it, so bring a particle mask, or face covering beany, if you did not bring one this time. I chose a spot to the right of the tracks and overhead cable mechanism. After a few flowers went in the bucket, I realized I had to get below and in between the boulders and dig down. Finally, some nicer pieces were coming out. While digging, getting a bruise here and small cut there, I spoke with recently retired couple who were hunting for pieces to make jewelry with. Everyone was very friendly out there. After a couple hours I got down about 2 feet and got some mostly complete pieces that made my day.

Continued on Page Four

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People were starting to head back to camp in the Kubota. But then, Steve said wait up a sec.. “Who wants to go in the mine.” Most all raised their hands, but only a limited amount of folks could go in at one time. We donned hardhats with lights on them and entered in. Taller folks were advised to keep our heads lower so we would not get bonked on the noggin as some parts of the roof were jagged and jugged down.

As soon as we entered, we could feel the cold air that was being sucked into the mine. Steve explained a theory that the Lost River would rise and fall like the tides, therefore the sucking this time and airflow going out another time. Shortly we came to bridge. It was about 6’ wide and we were told that no more than 5-6 could stand on the bridge for safety reasons. By the way, the headlamps were great, but also parts of the cavern had other lighting, like the grand opening about 50’ higher above us, which was Crystal Cave. Below the bridge in this cavern, it dropped another 30’. Steve told us that back in 1971 was the time when San Bernardino Museum Earth Sciences Curator Robert Reynolds and his team went down into the bottom and pulled out 7000 pounds of sediment, and the gold they found was ½ million fossilized bones. I would like to take a look at that collection in San Bernardino. If I can arrange that, would anyone be interested in going?

While in the mine we saw stalactites and stalagmites along the walls that had been slowly dripping for centuries. This was some of the material that went over the side for us to hunt. Slowly Steve started to bring us down from the mountain side, we got a little close to the edge at one point, I grabbed the bar of Kubota’s over-head frame for just a second as Steve cut the wheel and hit the gas and all was good.

Once everyone was back at the meeting point in camp, people meandered around looking at yard art consisting of larger specimens, frames from two 1910’s autos that were found buried in a mine shaft and other cool unusual items. Steve opened up the museum that he put together. Lots of discovery items, most found by Steve adorned the room. Outside, I set up table, covered with a turquoise Indian style blanket from the Outpost in Pearblossom and proceed to layout some of the Kokoweef specimens I have from as far back as the late 1980’s. The guests were excited to see the photographs I have of the 1940’s, vintage tee shirts, assay reports and more. A few people suggested I put a book together and I explained it was on my bucket list. Steve came out of the museum and wondered what was going on at the table. He was amazed and said that I have one of the largest groupings, he had ever seen. We hope to meet up in the future to discuss and perhaps trade copies of items we both own, to share.

All in all, it was a great trip. I will be writing a short story about the Legendary Kokoweef Caverns in an upcoming VVGMC Newsletter, so you too can wonder, what to believe and what not to believe about the legend, that has fascinated people throughout the decades since the 1920’s



Above: Some of the rocks Kokoweef offers  
Left: Ron Hauffman

## CFMS Shows for May 2025

### May 2-3, 2025 – Yucaipa, CA

Yucaipa Valley Gem and Mineral Society  
Yucaipa Blvd and Adams Street, Yucaipa, CA 92399  
Hours: Friday, May 2 5 PM – 10 PM, Sunday Noon – 9 PM  
Contact: [grandpasgems@gmail.com](mailto:grandpasgems@gmail.com)  
Website: <http://YVGMS.org>

### May 10-11, 2025 – Lancaster, CA

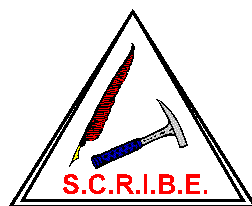
Antelope Valley Gem and Mineral Club  
Antelope Valley Fairgrounds, 2551 W, Ave H, Lancaster, CA  
Hours: Saturday 9 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 9 AM – 4 PM  
Admission and Parking are Free. The CFMS Convention will be held in conjunction with our show.  
Website: <http://avgem.weebly.com>

