

August, 2025

*GVR Clay Studio of Green Valley*

A Green Valley Recreation Hobby Club



## Message from the President, Kerry Boll



Dear Members:

Time flies when we are having fun! August is here!

There are so many fun classes that we are providing this summer...Lidded Casserole, Southwest Storyteller, Tiles and Mosaics, Waterfall Rosebud, Cuerda Seca, Intro, Hanging Owl, Interactive Pigments,

Sculpture, Beyond Basics, Majolica, Beyond Basics -- Wow! Thank you teachers, helpers, volunteers, etc. We are so lucky to have this studio together.

But there's more! We are getting a new door installed facing the parking lot, new shelves for clay projects

coming out of the kilns, new glaze boards, more member storage cubbies, and if all goes well with GVR, we will be updating all the counters and sinks to integrated stainless steel beginning in 2026. We also have new signs being made by some of our members to make our studio look even more tres chic! Thank you all who have contributed to the above! Oh and Jay and Doug are updating, changing and redoing the fire bricks in the raku kilns to make them more efficient. Woo hoo!

So here is some housekeeping when purchasing new clay. Before we ring up, the monitor needs to escort the member to the clay room. Members must take the clay from the black taped shelves. There are no exceptions. Members are not allowed in the clay room unescorted by a monitor.

**Some peeps have been emptying sink pails in the sink it sits in and these pails are where we empty glaze, clay and other things we don't pour directly into the sink. This is not cool!** In fact, you are causing the possibility of a clogged drain. This has been happening a lot recently and must stop.

So onto my wishes to all who will be travelling back to GV. We look forward to seeing you all soon and travel safe!



## IT'S GRANDCHILD SEASON

Fifth grader, Yuria Byrd has come all the way from Washington state to spend time with Grandma, Anita Rea Davies . She created a gnome as Anita worked on her tile project. Yuria was intent on doing her best. She told me that

they have very little art time in her school. POOR GIRL! But that she had created a self-portrait in math.

Grandma Anita brought in another grandchild; Makayla Martin delighted everyone around her with her attentiveness and creativity. Here she is with Teri Williams using the potter's wheel. Teri's gentle hand over hand technique led to success.



We had other grandkids as well. Sorry I missed seeing Jane's Ercolani's grandkids. But then I missed seeing Larry and Cindy Carter's two grandkids as well.



Luckily pictures were taken, and here we have another volunteer, Brian Alboucq teaching the wheel to a future potter.

Emma & Max were visiting from Ljubljana, Slovenia. They enjoyed working in the clay studio.



**Donna Herrera has guided another enthusiastic group in the art of Story-Teller figures.**



Traditional story teller statues depict female members of Southwestern tribes and are usually posed with their mouths open as it symbolizes telling tales. They depict the oral tradition of passing down

stories to children. You might see a mountain of children climbing on the storyteller. If you are interested in this style, go to the Sonoran Desert Museum Gift Shop and get inspired..



Donna has lots of texture stamps (foreground) for the class to use. From Left to Right: Donna H, Sharon Blackwell , and Sue Peetoom



Stephanie  
Andrew's  
lounging dog,  
begs you to rub  
its belly.

The members of this class  
included their animal children,  
as well.

Sue has been working on human  
hands, as she has already  
completed her pack of dogs.



Check out the dogs, they have so much character





Vicki Wier has many fine details on her work, like the fringe on the dress and rug.



Kitty Bottemiller textures her clay hair.

## A Spotlight on Pine Needle Weaving.



Katie Casey, long time member of the clay studio, displays her wheel-thrown mixed media ceramics in the display window of the wheel throwing room. Her work has inspired many in the

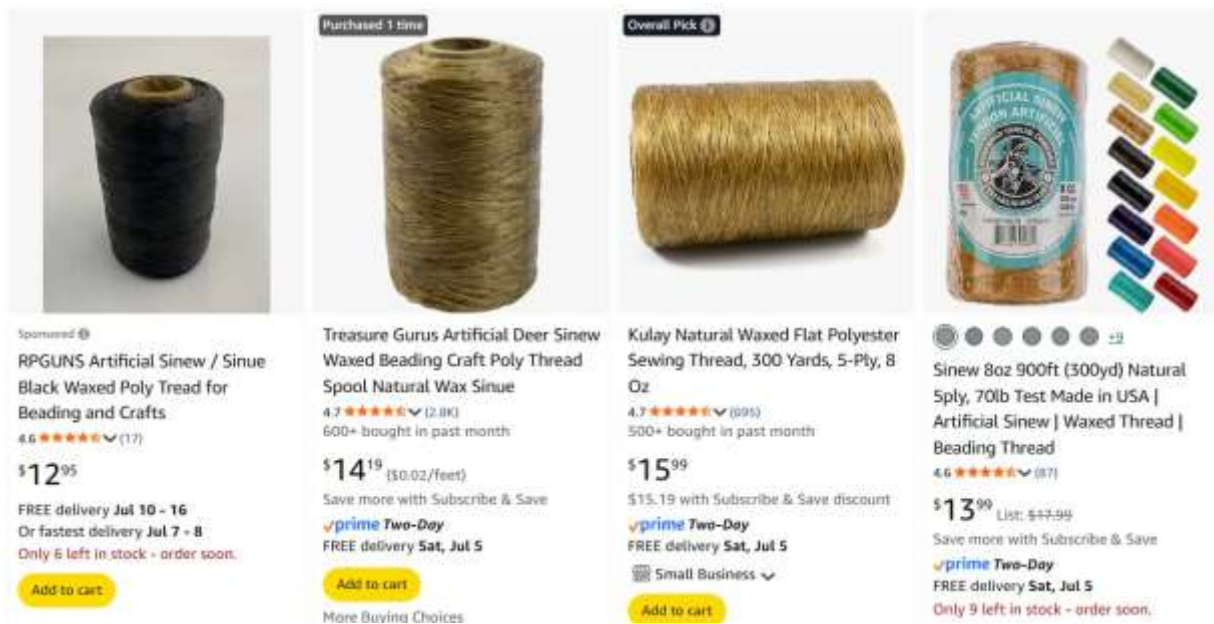
studio to give it a try.



