

# The Joshua Tree

September 1, 2020

## The Business of Death in the Age of COVID-19

**Chet Hitt**, Owner of six mortuaries, including Sunset Hills Memorial Park & Mortuary, two cemeteries (*one owned, one managed*), Topock Bar and Restaurant, Apple Valley Farmer's Market, Townsend Distillery, and founder of Morning Sun Foundation among others, spoke to the Club on the business of death in the age of Coronavirus.



Finally, 6 of their cases are from what Chet calls "Failure to Thrive", those, mostly elderly, who have lost their spouse, and then pass themselves within a two week time frame because they could not leave their homes and had no one to talk to. In 2019 their average take-in was 2.8 bodies per day, but now in the age of COVID-19, they average 4.7 bodies a day.

Recently he has purchased a new facility in Victorville that will become the largest morgue in the county, that can hold 250 bodies. Labeled kinder as a "Care Center", it currently houses around 98 bodies, with only 2 of them COVID-19 deaths, while 7 of them are from people who died due to not going to the hospital because they were afraid to leave their home because of the pandemic. Sadly, so far this year they have already surpassed 2019 suicide cases, and drug overdose related deaths are up 1.5% higher than last year.

Looking back at these numbers, Chet surmises, that people are dying from everything else but COVID-19. So far this year, his mortuaries have conducted 34 Covid funerals, and at the outset of the pandemic had to turn his chapel into a makeshift embalming room with 11 bodies in the chapel at one point.

One positive he gets out of this pandemic, is at his Topock Bar and Restaurant. Whenever Governor Gavin Newsom shuts California, more people come to his resort in Arizona and spend their money on booze and boating.

Recently he has gotten some slack for not enforcing a mask or social distancing policy at his Farmer's Market, but says it is not his job to police the visitors and is exempt by the State.

In the future Chet will open a new, 95-acre cemetery, but you can know that wherever you turn in Apple Valley, you will find something that has Chet Hitt's hands in it.

### This Week's Functionaries

- Invocation:** Bill Edwards
- Flag Salute:** Charles Gehrke
- 4-Way Test:** Tina Escareño
- Finemaster:** Ryan McEachron

## ORR'S ROARS



Thanks to all the Rotarians who came out for our Club Assembly and kudos to Arsalee Morales, Jessica Perez and Bill Edwards on your unanimous approval to be our future Presidential Leaders of the Rotary Club of

Victorville! Also thank you to Chet Hitt for coming out and speaking to the Club about yourself and how COVID has impacted your businesses.



Bill Edwards shared at the luncheon that so far, we have raised just under \$4,000 in our Movie Night and online auction! We are planning another online auction in the next 3 weeks or so. We already have some vacation destinations that will be up for grabs, but we are needing more, so please think of something of significance you can put up to raise needed funds, so our Club can continue doing good work throughout the community and beyond.

Margaret Cooker shared that very soon our ReadB4K program will have its own Facebook page! We will let you know when it is active, so you can share it within your social media channels and help spread the word on all that we do in our community! Speaking of Read B4K, Bryan Gillespie and Stefanie Montoya from Options 4 Youth, have expressed interest in making it part of their curriculum!

Have a great Rotary week!

Steve



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

## Club Assembly

At Tuesday's meeting, the Club held an official Club Assembly to accept or deny the slate of Presidential successions for the following Rotary years:

**2021 - 2022 - No Candidate**

**2022 - 2023 - Arsalee Morales**

**2023 - 2024 - Jessica Perez**

**2024 - 2025 - Jessica Perez**

**2025 - 2026 - Bill Edwards**

**Mike Page** accepted the slate and was seconded by **David North**, and with all in agreement, the slate was accepted. We are still needing someone to represent the Club for the 2021-2022 year, so please let's hear from a volunteer!



# Rotary Opens Opportunities

## Big Blue Dice



*Chris Ackerman had an opportunity to grab the Blue Dice, but drew white instead and saved the chance for another next week.*

*We will continue next week with 8 dice and \$350 for the Rotarian who can pick the Blue Dice out of the bag.*

## Raffle

Both **Ryan McEachron** and **Brad Poiriez** will be doing shopping at Midway Home Solutions with \$25 gift cards they took away this week from **Jason Montana**, but Brad will be doing even more shopping with the Chamber Discount Card he also won from **Dwight Johnson**. Dwight will be cleaning up his act with a couple bottles of Victor Valley Transit Hand Sanitizers he received, courtesy of **Kevin Kane**. **Jessica Perez** will also help bolster the economy with the \$25 VISA gift card she received from **Steve Orr**, and **Keith Metzler** will be able to stay on top of city business with the VVTA electronics charging kit he won. Although he may not have won a gift card, but **Jim Cox** will look stylish around town with the Victor Valley Transit tote bag he took home from **Chris Ackerman** and finally, guest **Bob Wyatt** left the meeting with a goodie bag from **Jessica Perez**!