### May 16-18, 2025 – Vista, CA

Vista Gem and Mineral Society  
Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum, 2040 N. Santa Fe Ave., Vista, CA 92083 (in the Lower North Field)  
Hours: Friday and Saturday 10-5 and Sunday 10-4  
Come on out for a fun-filled weekend to the Vista Gem and Mineral Society's Spring Gem and Mineral Market at the Antique Gas and Steam Engine Museum. You will find everything from crystals and gems, rough slabs and cabs and even lapidary tools. The Artist's Alley will be returning focusing on our Lapidary Artist's and Jewelry Makers (Saturday only).  
Not only can you find all the supplies you are looking for, but we are also known for our raffle held on Sunday afternoon. All prizes are donated by our vendors and VGMS. Come out and see what the new Grand Prize will be! All proceeds go to support our non-profit school and you do not need to be present to win.  
There will be a food truck so you can even plan to join us for lunch. This is an outdoor show so we recommend wearing good walking shoes, sunscreen and hats. We hope to see you there!  
Contact: [info@vistarocks.org](mailto:info@vistarocks.org)  
Website: <https://vistarocks.org/events/>

### May 30-June 1, 2025 – Reno, NV

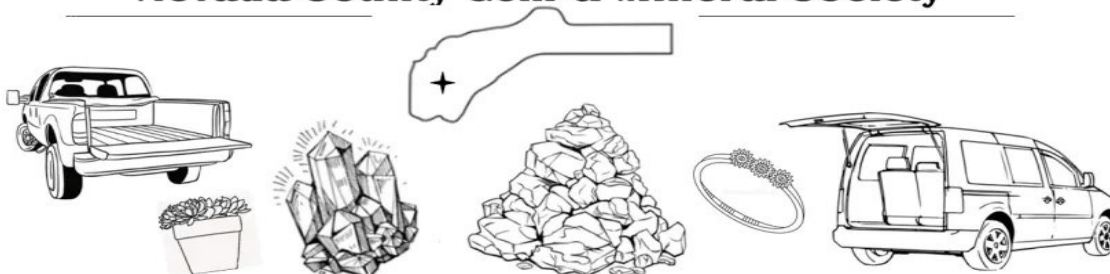
Reno Gem and Mineral Society, Inc.  
Reno Town Mall, 4001 S Virginia St, Reno, NV 89502 (across from Atlantis Casino)  
Artisan Craft Fair. Beautifully crafted jewelry by RGMS members. Vendors with rocks, gems, fossils, crystals, and related crafts. Kids corner. Free parking.  
Contact: [theresalanhans@yahoo.com](mailto:theresalanhans@yahoo.com)  
Website: <http://renogms.org>



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Tailgate Swap - May 17, 2025

### Grass Valley, California

### Nevada County Gem & Mineral Society



Come sell and trade ANYTHING earth-related (rocks, plants, gems, art/crafts, tools, jewelry)

Located at Banner Grange parking lot – 12629 McCourtney Road, Grass Valley, CA

About a mile past Nevada County Fairgrounds - Parking/booth \$20 (additional spaces \$15 – 50 available)

Arrive early, no reservations, sell 8:00 to late afternoon. Questions? Email [oominerals@gmail.com](mailto:oominerals@gmail.com)



### 2025 ARTISAN CRAFT FAIR


**MAY 30, 31 AND JUNE 1, 2025**  
**FRI: 10AM – 6PM ♦ SAT: 10AM – 5PM**  
**SUN: 10AM – 3PM**

**RENO TOWN MALL**  
**4001 S. VIRGINIA STREET**  
**ACROSS FROM THE ATLANTIS CASINO**

**FREE ADMISSION & PARKING**

SPONSORED BY  
 THE RENO GEM & MINERAL SOCIETY, INC.  
[WWW.RENOGMS.ORG](http://WWW.RENOGMS.ORG)  
 SECTION 501(C)(3) NON-PROFIT CORPORATION








## June 28 -29, 2025

# Culver City Rock & Mineral Club's Fiesta of Gems 2025 Show



Free Admission



Free Parking



Kid Friendly



Featured Stone  
FLUORITE

**Veteran's Memorial Auditorium**  
 4117 Overland Ave.  
 Culver City, CA 90230  
[www.culvercityrocks.org/fiesta/](http://www.culvercityrocks.org/fiesta/)

**We're going to run this important article again this month.**

**Information about the newest monuments in Southern California that rockhounds Need to know**

**From "Save Gem Hill, Lonely Butte and Rock Collecting in Southern California."**

There is a ton of misinformation going around due to the Chuckwalla National Monument having been declared by Proclamation last month. This is understandable as the Hauser Geodes beds, Chuckwalla, and all the Wiley Well's collecting spots are within the boundaries of the monument.

