



## THE WONDER OF (COLLECTING) SAND

Our **March 9** membership meeting, starting at **7:30 PM**, will be in the Theater Room at the **Gloria Kaufman Community Center**, the same place as the January meeting, but in a different room. The community center is right next to the Scout House and our lapidary workshop. For your GPS, the address is 10858 Culver Boulevard. Park in the parking lot by the Scout House. We will arrange for the door or gate from the parking lot to the Kaufman building

to be open. Food and drinks are not allowed in the Theater Room, so refreshments, including water and soft drinks, will be available in the garden. We will also have the Trading Post in the garden. We are delighted to have (new) member David Balenson do the presentation at the meeting.

Sand, the second-most-used resource on Earth after water, permeates our lives and culture. From

The Culver City Rock & Mineral Club brings together persons interested in the Earth Sciences to engage in research and study, to assist members in the collection and preservation of rocks and minerals, and in the study and practice of lapidary and related arts.



beaches to riverbanks, deserts to mountains, and even beyond Earth, on the Moon and on Mars, sand is ubiquitous. Its versatility is astounding; from arts and crafts to abrasives, and from glass to computer chips, our reliance on sand is extensive. In this presentation, Dave will share his fascination with sand, cultivated through over 200 samples collected around the globe over the past two decades. We will delve into the myriad types, colors, and granularities of sands, unveiling their diverse beauty. Utilizing a digital microscope projected onto the screen, we will scrutinize sand up close, unveiling a largely unseen world. We will also explore the intersection of sand and art, where it serves as both subject and medium. Finally, he will provide insights into resources for further exploration and sand collection, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for this remarkable resource.

David Balenson is the Interim Director of the Networking and Cybersecurity Division and a Senior Supervising Computer Scientist at USC Information Sciences Institute, a world leader in research and development of advanced information processing, computer, and communications technologies, headquartered in Marina del Rey, CA. He has over 35 years of experience managing and conducting research and development of innovative solutions to challenging cybersecurity problems for government and commercial customers.

David is a native of Baltimore and currently lives in Olney, MD, with his wife of over 35 years. He received his B.S. and M.S. degrees in Computer Science from the University of Maryland.



David enjoys collecting stamps, coins, rocks, sand, bottles, and dried flowers. He collected his first rock (a cut geode) as a child at a gem and mineral show held at the Pikesville Armory in Maryland, and his first sand sample at Pebble Beach, California, in July 2003. He loves traveling the country and world, adding to his collections. He recently returned from a trip to the Oregon coast, where he collected 20 heavy mineral sands and many beach agates and jaspers.



## **PRESIDENT'S LETTER**

Dear members,

Exciting news: CCRMC has begun working with the Wende Museum and Culver City to create a new and expanded space for our shop. The museum wants to make our club a part of their expansion of our block into a cultural hub for the community, including helping us to increase our shop's capacity, and hopefully expanding our footprint and deepening our impact. This plan will take some years to actualize, but it could be a wonderful way for us to ensure a productive and secure future.



The only immediate change for CCRMC this year will be a new and expanded storage unit — replacing our storage sheds with one large shipping container. We will be reaching out to members when the date for that change happens, as we will be needing strong folks to help us with the move.

The club is also in need of a few more people to support our outreach to local schools, also known as the Education Department. More outreach to local schools means writing a few emails and occasionally setting up a display of mineral specimens for a school's science fair for a few hours. I guarantee you it is not time-consuming, and it would be so helpful to our club's mission.

Hope to see you at our meeting on March 9th.

— Alexa Hunter, President

## MARCH WORKSHOPS

### LAPIDARY 101

Sunday, March 15  
9 AM to 12 PM  
In the Lapidary Shop – Instructor Jette Sorensen



**Description:** Get to know the equipment at the club's lapidary workshop. Use a trim saw to cut the outline for a cabochon. Shape the stone on the grinding wheels and use the Expando wheels to polish it. Use the arbor with a leather wheel to get a high polish. Go home with a cabochon you can use for a pendant.

