



Maturango News

Death Valley Tourist Center • Northern Mojave Visitor Center

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www.maturango.org

Museum Director's Notes

By Debbie Benson, Interim Director

Things are happening in Ridgecrest! The Maturango Museum was very happy to hand over the Petroglyph Shaman created by Milt Burford for Petroglyph Park to the Kern County construction crew. I can't wait to see them once they are in place! If you have a chance, go by the new park and see the work Olaf Doud is doing on the replicas of the local petroglyphs on the large boulders. It is worth it to watch the progress. The whole city is getting ready to celebrate the history and heritage of the Indian Wells Valley with the First Ridgecrest Petroglyph Festival. The Museum is taking an active role with the tours, the education program, guests and our great gifts in the Museum Store. I hope everyone comes out to join the fun and stop by the Maturango Museum as part of the festivities. I am hoping to take the opportunity to see Carlos Nakai in concert. Information on the event can be found at www.rpfestival.com.

What Does the Archaeology Curator Do?

By Alexander "Sandy" Rogers, Archaeology Curator



When Debbie and Andrea suggested writing a newsletter article on what the archaeology curator does, my first reaction was "good question". "Curation" means storing and taking care of something, which is the basic job of a curator – in my case, the archaeological collection. However, in a small museum like ours, the curator has multiple other duties as well. I will discuss them under four headings: accessions management, curation of collections, design and construction of exhibits, and education.

In the first place, a collection must be accessioned by the museum before it can be curated. (A "collection" in this context includes artifacts, data sheets, field notes, maps, photographs, reports, and electronic data bases.) Generally a collection proposed for accession will be examined by the appropriate curator to determine whether it is suitable for our museum. Was it legally collected? Is it from our area of interest? Do we already have it? If it is suitable, the curator will recommend accessioning to the Accessions Committee, which includes Board members and the Museum Director. Once the committee decides, the collection is assigned an accession number and the necessary paperwork is prepared, with the accompanying entry in the electronic data base. (The curator also reviews accessioned collections periodically and may recommend certain items for deaccession. Reasons for deaccession might be duplication, severe deterioration, or transfer to another museum.)

Another part of accessions management is related to the legalities of archaeology. Under Federal law, any institution conducting archaeological investigations on public lands

must get a permit from the land-management agency, which includes a curation agreement with institutions such as ours. Furthermore, for us to store such collections we need a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the land-management agency, and our storage spaces must meet Federal standards for environmental control and security. One task of the archaeology curator is negotiation of necessary MOUs and curation agreements, and keeping them up to date. To do this the curator must maintain close and cordial relationships with the land management agencies, local Native American tribes, and other agencies and entities concerned with archaeological collections. As a final point of interest, artifacts collected from Federal lands remain the property of the Federal government, and are so noted in our data base.

The preparation and conservation of the Museum's archaeology collection must be in accordance with Federal regulations. The second task area, curation of collections, includes record keeping and organizing the storage area. This includes checking regularly for temperature and humidity levels in collections storage, monitoring for insects, rotating perishable artifacts such as basketry/cordage/cloth through freezer storage as necessary, and performing periodic inventory. The curator also assists other archaeologists who need to study our collections or our reference library.

Design and construction of exhibits is a task which happens from time to time. In a small museum like ours the curator generally originates ideas for exhibits, and discusses them with other staff and Board members. (In a large museum, the exhibits are planned and constructed by a special staff, separate from curation). Here the curator then designs and updates exhibits of the archaeology collection, including signage. Specimens are then prepared for exhibit, and the exhibit is constructed.

Education is a large area. The archaeology curator advises and assists the museum docents on matters related to local archaeology and ethnography, including giving lectures and leading field trips. The curator also gives lectures and field trips to outside groups, such as the museum lecture series, the Historical Society, or Cerro Coso College.

Finally, the archaeology curator tries to find time to do individual research, on topics related to museum collections, and publish papers and books. Elva Younkin, of course, edited the Maturango Museum book *Coso Rock Art – A New Perspective*, back in 1998. In my own case I have published two books through the Maturango Museum (*Land, People, and Rock Art of the Coso Range*, with Camille Anderson and Carolyn Shepherd; and *The Epsom Salts Monorail*, which is being revised). I also published a chapter in a technical book on obsidian, published by the University of New Mexico, and professional papers in the *Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly*, the *Journal of Archaeological Science*, the *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology*, and *American Indian Rock Art*. In each case the journal identifies the Maturango Museum as my institutional affiliation, which is good publicity. Further publicity for the museum is gained by presenting papers at local, regional, and national archaeological societies.

Finally, as in all organizations, the curators assist as needed in a myriad of tasks, ranging from dusting exhibit cases and changing light bulbs to taking out the trash. The Maturango Museum is a great institution to work for, and I think we are doing good things for the community.

Double Dip Sundays in the Gift Shop

Every Sunday in November. As a member, you'll receive 20% off your purchase in the gift shop instead of 10%. Be sure your membership is current so you can benefit from this member's only special discount.