Know that:

1) Nothing changes with respect to recreational rock and mineral collecting until a Management Plan is created. That plan will replace the existing management plans in place for the public lands within the boundary of the new monument.

Mining is affected now in that upon proclamation, no new mining claims can be made. As with the Mojave Trails National Monument, existing claims will remain unchanged.

There is some provision in the Proclamation for areas to be closed in the interim for Native American ceremonies and to protect artifacts.

2) The existing MOU with the CFMS and BLM DOES NOT protect the Hauser Beds from being closed to collecting in the Management Plan for the Chuckwalla National Monument. It can be useful in arguing that they should stay open, but it holds no water over formal land management plans.

A VERY FIRST FOR RECREATIONAL ROCKHOUNDING, THE PROCLAMATION SPECIFIES RECREATIONAL ROCKHOUNDING AS A RESOURCE AND THAT THE HOBBY BE ALLOWED IN THE MANAGEMENT PLAN.

"Protecting the Chuckwalla region will preserve an important spiritual, cultural, prehistoric, and historic legacy and protect places inscribed with history for future generations; maintain a diverse array of natural and scientific resources; and help ensure that the prehistoric, historic, and scientific resources and values of the region endure for the benefit of all Americans. As described above, the region contains numerous objects of historic and scientific interest, and it provides exceptional outdoor recreational opportunities, including hiking, camping, backpacking, rockhounding, sightseeing, nature study, birding, horseback riding, hunting, climbing, mountain biking, and motorized recreation, all of which are important to the travel- and tourism-based economy of the region."

The Proclamation for the Chuckwalla National Monument can be found at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/DCPD-202500054>

I have no doubt Rockhounds have Linda Castro from Cal Wild to thank for the Proclamation specifically specifying recreational rockhounding be considered for inclusion in the Management plan. Linda is a fierce proponent for the Chuckwalla National Monuments. She has supported recreational rockhounding the Mojave Trails National Monument as well. Her goal when pushing for Chuckwalla National Monument to be declared by Proclamation was to avoid the problems that arose with the management planning for Mojave Trails and recreational rockhounding.

While no monument would certainly be much better for our hobby, if they are going to be pushed, we have to appreciate the work of those that support our hobby being involved.

The Proclamation protects many resources, and conflicts definitely exist that will affect where and how the management plan may allow collecting. IT IS IMPORTANT that all rockhounds and Clubs stay involved in the management planning process and take part when given the opportunity to speak up.



## Birthstones and Birthdays

*Emeralds, the celebrated modern birthstone of May, derive their name from the Old French word "esmeralde," originating from the Greek "smaragdos," meaning 'green stone.'*

Belonging to the beryl family, emeralds owe their mesmerizing green hue to traces of chromium and sometimes vanadium. The most sought-after emeralds flaunt a bluish-green to pure green color. Unique among gemstones, emeralds are always green, setting them apart in a world of color variety. Most emeralds display imperfections visible to the naked eye, serving as a hallmark of authenticity against lab-created counterparts.

Also recognized as a May birthstone is the Agate. Agate, a stone known for its mesmerizing, intricate bands and rich array of colors, has been a favorite of gem enthusiasts, collectors, and jewelers for millennia.

Beyond its undeniable beauty, agate carries with it a history and symbolism that is as layered as its appearance. Agate is a form of chalcedony, a microcrystalline quartz. Formed from igneous rock, the stone's unique patterns emerge from the slow filling of cavities in volcanic host rock. The name 'agate' comes from the Achates River in Sicily, where the stone was first found.

However, **agate deposits exist all over the world**, including Brazil, Uruguay, the USA, India, Madagascar, and Mexico, among others.