**Safety Notes:** Wear old clothes, you will get wet. Wear closed-toe shoes. Long hair should be tied back away from your face. Refrain from wearing long dangling jewelry and loose long sleeves. Bring eye and ear protection.

Don't bring your own stone(s), save that until you know the equipment.

Workshop fee: \$20 payable in advance. Limited to four members.

Email [Jette Sorensen](mailto:jette.sorensen@desviado.com) for registration and payment information.

### INTRODUCTION TO WAX CARVING

Saturday, March 28 | 11 AM - 3 PM  
In the Scout House – Instructor Monica Moreno

**Description:** Learn the basics of wax carving for jewelry using simple, beginner-friendly tools. In this introductory workshop, you'll get hands-on



experience cutting and shaping wax to create your own unique pendant design, which will be cast in bronze and mailed to you after the workshop.

A few of the techniques you'll explore include:

- Transferring and sketching designs onto wax
- Using basic tools to carve out form and detail
- Shaping and smoothing carving wax
- Preparing your piece for casting

This workshop focuses on accessible tools and techniques you can use at home to continue developing your skills and create more beautiful work. You will carve a design for one pendant that will be cast for you and mailed to the address you provide. You can bring ideas for small simple designs, or use a design provided. If bringing your own, sketch ideas for flat designs that are within 1 inch by 1 inch in size.

Things you could bring with you to the workshop: If you have them, please bring your prescription eyeglasses and/or safety glasses, an apron if you prefer your clothing not to get dirty.

**Safety Notes:** Please wear closed-toe shoes and long pants. Long hair should be tied back away from your face. Refrain from wearing long dangling jewelry and loose long sleeves.

\$145 for non-members | \$135 for CCRMC members

To make a reservation for this workshop, visit [www.desviado.com/event-list](http://www.desviado.com/event-list)

### BEGINNING BEZEL SETTING (premade bezels)

Sunday, March 29, 9 AM to 12 PM  
In the Lapidary Shop – Instructor Jette Sorensen



**Description:** In this hands-on jewelry-making workshop, you'll learn one of the most elegant and timeless stone-setting techniques — the bezel setting — while building practical soldering and finishing skills you'll use throughout your jewelry journey.

We'll begin at the bench with a mini torch, learning how to prepare and solder a premade bezel

cup onto a skinny ring. You'll practice reading the heat, applying solder with precision, and achieving a clean, secure join between the two components. Using pliers, you'll refine the bezel cup's positioning and make any small adjustments needed to keep everything aligned and true before and after soldering. Needle files will help you clean up any rough edges or excess solder, leaving a polished, professional result.

Once your bezel is firmly in place, you'll move on to the satisfying work of setting a cabochon stone. You'll learn how to select a stone that fits the bezel correctly and seat it evenly before using a bezel pusher, bezel roller, and burnisher to gradually work the metal walls up and over the stone's girdle. You'll discover how these three tools work in sequence — pushing, rolling, and finally burnishing the bezel to a smooth, reflective finish that holds your stone securely and beautifully.

By the end of the session, you'll leave with a finished ring you've made yourself and the foundational knowledge to tackle bezel setting in your own studio practice.

Time permitting, you will also set small cabochons in small bezel cups and prong settings.

### **What to bring:**

Skinny rings, made in a prior workshop. Butane torch (Crème Brûlée), jewelry flat-nose and round-nose pliers, and needle files; setting tools, if you have them (bezel pusher, bezel roller, burnisher); we'll have some available to share.

Workshop fee, \$110, including silver, premade bezels, prong settings, tubing, and cabochons. Limited to four members.

