



# The Joshua Tree

June 2, 2026

## ANOTHER JOURNEY ON THE HIDE N SEEK RIVER

Rotary Club members were treated to the second installment of an engaging presentation by **Tony Winkel**, Principal Hydrogeologist with the Mojave Water Agency, who continued his fascinating exploration of the Mojave River, often called the "Hide and Seek River" or the "Upside Down River."

Tony explained that the Mojave River earned the nickname "Hide and Seek River" as early as an 1890 mining document because much of its water disappears underground, only to reappear miles away. Unlike most rivers, the Mojave's flow is largely hidden beneath the surface, creating what hydrogeologists refer to as a perennial groundwater system. This unique characteristic has made the river both a vital resource and a source of mystery throughout the High Desert's history.

Beginning at Lane's Crossing in the Lower Narrows, Tony shared the story of **Aaron G. Lane**, an ex-Army captain who became the first permanent non-Native settler in the High Desert in 1857. Lane established a 160-acre ranch and relied on natural springs to irrigate crops and support livestock. His ranch supplied beef and produce to nearby Camp Cady, and a bank-to-bank footbridge allowed travelers to cross the river. The area was also known as Turner's Crossing.



Throughout the presentation, Tony highlighted how groundwater conditions have changed dramatically since those early days. Historically, springs, seeps, and shallow groundwater supported communities throughout the Mojave River basin. However, decades of groundwater pumping have lowered water tables in many parts of the High Desert, reducing natural surface water features that were once common throughout the region.

The historical journey continued through Oro Grande, which began as a mining camp in 1875 and later grew when the railroad arrived in 1885. Tony shared colorful accounts from early visitors who described miners returning from work at dusk while campfires glowed throughout the settlement.

The audience then traveled north along the river corridor to Point of Rocks Station, established as a way station in the 1870s. The community was renamed Helen in 1907 after **Helen Wells**, daughter of a railroad vice president, before becoming Helendale in 1918.

### This Week's Functionaries

Invocation: **Chris Ackerman**

Flag Salute: **Dr. Ron Boyd**

4-Way Test: **Brad Poiriez**

Fine Master: **Ryan McEachron**

*Continued on page 2*

## MURRAY'S MINUTE



Thank you to Tony Winkel for coming by again to share the story of our Mojave

River. I love how well you describe not only the river, but the history as well! Can't wait for the final installment on June 23rd!



Less than 30 days until we draw for our big 50/50! We are currently over \$900, so lets keep on buying and get the money over \$1000! Half of that money going to one lucky Rotarian and the other half will help Brad Letner get his presidency off and running! Each ticket is \$5 or you can purchase 5 for \$20. Winner will be drawn on June 30, 2026.

This week, we held a Club Assembly. As part of the Consent Agenda, members voted on the proposed Board of Directors for both the Club and the Foundation, as well as the budgets for each organization. Members also voted to approve Brad Letner as President for the 2027–2028 Rotary year. The floor was then opened for questions, but none were raised. The motion was made by Ryan McEachron and seconded by Chris Ackerman. With all members voting in favor, the Consent Agenda was unanimously approved.

Steve

## Tony Winkel

*Continued from page 1*

Another stop along the river was Cottonwood Station, first established in 1863. Tony recounted the colorful history of California bandit **Tiburcio Vásquez**, a controversial figure viewed by some as a folk hero and by others as a criminal. Vásquez and his followers used the rocky outcroppings and hills throughout the Mojave Desert as strategic hideouts and lookouts, where they could reportedly spot pursuing posses from miles away. Following Vásquez's execution in 1875, his lieutenant **Cleovaro Chávez** continued the gang's activities before meeting his own dramatic end just a year later.

The presentation then moved east to Barstow, whose history includes several name changes. Originally known by the Native American name Angaybee, the area later became Jacobi, then Grapevine Station, and later Waterman before finally being renamed Barstow in 1886 after railroad executive **William Barstow Strong**. Historical records from 1929 noted that groundwater was close enough to the surface that small streams could be seen flowing near rock outcroppings west of town.

Tony also discussed the historic Daggett Ditch, constructed in 1867 and fed by artesian wells near Fish Ponds. The ditch carried water approximately eleven miles through Daggett to Minneola and remained functional well into the twentieth century. Remarkably, fish were still present in portions of the ditch during the 1950s, and parts of the system remained in use through the 1970s.

The final stop on the tour was Fish Ponds, where a station was established in the 1870s. The area earned its name from ponds reportedly filled with native chubs before Mormon pioneers later renamed the community Nebo after establishing the Nebo Sheep Company.

Tony masterfully blended hydrology, local history, colorful characters, and the evolving story of water in the Mojave Desert. His presentation provided a fascinating reminder that the Mojave River is much more than a riverbed, it is the lifeblood of the High Desert and a living thread connecting generations of settlers, travelers, miners, ranchers, and residents who have depended on its waters for more than a century and a half.

# UNITE FOR GOOD



## Big Blue Poker Chip



Keith Metzler had the chance to draw the Blue Chip but picked green and saved the chance for another. We will continue next week with 9 chips and \$325 for the lucky Rotarian who can draw the Blue Chip.

## Spoon of Exception



Keith Metzler had his first week with the Spoon and shared that this year, the Fourth of July, will look a little different. Instead of being held at the Fairgrounds, this year it will be at the stadium at Silverado High School. Starting at 6pm, attendees will enjoy a laser light show, live music, entertainment, food vendors, and of course fireworks!