### Club Member Birthdays for May!

Jake Brouwer	Vilma Whitehead
Sara Arnold	John Muir
George Robles	Charlie Michener
Steve Rucker	Jeanie Amaya
Stacey Lovan	Tina Paredes
Glen Brauker	Ody Oriva
Annie Nelson	Vanessa Coe
Roberta Kaufman	Loretta Perkins



**On behalf of the VVGMC we wish all of you a very happy birthday!**

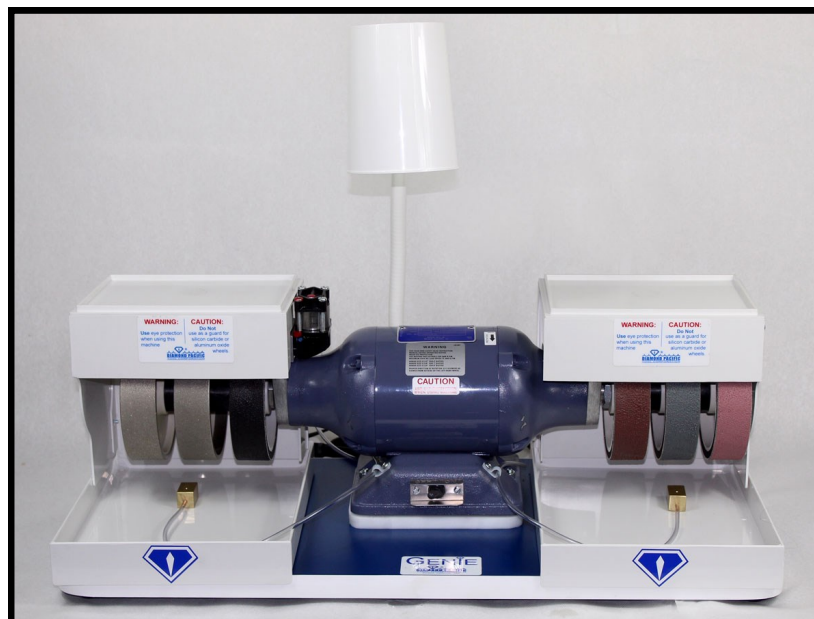


## The Magic Genie Scott Gray

Well it's official! Sasha and I have joined an exclusive club, but one that any can join, barring the cost of membership. One that once you're a member you wonder why didn't you join earlier. One that makes you feel like a Rockstar. We finally joined the Genie Club!

After Quartzsite this year we both agreed it was time to take the plunge. A little bit of saving and a healthy tax return helped seal the deal. And, like that, we have our own Genie. After telling Dave Duncan of our decision he graciously took it upon himself to locate us a good deal on a used unit out of North Hollywood. We were ready to go new but Dave's exact words were "Don't Be Afraid Of A Used One, It Might Be A Better Machine!" So on a Saturday I took a drive to North Hollywood, CA and met Gary Young. I'm glad I did. Gary was kind enough to hold the unit for us for 2 weeks, the soonest I could get the time to get out to see him, despite having offers that came in after us that would have moved it a lot quicker. I also made a really cool friend too. Gary, a native New Zealander, runs a very nice Facebook page and has all kinds of neat stuff going on..Join Gary's Rocks And Minerals on Facebook and check out his daily 4pm pst live sales and keep your eyes open for the random weekend pop up deals and you will see what I mean

He has a lot of cool stuff and loaded me down with some bismuth and a gorgeous ammonite, in addition to other cool rocks. A real gentlemen and a pleasure to deal with, I was smiling all the way home. And, yes, getting a Genie does feel magical. It has the power to turn my finds into real gems. And it has another power I wasn't even aware of until using it for a couple days in a row: it's a time machine that takes you into the future because when working on it time flies by. You sit down for a few minutes and next thing you know it's the afternoon and you wonder "How Did I Get Here So Fast?" Thank you Gary and thank you Dave for making magic happen!



[Don't forget to pay your dues for 2025.](#)

## Jade Fever: The Gem Show You Didn't Know You Needed

Hello gem lovers!

If you're anything like me, you enjoy a good sparkle, a polished cabochon, or maybe just the thrill of a new rock in your pocket. But have you ever found yourself yelling, "No! Not the excavator again!" at your TV? If not—prepare yourself. *Jade Fever* on Amazon Prime is about to become your newest addiction.

My husband accidentally stumbled upon this hidden gem (pun totally intended) one evening, and let's just say—we're now fully invested in the fate of a small jade mining family in British Columbia. The show follows the Bunce family as they dig (literally) for nephrite jade in some of the roughest terrain you've ever seen. It's part treasure hunt, part family drama, and part "will the loader break down again?" suspense. Spoiler alert: it probably will.