Email Jette Sorensen to reserve a spot and get payment information: [jetsorensen@gmail.com](mailto:jetsorensen@gmail.com)



## **BENCH TIPS**



### **BEZEL PROBLEMS**

When bezel setting a cab that has rather sharp corners, have you ever had problems pushing the metal down at the corners? It's a common problem, often causing a wrinkle in your bezel and a grimace on your face.

In order for a bezel to capture the stone, the top edge of the bezel must be compressed and become shorter to lay down onto the stone. With a round or oval stone, this naturally happens as you push and burnish the bezel. But when setting a stone with corners, the tendency is to push the long sides of the bezel down first. No compression occurs along the sides, and all excess metal is left at the corners. Compressing everything there is difficult. Often, the only way to remove the extra metal at the corner is to make a saw cut and fold the two sides in to touch.

If you want a smooth bezel all around the corners, the simple solution is to set the corners of the bezel first. Then push in and burnish the sides. In this way, the necessary compression is distributed along the length of all sides and not forced to occur at the corners. With the corners set first, the top edge of the bezel can easily be compressed along the sides.

### **CHEAPER & BETTER PICKLE**

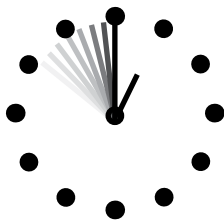
Most jewelers use a granular pickle mixed with water. The active ingredient is sodium bisulfate. This

can be purchased online (amazon.com/dp/B084G-PS6KR) or from local stores as a common pool chemical like pH Down, used for adjusting the acidity of the water. Check the list of active ingredients for a brand that is 95% or more sodium bisulfate.

An added benefit is that the pool chemical is usually more pure in form than what is sold for jewelry use and does not cause the brown grime often found floating on the top of the pot.

Get more of Brad's tips and tricks in his book [Smart Solutions for Jewelry Making](#).

— Brad Smith



## ***THE MINUTES***

### **February 09, 2026 General Meeting**

Called to order at 7:34 PM by vice president Steve Dover.

Treasurer – Darrell stated that the club is solvent.

Membership – Regina stated that we currently have over 200 members. Payment of dues for 2026 is due by the end of the March general meeting. She explained how to renew online. She also asked that members buy 20 raffle tickets, \$1 each, equaling \$20. She has made packets for all current members, and anyone who doesn't pick up tickets at a meeting will automatically have them mailed to the member. Reminder that all proceeds from the raffle at Fiesta of Gems are donated.

Fiesta of Gems (FOG) – June 27th and 28th.

We have printed out postcards and tear-off flyers. The flyers have been brought to the meeting for all members to take. We are not mailing out the post-

cards this year.

Planning for FOG has already begun. Darrell announced that Culver City has given the club a grant that covers almost the entire cost of renting out the Veterans Auditorium.

Steve announced that we have 20 display cases for the show. Members can show gems and minerals they have collected and/or jewelry they have created. He is providing the sign-up sheet.

Gary announced that we need volunteers for security. We especially need people to stay after the show to guard all of the exits.

Ellen asked for donations of beads and stones for the kids' games.

Lapidary shop – Steve announced that the shop opens 3 days a week. Club members need to reserve a space online. The club limits the shop to 5-6 members per day.

Stephanie announced that the club will have another Alley Sale on April 18th from 10 AM to 3 PM. There is room for members to bring a table and sell slab, specimens, tools, handmade jewelry, etc.

Jette announced that the presentation at our March meeting will be about sand. She asked if anyone has a digital microscope to borrow that can attach to a projector.

There are several classes coming up, and the schedule is on [culvercityrocks.org](http://culvercityrocks.org). Upcoming classes include how to make a prong setting, how to make a Byzantine chain link necklace or bracelet, and making jewelry with found objects.

Steve announced the rules for the Silent Auction. This now includes being a member of the club and signing in before the auction starts.



## **MEMBERS TO EXHIBIT NEEDED FOR OUR 63<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL CULVER CITY FIESTA OF GEMS SHOW!**

The Culver City Rock and Mineral Club needs members to display their creations and/or collections at our upcoming show, June 27th and 28th, at the Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Culver City.