## Fine Session

Ryan McEachron was our Fine Master and began by fining Jon Hove \$10 for his awful "dad" joke and Brad Poiriez the same amount, since he hasn't been seen in so long, it was like he was a guest!

## Rotary Guests



This week we said farewell to one, and met another. After many years, Maureen Mills is heading into retirement, so she brought VESD Public Information officer and District Spokesperson Eric Camarena to see the Club with plans to join us! Jon Hove brought Harrison Hove to the meeting and our Stand-in was Courtney Jefferson for Chandale Sutton.

## Raffle

This week Keith Metzler was a big winner, taking home a Bob's Tire hat, koozie, and a VVTA swag bag. Ryan McEachron won two 70th anniversary Hi-Grad Material hats, while Mike Page will read a book on whiskey from Steve Murray. Steve donated a patriotic rug that will be used by Jon Hove, while Harrison Hove won a VVTA blanket from Chris Ackerman.

**Rotary**  
Club of Victorville, CA

Join us for our Annual  
**ROTARY DEMOTION PARTY!**

**Steve Murray**  
Outgoing President  
Passing the Torch  
(and the Bell!)

**Brad Letner**  
Incoming President  
Diving for the  
Rotary Gold Bell!

**SATURDAY**  
**JUNE 20**  
6:00 PM

AT THE HOME OF  
**BILL & LINDA SCOTT**  
18136 Pier Dr.  
Spring Valley Lake

**FREE EVENT!**  
Bring Family & Friends!

**ENJOY THE EVENING!**

- ✓ **FOOD & DRINKS**
- ✓ **BOARD RECOGNITION**

*Celebrate the Past, Dive into the Future!*

**VICTORVILLE ROTARY CLUB OFFICERS**

**Board of Directors**

President 2025-2026 .....	Steve Murray
President 2026 - 2027 .....	Brad Letner
Immediate Past President/Club Service .....	Bryan Gillespie
Executive Secretary/Grants .....	Steve and Pam Murray
Treasurer .....	Darron Poulsen
Youth Services/Ethics Essay .....	Dr. Ron Boyd
Foundation.....	Darron Poulsen
Club Service & Membership .....	Bryan Gillespie
International Service.....	Ben Tafoya
Youth Service .....	Ryan McEachron
Community Service .....	Arsalee Morales
Vocational Service .....	Angel Espino

**Members-at-Large:** Bob Basen, Ron Boyd, Steve Murray, Ron Boyd, Rob Kilpatrick

**Positions & Committee Chairs**

BOD/PP Secretary.....	Pam Murray
Scholarships.....	Kirsten Acosta
Billing.....	Pam Murray & Darron Poulsen
Public Service Awards.....	Arsalee Morales
Teacher Mini-Grants .....	Angel Espino
Special Projects.....	Rob Kilpatrick
Dan Stover Music Contest.....	Angel Espino
Joshua Tree Editor .....	Chris Ackerman
Read B4K .....	Brad Letner
Grants.....	<b>Please Volunteer</b>
Food Baskets.....	Ben Tafoya
Interact (Junior Rotary).....	<b>Please Volunteer</b>
Programs .....	Mike Page
Fundraising .....	Brad Letner
S.T.A.R. Students .....	Chris Ackerman
Club Learning Facilitator.....	<b>Please Volunteer</b>

The Victorville Rotary Club meets every Tuesday for fellowship at 11:30 a.m. and meeting at 12:00 noon at the Bear Valley Country Club, 13229 Spring Valley Parkway, Victorville

**Make-up Days and Locations**

<b>MONDAY:</b>	San Bernardino East, Imperial Palace, noon
<b>TUESDAY:</b>	Rancho Cucamonga Sunrise, 7:15 a.m. Empire Lakes Golf Course Rancho Cucamonga, 12:00 p.m., Etiwanda Gardens
<b>WEDNESDAY:</b>	San Bernardino Crossroads, Hilton, noon, Barstow, DiNapoli's Firehouse, 1358 E Main St, Barstow, CA
<b>THURSDAY:</b>	Apple Valley, Rusty Bull, 13685 John Glenn Rd, Apple Valley, Noon. Ontario, 12:15 p.m., Doubletree Hotel San Bernardino, Denny's at I-15, 7 a.m. Redlands, Masonic Temple, noon
<b>FRIDAY:</b>	San Bernardino North, Elks Lodge, 12:05 p.m.

**Calendar Dates**

- June 20 Demotion Party**  
Home of Bill & Linda Scott  
18136 Pier Dr, Spring Valley Lake  
Time: 6:00pm  
Bring Family and Friends
- July 6 Board of Directors Meeting**  
5:30pm Board Meeting  
ISU ARMAC Insurance Agency  
17177 Yuma St., Victorville, CA 92395
- July 25 Movie Night at the Hove's**  
Movie: Pretty Woman (1990)  
Time: 6:30pm  
18970 Appaloosa Rd, Apple Valley

**Rotary**  
Club of Victorville, CA



**Upcoming Programs**

- June 9** Bobby Tarango, Vice President & Sales Manager, Chicago Title Inland Empire  
**Title: "Estate Planning for Your Real Estate: Things You Need to Know"**  
(Page)
- June 16 OPEN**
- June 23** Tony Winkel, Mojave Water Agency Senior Principal Hydrogeologist  
**Title: "The Hide and Seek River"**  
(Part 3 of 3) (Page)

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