What makes *Jade Fever* so irresistible to gem and mineral lovers? It's not just about the jade (though there's plenty of it). It's about the grit, the grind, and the glory of finding something beautiful buried deep in the Earth. Plus, there's something so relatable about chasing a shiny rock that may or may not make you rich—or at least really, really tired.

If you love minerals, enjoy a hearty laugh, and don't mind a bit of mining chaos, *Jade Fever* is a must-watch. Bonus points if you yell "Jade!" every time they find a boulder.

Trust me—one episode in, and you'll be yelling at equipment breakdowns right along with us.

Keep shining,

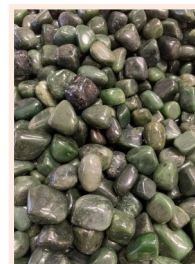
Cristiane

Resident gem nerd, rock hound, and now armchair jade miner.



Cristiane Stoll

Cristiane is a well-regarded  
massage therapist in Apple Valley



## A new donation!



A new (to us) 6 inch water lubricated saw in the grinding room. This saw will be great for cutting turquoise, varicite and other rocks that don't do well when exposed to cutting oil.  
Thanks to new member, Doug Paul and his friend Evan Schwartz.

## Quartzite the other 11 months of the year

### Stina Smith

Quartzite has «seasons» where it swarms with visitors from everywhere, all over the world. My first time here it was dead quiet. However, I have Norwegian friends that live in Bouse when they're over here. Bouse is a small town / area 35 mins north of Quartzite. I, not having been much around in the US ever since I got here, happily accepted the invitation to go to AZ with my other Norwegian friends living in Apple Valley.

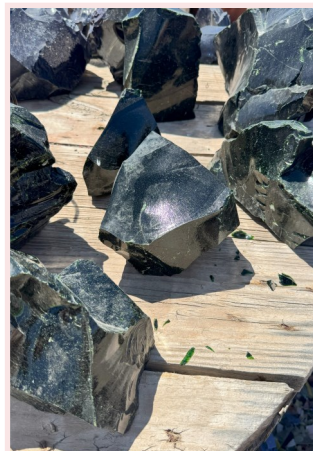
We left Tuesday and drove via Barstow, Needles and Parker before arriving in Bouse some hours later. The gas prices in AZ is to die for, \$2.96 a gallon!!!! We enjoyed the evening with beer, wine, BBQ and a beautiful sunset. So, the morning after we have coffee on the veranda, wearing hoodies because it's 98 F during daytime, that doesn't mean it's late 70ish F in the early morning. ☹️

We eat a typical Norwegian breakfast; toast, butter, Jarlsberg cheese, Norwegian liverwurst and our brown goat cheese ☹️

The time has come to venture off to Quartzite, Facebook friends wonder wtf I'm doing there after the whole rock event is over, it starts January 1st, with certain highlights like Pow-wow, and it lasts till end of February. At the same time in February and March there is a gigantic swap meet. Anywhoo, it is not hard to find parking now that the season is over, you can park anywhere and we notice quickly there isn't much open. There are a lot of stores with rocks and slabs, some silver work - but just a few are doing business this time of year. Well, we found a huge outdoor area, which has a lot, but I'm looking for Lapis lazuli slabs, Pietersite or Turquoise. She's got none of that but she does have, Jasper, Agate and Obsidian in all different shapes, colors and origins. I end up with 2 small slabs, a beautiful Tiger Eye with a spectacular chatoyance and a Chinese Writing Stone and I have no idea why it's even called that ( unless I use my imagination) - I wanted the one that had almost a white background with black "writing" ( I suppose) - however I ended up with dark background and white "writing". I'm a sucker for Tiger eye, so no wonder I ended up with one. This lady also had a lot of cabs, spheres and other shapes, but they're already shaped and polished - the fun is gone. I think I saw one other customer wandering around here.



Left: Stina



Right: Obsidian



The streets were just empty, one truck every now and then. Free parking everywhere. We had another go at an indoor rock / gem shop- I bought a pair of Lapis Lazuli earrings and a Quartzite T-shirt. The last stop was like a whole sale for spheres, gems / bracelets / displays and packaging. At the end, we went to Silly Al's pizza for a really good pizza, and some beer.