We provide the display case, liners, lights, locks, and security during the show. All you have to do is set up your display on Friday evening or Saturday morning and pick it up on Sunday after the show closes. If you need help setting up your display, assistance will be available at the show.

Please contact Steve Dover directly at [skdover@yahoo.com](mailto:skdover@yahoo.com), 760-764-2422 or sign up at the shop or at a club meeting to reserve a case.

Thanks!  
Steve Dover, Display Chairman

## **LAPIDARY WORKSHOP HOURS**

10866 Culver Boulevard  
Culver City, CA 90230  
(310) 836-4611

The shop is located behind the Scout House. There will not be a Wednesday evening shop until we find a new instructor. Steve Hanna is not available to continue.

The shop is open Saturdays and Sundays from 12 noon to 4 PM. To see if there is room, go to the Lapidary Shop tab on the Club's website and send an email; do not just show up.

Saturdays: Steve Dover  
Sundays: Jette Sorensen

If you have not made a reservation, you can call the shop during open hours to see if there is room, 310-836-4611. Do not wear open-toed shoes or shorts. Wear old clothes. Tie long hair back. Bring eye and ear protection.

## **UPCOMING SHOWS:**

**Ventura Gem & Mineral Society**  
March 7-8, 2026 – Ventura, CA

Ventura County Fairgrounds, 10 W. Harbor Blvd.,  
Ventura, CA 93001  
Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

Ventura Gem, Mineral, Fossil & Jewelry Show. Exhibits of gems, minerals, fossils & lapidary arts; jewelry-making demos; gold panning; raffle prizes & silent auctions; rummage sale & plant sale; 15+ dealers; kids' activities. A SoCal tradition for 6 decades & counting!

Contact: (805) 312-8467, [info@vgms.org](mailto:info@vgms.org)  
Website: [vgms.org](http://vgms.org)

**Victor Valley Gem and Mineral Club**  
March 13-15, 2026 – Apple Valley, CA

7 Miles down Stoddard Wells Rd., Apple Valley, CA  
Hours: 9 AM – 5 PM daily

50th Annual Stoddard Well Rockhound Tailgate. Everyone is Welcome! Free event, free vendor spaces, dry camping, restrooms on site, silent auction, grab bags, spin the wheel and more. Come visit for hand-crafted and faceted, jewelry, slabs, cabs, findings, equipment, minerals and fossils with tons of rough materials and more.

Saturday family field trip 9-1 – we will be collecting tri-colored marble.

Contact: (760) 490-8401  
Website: [vvgmc.org](http://vvgmc.org)

**Lake Elsinore Gem and Mineral Society**  
March 14, 2026- Lake Elsinore, CA

32097 Corydon Rd., Lake Elsinore, CA 92530  
Hours: 10 AM – 4 PM

6th Annual Lake Elsinore Spring Rock and Craft Show

Contact: [berylman50@aol.com](mailto:berylman50@aol.com), (909) 208-6956

**Fallbrook Gem and Mineral Society**  
March 15, 2026 – Fallbrook, CA

123 W. Alvarado St., Fallbrook, CA 92028  
Hours: 12 Noon – 3 PM

Rough and Cut – This is a kind of clearance sale for miscellaneous minerals. Includes some fine minerals flats of lower end minerals, and lapidary rough. For the kids, there is a rock pile. \$5.00 for a bucket to be filled as many times as they want. Also, larger very nice garden rock. Good family event and open to the public.

Contact: (760) 728-1130, [info@fgms.org](mailto:info@fgms.org)  
 Website: [fgms.org](http://fgms.org)

**Antelope Valley Gem and Mineral Club  
 March 28-29, 2026 – Lancaster, CA**

Antelope Valley Fairgrounds, 2551 W Ave H, Lancaster, CA 93534

Hours: Saturday 10 AM – 5 PM, Sunday 10 AM – 4 PM

Parking will cost \$10. Show will be in the Van Dam building.