## Rotary Guests

This week we welcomed **Bob Wyatt**, who attended as a guest of **Mike Page** and our stand-ins this week were **Jason Montana** for **Don Lager** and **Stefanie Montoya** for **Bryan Gillespie** via Zoom.

## Fine Session

**Ryan McEachron** was our Fine Master this week and was so happy to see a whole group of Rotarians who came out for the Club Assembly, that we have not seen for quite a while, and some of them pre-Covid! Those special people who were called out all received \$10 fines including **Jim Cox**, **Terry Caldwell**, **Dan Dever** and **Keith Metzler**, who was hit for \$22. Any great city is only as good as its City Manager and since there are a whopping 22 candidates running for City Council...



## September Birthdays

<b>Steve Orr</b>	<b>September 5</b>
<b>Dan Dever</b>	<b>September 13</b>
<b>Teresa DeAtley</b>	<b>September 16</b>
<b>Kirsten Acosta</b>	<b>September 24</b>
<b>Paul Earle</b>	<b>September 24</b>
<b>Bob Basen</b>	<b>September 26</b>
<b>Ron Boyd</b>	<b>September 27</b>

## September Anniversaries

<b>Dwight Johnson</b>	<b>24 Years</b>
<b>Donna Wells</b>	<b>23 Years</b>
<b>Caroll Yule</b>	<b>19 Years</b>
<b>Alicia Barnes</b>	<b>12 Years</b>
<b>Jim Barnes</b>	<b>10 Years</b>
<b>Ron Williams</b>	<b>8 Years</b>

## The Polio Pig

**Collected this week: \$21.00**

*Polio Pig: \$20 + Bob Wyatt: \$1.00 = \$21.00*

**Collected to Date: \$17,436.48**

**Total equals: 95,986 Doses!**

*One dollar equals 2 doses of vaccine!  
\$500 pays for a Polio Clinic!*



## VICTORVILLE ROTARY CLUB OFFICERS

### Board of Directors

President 2019-2021 .....	Steve Orr
President 2022-2023 .....	Arsalee Morales
President 2023-2025 .....	Jessica Perez
President 2025-2026 .....	Bill Edwards
Immediate Past President .....	Margaret Cooker
Treasurer .....	Donna Wells
Executive Secretary .....	Margaret Cooker
Publicity/Public Relations .....	Kevin Kane
Club Service .....	Bill Edwards
Community Service .....	Paul Earle
International Service.....	Ben Tafoya
Youth Service/RYLEA & TLC .....	Arsalee Morales
Vocational Service .....	Dr. Bowtie Brian
Grants/Speech Contests .....	<b>PLEASE VOLUNTEER</b>
Scholarships.....	Please Volunteer
George Hensel Ethics Essay Contest .....	Ron Boyd
Membership.....	Don Lager
Billing Officer .....	Esther Mears

### Members-at-Large:

Dwight Johnson • Jon Hove • Rob Kilpatrick

### Positions & Committee Chairs

BOD Secretary .....	Marilyn Buttlerwerth
Programs .....	Mike Page
Public Service.....	Rick Bessinger, Teresa DeAtley & Greg Benson
Sergeant At Arms.....	Arsalee Morales
Dan Stover Music Contest.....	Dr. Bowtie Brian
S.T.A.R. Students .....	Jim Barnes/Robin Cackler
Fundraising.....	Bill Edwards
Flowers and Gifts .....	KayMarie Gregory
Joshua Tree Editor .....	Chris Ackerman

The Victorville Rotary Club meets every Tuesday for fellowship at 11:30 a.m. and meeting at 12:00 noon at the Green Tree Golf Course Clubhouse, 14144 Green Tree Blvd., 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>	High Desert/Hesperia Club meets 7:00 a.m., Denny's, 14165 Main St., Hesperia San Bernardino Crossroads, Hilton, noon, Barstow, Rositas, 540 Main St, 12:00 p.m.
<b>THURSDAY:</b>	Apple Valley, ZOOM Meetings, 1st, 2nd and 4th Thurs 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

**Sept 14: Board of Directors meeting**  
5:30 pm Meeting  
DCB Board Room, 2nd Floor  
Hesperia and Silica Roads

## Upcoming Programs

**Sept 8:** Don Lager, Owner - Midway Home Solutions  
**Topic: "COVID-19 and Retail Sales"**  
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**I'M  
A  
PROUD  
MEMBER**

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