Across the street there was a sign with "Leather" - but guess what, it was closed.... So "off season Quartzite" is what I experienced!! However, I'll be back!!!



Above left: Arizona gas price...ugh!



Above right: A metallic horse  
Ed note: not surprising considering the author is a horse lover and a great help at a local horse rescue.

#### From CFMS

### WATCH WHAT YOU CLICK!!

The "phishers" are out there and seem to be getting better and better at what they do. In the past few days I've gotten "emails" supposedly from Susan, Bob Papac, and some AFMS people wanting me to pay a bill, send a wire transfer, etc. and that's just the federation phishing. Don't get fooled into responding to them. If in doubt contact the person whose email is being spoofed at their real email address to find out if they contacted you. Delete the phony email.

## Hammers, Nails and Tumbling Lessons

### Merri Lynn Casem

"If the only tool you have is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail." Abraham Maslow

This quote applies to many aspects of our lives, including our rockhounding hobby. And no, I'm not talking about rock hammers!

I got back into the world of rockhounding about eight years ago. Around that time, my sons bought me a Lortone 3A rotary tumbler. Bliss!

It was so fun to set up the runs, change out the grits each week, and watch the rough rocks I had collected (mostly chalcedony and jaspers) reveal their true beauty. I had so much fun I bought a second tumbler. I read the booklets that came with the machines and watch a bunch of YouTube videos (thank you Michigan Rocks!). I made mistakes but learned as I went.

On one of my trips to the Mojave I collected Calico Silver Lace Onyx from the hills north of the west entrance to Mule Canyon. I collected a lot of tumbler-size pieces in float and happily set them up for a run when I got home. Like usual, I let the material run in course (60/90 grit) for about a week. Imagine my surprise when I opened the barrel to see a LOT of grey sludge! Not getting the clue, I moved to medium (150/220 grit) for another week – more sludge. At this point I noticed that the rocks were getting a lot smaller – oopsie! I knew that you should tumble similar rocks together, but I missed the lesson about checking the Mohs hardness of the material before you start. Not all rocks are the same! Turns out Silver Lace Onyx is around a 3 on the Mohs scale. Very different from the 7 I was used to with jasper.

Here is the protocol I developed for tumbling this softer material:

Stage 1 – 4 tablespoons Course (60/90 grit) 2-3 days (check after 2 days to judge progress in smoothing). Rinse material well and clean the barrel. Grit may still be detectable.

Stage 2 – 4 tablespoons Medium (150/220 grit) 2 days. Rinse material well and clean the barrel. Grit may still be detectable. Can add ceramic media if volume of material is less than the initial 2/3 of the barrel.

Stage 3 – 6 tablespoons of Fine (500 grit) 2 days. Rinse material well and clean the barrel.

Stage 4 – 4 tablespoons of Borax powder 2 hours to overnight. I use this step to help remove any remaining fine grit on the stones.

The onyx material should be smooth with a matte polish. I have not been able to get a high gloss finish on tumbled Silver Lace Onyx. You can apply mineral oil to the surface of your stones, let sit overnight, and then wipe off the excess to help improve the appearance.

In conclusion, to paraphrase the quote I started with –

"When the only lapidary tool you have is a tumbler, you tend to tumble every rock."



## Youth Program

Yaya Avila says that the kids program is going very well. Thanks to her the young students are learning how to do lapidary. They are using the Ameritool flat laps to create cabochons. The kids meet every other Saturday. Yaya asks that club members help to keep the students directed and on-track and make sure the flat laps are organized.



Left are cabs created by students;

Rachel, Ruth, and Darla.

Nice work girls!

Below are the students & Yaya at work.







This is a photo from last Saturday, April 19 general meeting.  
Is anything missing? Maybe it's you? We'd love for you to be here.  
See you soon!



**Have a wonderful Spring and begining of Summer!**





## How I became Interested in Rocks

### Beka McNeil

In 1967 I got interested in crystals and in doing so I found out that quartz crystals contain energy. With that thought in mind I began to think that other rocks might possess that energy too. I have, since then, carried a crystal in my pocket all the time. I have always been interested in spheres and heart rocks and have collected them for years.