Contact: [marylandoriole@gmail.com](mailto:marylandoriole@gmail.com)  
 Website: [AVGem.weebly.com](http://AVGem.weebly.com)



**49<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GEM & MINERAL SHOW**

**APRIL 18TH-19TH, 2026**  
 SATURDAY: 10AM-5PM  
 SUNDAY: 10AM-4PM




**Free Admission - Free Parking**  
**Borchard Community Center**  
 190 N. Reino Road  
 Thousand Oaks, CA

[www.CGAMC.org](http://www.CGAMC.org)



**Vendors Exhibits**  
**Live Lapidary-Demonstrations**  
**Silent Auction**  
**Hourly Raffle**  
**Plant Sale**  
**Youth Room**



**SEARCHERS**  
**65TH ANNUAL GEM, MINERAL & JEWELRY SHOW**  
 Saturday, **April 25th, 2026** / 10am - 5pm  
 Sunday, **April 26th, 2026** / 10am - 4:30pm

**JPK Studios**

**Sue G.'s Jewelry**

Photo courtesy of Veronica Purpura of Zincite crystal from Poland



**BROOKHURST COMMUNITY CENTER**  
 2271 W. CRESCENT AVE, ANAHEIM, CA  
[www.searchersrocks.org](http://www.searchersrocks.org)




## ***The Nugget – Submissions***

The submission deadline is on the 15th of every month. Articles or notes without a byline are written by the Editor. Photographs without credits are shot by a CCRMC member. Email the Nugget submissions to the Editor: [nugget@culvercityrocks.org](mailto:nugget@culvercityrocks.org)

## ***The Nugget – Advertisements***

The Nugget accepts paid advertisements. The cost for an eighth of a page is \$7 per insertion, payable in advance. Size is about 2" high x 3.5" wide. Ad location is at the discretion of the Editor.`` Ads, copy, or business cards must be received by the 10th of the month. Email submissions to the Editor: [nugget@culvercityrocks.org](mailto:nugget@culvercityrocks.org)

### **Mailing Address**

Culver City Rock & Mineral Club  
PO Box 3324  
Culver City, CA 90231  
[info@culvercityrocks.org](mailto:info@culvercityrocks.org)  
310-836-4611

See local field trips posted on LA-Rocks at [facebook.com/groups/411978609512229](https://www.facebook.com/groups/411978609512229)

More field trips are posted on SoCal Rocks [www.facebook.com/groups/2605376056257691](https://www.facebook.com/groups/2605376056257691)

### **Zoom Address**

<https://zoom.us/j/3108364611?pwd=WnRTclZTS-3RJMEdWdlV2c01mQWxqdz09>  
Meeting ID: 310 836 4611  
Password: rocks

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The CCRMC is a nonprofit 501(c)(4) organization.

## **2026 Elected Officers**

President - Alexa Hunter  
Vice President - Steven Dover  
Treasurer - Darrell Robb  
Recording Secretary - Stephanie Dangott  
Corresponding Secretary: Ellen Moe  
Parliamentarian - Ana Maria Strambi Guimaraes

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## **2026 Committee Chairs**

Education - Merrilee Marks  
Federation Director - Ellen Moe  
Field Trips - AVAILABLE  
Librarian - Joannie Rippner  
Membership - Regina Lozano  
Minerals - Joel Kuennen  
Photography - Brit Smith  
Programs - Jette Sorensen  
Publications - Jette Sorensen,  
Joel Kuennen  
Publicity - Janice Metz  
Social - Co-Chairs Peggy Oberg, Steve Dover  
Sunshine – Stephanie Dangott  
Trading Post - Gary Mitchell  
Zoom Host - Darren Cokin

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## **Board of Directors**

2026 + 2027

TBD