Docent Doings

By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator

Paula and Mike Herr, Penny LePome, Susan Prazak, Bob Parker, Dan Burnett, Bob Zeisler and Chuck Morgan provided a wonderful, exciting morning for the 29 boy scouts and their leaders from Tustin on Oct. 19. Paula and Susan organized the planetarium showings that Mike gave to two groups of scouts. Bob brought three species of tortoises to share, Dan and Penny engaged the scouts as they toured, Bob Zeisler and Chuck Morgan brought their solar scopes, and I shared Rosey, our Rosey boa. What a full morning the scouts had! The leaders told me they knew other boy and girl scout groups that would love to come to our museum.



What's happening? Well, docents had 33 requests for programs in October! That might be our record! Many of the requests involved seeing more than one group, for instance the planetarium for Las Flores and Richmond Family nights. "Bats" was the most requested program for October. No surprise! We love to bring the docent bat specimens -- Mexican free-tailed, pallid, and hoary bats -- so that students see some of the species of bats that live in or migrate through our desert.



We feel it is important to spread the word that bats are good, not scary. We try to erase myths with fact. We find that this program is easily adapted to any age group.

The Maturango Museum docents will play an active role with the many local students who will participate in the Ridgecrest Petroglyph Festival on Nov. 13 and 14. We will help present activities at the Museum, the library, and at Crossroads Church. Students will learn about the petroglyphs, other stories of our local heritage, and do some art projects. We are excited to participate!

On November 8, don't miss the free Saturday. Mike Herr will present showings in the planetarium from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. We can accommodate about 20 people in the planetarium for a 20-30 minute showing. The show is the same each session although our place holder tickets are labeled Earth, Venus, Solar System, and Mars. We will pass out place holder tickets so you know what time you can go into the planetarium. Come early so you don't miss your chance!

We will be on the road with the Beth Armogida portable planetarium when we take it to the Cal City Library on the evening of Nov.13 and Trona Elementary School on Nov.6.

Remember to check the Maturango Museum website for information on docent programs and Children's Hour. If you would like to become a member of our illustrious Docent League call me here at the museum 375-6900.

Join Our
eMail List

Receive Museum News, Updates & Newsletter via e-mail.

Go to www.maturango.org. Complete the requested information and you're on the list. Our e-mail list is used exclusively for the Maturango Museum and is never shared with other organizations.

Having your newsletter e-mailed instead of regular mailed would save the Museum substantial funds. And... you get to see the all the photos in color !

"ARTifacts"

"Museum Members' Artistic Interpretations of Curators' Chosen Artifacts"

We've got something new this year. The curators usually have an exhibit of their own and the museum members usually have a show of their own – this time we're combining the exhibits. Each of our curator's has chosen 3 artifacts from collection storage. Each item has 3 artists assigned to it. The challenge for the artists is to create a piece of artwork that "interprets" the artifact. Think "texture, form, color, symbolism, the original maker of the artifact, ..."

All of the curators' artifacts and the artists' items will be displayed November 1 – December 2. The artists' items will be for sale.

Please join us for the opening reception, Saturday, 1 November. Doors open at 7 p.m.



Maturango Matt's hat – one of the items from curation storage.

How would you "interpret" it ?



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Art Gallery

Helen Baker
Andrea Pelch –
in honor of Chantal Laurent Andrews
Sandy and Fran Rogers

Docents Fund

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New Members

Val Buonaiuto
Travis Gilbert
Gunther Haller
George and Eleanor Herr
Janie Killerman
Sterling J. King
John Meyers
Bob Robens

Maturango Museum of the IWV

100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555
Open every day (except major holidays)
from 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Staff

Debbie Benson, Museum Director
Mary Lattig, Store Manager/Buyer
Sandy Rogers, Archaeology Curator
Elizabeth Babcock, History Curator
Maria Getusky, Natural History Curator
Julie Stephens, Chief Financial Officer
Fran Van Valkenburgh, Membership
Andrea Pelch, Art Gallery Coordinator
Joann Barbee, Assistant Bookkeeper
Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator
Linda Saholt, Petroglyph Tour Coord.
Maureen Goff, Store Supervisor
Sue Gilbert, Museum Assistant
Nora Nuckles, Museum Assistant
Duane Rice, Museum Assistant
Nick Rogers, Museum Assistant
Andrea Pelch, Newsletter Editor

Committee Chairpersons

Dan Burnett, Building
Fran Rogers, Concerts
Paula Herr, Docent League
Dan Burnett, Finance
Dan Burnett, Garden
Sandy Rogers, Lectures
Liz Babcock, Publications
Bob Westbrook, Strategic Planning
Mike Brown and Janet Westbrook,
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Regularly Scheduled Meetings

- China Lake Astronomical Society: 7 pm on 1st Monday of every month
- China Lake Photographic Society: 7 pm on 1st Thursday.
- Owens Peak Group of the Sierra Club: 7:30 pm on 4th Monday of every month
- Kerncrest Audubon Society: 7 pm on 3rd Thursday bi-monthly [January, March, May, September, November] Not July
- Docent League presentations – brochure of topics is available.

Calendar of Events

Sat, Nov 1 – ARTifacts Opening Reception –
7pm

Sat, Nov 8 – FREE Day at the Museum –
Planetarium 11am – 2pm

Nov 14 -16 – Ridgecrest Petroglyph &
Heritage Festival

Thu, Nov 20 – Pizza Factory Fundraiser

Fri, Nov 21 – Children’s Hour – 10:30 am

Thu, Nov 27 – Closed for Thanksgiving



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