In 2021 my son passed away. It was devastating for me. A good friend took me to Hobby Lobby so I could get some materials for jewelry creation. He was so generous and ended up spending a huge amount to help me get started. I started making pieces to give away and sell to family and friends. My particular interest is in healing stones and the creation of healing bracelets to sell so that others can experience the same blessings as I have.

Emiliano and Rosemary, friends of my daughter, introduced me to the VVGMC, for which I am forever grateful. I took advantage of the opportunity to enroll in the silversmithing class there and shortly after that I became a vendor. I needed to move some of my creations so I could make more. The silversmithing class was a great chance to expand my knowledge and techniques.

In the mean time I learned to become an instructor at the rock club so I could help others increase their production and skills here at VVGMC. I have become a vice president, and enjoy serving my friends and fellow club members.



Above: Part of Beka's collection on display at the VVGMC clubhouse.

Right: Beka McNeil



**Who's this?**

1995

It's none other than our friend and board member Jake Brouwer!

Jake is a rock collector, lapidary and treasure hunter, we're quite fortunate to have him for advice and support as we continue to practice our hobby.





## Legacies Ken Villars

One of the things we tend to like about rocks is their permanence. Especially when connected by memories, beautiful stone pieces can really capture our attention and make us feel closer to our ancestors.

I was already connected to my Father in law Gene before I met his daughter Barbara (my wife) through an interest in bow making. Later on, when I found out he had been interested in flintknapping before I met him, I was excited to check out the pieces he had made. We lost Gene in 2020, and before we joined the VVGMC, when we had started tumbling rocks, we brought home a bucket of rocks that Gene had collected. The rocks had been dumped in the gravel by the garage, and included various pretty rocks collected over the years by Gene while fly fishing and other outdoor activities.

On trips to visit Barbara's Mom, we still find a few rocks by the garage that we missed. Recently, I was pleasantly surprised to find a rock Gene had cut. I had no idea Gene had enjoyed cutting rocks, like we have been doing recently. I thought it would be fun to cut a section off and polish it into a live edged cab, to make something nice for someone Gene loved. It has been a special and nostalgic feeling to finish a project started by someone special, long ago.

This Easter weekend, we visited Barbara's Mom again, and the kids and I picked through the gravel for more of Gene's rock that we might have missed. I'm pleased to say I found a few more pieces he had cut, and one that he had started to polish. More special future projects!

I've included a photo of the kids picking through the gravel, and a few of their finds (Including agate and a piece of petrified wood). I've also added a few photos of Gene's arrowheads he knapped from glass.

Somehow, finding more things that remind us of Gene and projects that make us feel like we are participating with him even to this day brings me some comfort, and gives me the chance to honor his memory.



## Officers, Department Chairpersons & Instructors

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### **INSTRUCTORS:**

Chris Koch, Stine Smith, Dave Duncan, Ann Musik,  
Lia Hamilton, Gayland Graves, Beka McNeil, Lorie Cunningham, Janel Russell

**ASSOCIATE INSTRUCTORS** Ody Oriva



Victor Valley Gem & Mineral Club was founded in 1947, as a 501/C4 non profit education club. Visitors are always welcome.

Our objective and purpose is to disseminate knowledge of mineralogy & earth sciences. To encourage study in those subjects through various programs. To arrange field trips for exploration, study, and collection of specimens. The preparations, 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.

**MARCH SHOP DAYS:**

SHOP DAY TUESDAYS - 12:00pm - 5:00 pm  
SHOP DAY: THURSDAYS - 12:00pm - 5:00pm  
SHOP DAY: SATURDAYS - 12:00pm -5:00 pm  
SHOP DAY: SUNDAYS - 12:00pm - 5:00 pm

**REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS AS FOLLOWS:**

**CLUB CLEAN UP DAY:** TO BE ANNOUNCED (usually the Thursday before the General meeting at 11:00 AM)

**INSTRUCTORS MEETING:** TBA

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:** First Tuesday at 5:30 PM (May 6th)

**EDUCATION NIGHT:** None planned at this time.

**GENERAL MEETING:** - May 17, 2025. 12:00 - 2:00 Shop work resumes APPROXIMATELY 2:00 -5:00 pm.

**JUNIOR ROCKHOUNDS:** Every other Saturday at 10:00 AM

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