Pine needles were gathered in November after the Apache Pine began dropping their needles. The needles were spread out to dry and then pulled apart into single needle clusters and loosely bundled to dry out completely. Wrapping them helps to stop the needles from curling.

Once they are dried, the tarry ends are trimmed and disposed of. What looks like a single needle is actually a few single needles held together. The cluster **SHOULD BE** split apart into single needles. Do not skip this step as it will interfere with the weaving process.

Some people like to treat their needles with a glycerin bath to make the needles supple (bendable). Also, some weavers use natural or commercial dye to add color.



Amazon offers needles and artificial sinew for binding the needle together. There are many different sewing and wrapping techniques. It is suggested that you split each strand of sinew in half or thirds to reduce the thickness.



Susan Anderson used red to add a decorative element. Notice how she wrapped her first row which helps lift and keep the first row of needles in a tight formation. Without the wrapping, the needles like to slip over the edge onto the pot. To finish the design, she then added a wrapped her last row to help gradually decrease the overall diameter. It also adds the principles of balance and repetition to the design.



Denise  
LeCount-  
O'Brien's  
speckled buff  
lizard pot was  
the forth  
attempt at pine  
needle  
weaving. I used  
a natural  
colored  
artificial sinew  
because it  
blends with the  
needle color  
better hiding  
flaws that  
occur when I

weave. My other attempts were more traditional closed basket shapes whereas this one has lots of open spaces that I admire inspired by Katy Casey's antler and pine needle pieces.



Susann Ecklund's mixed media pot is a superb effort. Her bold use of a contrasting color adds to the design. Susann's try and try again work ethic resulted in a very professional result.

Other studio potters have used pine needles to embellish their work and more are motivated to try like Robert Bonner, who just finished a pot with drilled holes. He wants to glaze his piece including the area where the

holes are drilled. After glazing, he used a tapered fine rounded file to clean out the holes. Rob even went to Madera Canyon and gathered his own needles. He then dried, cleaned, treated the needles with glycerin. He should be ready to start weaving soon. Good luck Rob.

**The Studio classes and workshops keep us busy.**



Classes are in such high demand that they fill up quickly. Our instructors, whether they are in the sculpture room or the education room constantly improve on their teaching

methods. The Waterfall Roses class was filled with people eager to learn a new style.

**Christine Shephardson and Teresa Turocy taught on a hugely successful mosaic class.**

They will repeat the class again soon, because there were so many people on the waiting list for the first class. I'm hoping she will repeat the class for a third session so I can sign up. I think there are many of us like me who just aren't quick enough signing up.

Patience, patience.

Meanwhile thank them for all their creativity, research, prep and dedication.







## Glaze committee newsletter by Christine Shephardson

Dave Karakatsoulis has further tweaked Turquoise Lake for dipping. Most important step: use the whisk in the 5 gallon bucket and stir up VERY well. We have approved Mayco Blue Splatterware crystal glaze. It will be on the shelf very soon. We will have examples of it mixed with Alabaster Satin, White gloss and Snow for a less blue look.

**As with all crystal glazes, avoid large amounts of crystal toward the bottom of your piece. We are testing Amaco River Birch, and it is looking promising.**

**If doing tile work at the Clay Studio, you must make your own tiles. Premade bisqued tiles from Amazon, or Marjons etc are not allowed. The only clay that can go in our kilns is that bought at the studio.**



**We have a new suggestion box, we want to hear from members.**

Potter's helping others through support for Valley Assistance Services.

Located in our Santa Rita Springs neighborhood, Valley Assistance serves area seniors from Sahuarita to Rio Rico. Recently, the organization held a fund raiser at Desert Diamond Casino in which some of our members attended and others donated pottery and gifts for the silent auction .



Left to right: Lisa Mann, Pat Buske, Kim Boswell, and Barb Jekema.

Clay club members turned out for the Fashion Show Fundraiser at Desert Diamond. Wouldn't it be fun to have several tables next year. Kathy Szeto will keep us posted.

**Quac & Give: An Afternoon of Flavor for a Cause.** The fund raiser takes place on September 12 from 2-5 at Tubac Golf

Resort. Tickets are \$20.00 in advance. Check out [valleyassistantservices.org](mailto:valleyassistantservices.org) <mailto:valleyassistantservices.org> .

Then the next big event we can help with as studio members would be the Empty Bowls Project. So start making some soup bowl size bowls to donate. The event is February 21, 2026.



Self-described Newby, Judy Grimes was delighted to take Sue's Waterfall Roses class and plans to take as many classes as she can.

# A Walk Around The Studio





Wow, look  
at these!



That's all Folks. Have a great August.



If you have something for the newsletter, please text me your image and a little write up about it. Plus, forgive me if I mess up your name or such. Denise LeCount-OBrien at 309-830-0177.

I am having cataract surgeries in August and September, so these might interfere with putting out the newsletter in a timely manner. So be patient.