

## Museum Director's Notes

*Debbie Benson, Director*

Volume 52, No. 6 June 2016

May brought every kind of weather that the desert has to offer and with it the beauty of the valley with varying clouds along the edges. It's been a photographic adventure for many! The Museum's wildlife has been active and we appear to be hosting cottontails, antelope ground squirrels, some very well fed desert iguanas and other small friends. A walk through Gladys Merrick Garden often includes a meeting with at least one of the inhabitants as long as you know that they are often very well camouflaged by the creosote and may be nervous about being seen.

We are moving forward with our projects and are very grateful for the support and help of many to get them done. My personal thanks go to Peter and Dan for their unstoppable work to get the parking lot project on its way and done. Brennan from Environmental Concepts, the paving contractor, and Jane from Interstate Sales, our paint supplier, worked with us through a process that is most often based on larger contracts. They gave us information and support which made the whole project possible before that very well used parking lot just fell apart completely! Many thanks also to Pascual Mondragon for all of his trimming and pruning to get all of the landscaping inside the lines. It's all been a learning adventure!

Preparing for the heat of summer also brings the bonus excitement of having our interns here. This is such a great experience for everyone and the Museum benefits so much from their presence and their hard work. Thanks to Sandy and to the people who made this possible for these students! It is life changing.



Maturango Museum:

Preserve, interpret and develop an appreciation for the natural and cultural history of the Northern Mojave Desert.

100 E. Las Flores, Ridgecrest, CA 93555

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

Death Valley Tourist Center

Northern Mojave Visitor Center

## The Matthew Armstrong Memorial 5-A-Side Soccer Tournament Exhibit

The first formal exhibit in the Argus Gallery, with its new panels and shiny floor, will be on display for the next month. Memorabilia and information about this yearly tournament is featured.

This upcoming Memorial Day weekend marks the 20<sup>th</sup> and final Matthew Armstrong Memorial 5-A-Side Soccer Tournament. The tournament is held in memory of Matthew Armstrong who passed away at age 16 from meningitis. Matthew was an avid soccer player and was very well liked by his fellow players, peers and the community. Matthew's death hit the soccer community hard and different groups organized memorials in his name. The Burroughs High School soccer team created an award that recognizes a player who has Matt's traits. The Scorpions Soccer team sponsored a resolution to name a soccer field in his name and Matt's parents, Ken and Linda Armstrong, established a scholarship program that is funded by the yearly Matthew Armstrong Memorial 5-A-Side Soccer Tournament.



## Lecture : “Newberry Cave: Ritual, Ceremony and Symbolism of the Desert Bighorn Hunters”

On Sunday, June 26, Alan Garfinkel, PhD will present a lecture on the archaeology of Newberry Cave, east of Barstow, California. The lecture will start at 3 pm.

Newberry Cave (CA-SBR-199) is a large, multi-chambered, dry cave in the eastern Mojave Desert. It was initially explored in the late 1950s and early 1960s by Gerald Smith and colleagues of the San Bernardino County Museum.

The prehistoric artifacts identified at the cave are quite unusual, as are the accompanying cave paintings. The cave is important since it has been precisely dated and provides a window into the Early Archaic (4000 – 3000 years ago) culture that employed the cave.

Dr. Garfinkel’s talk suggests that this was a religious site that figured prominently for many generations and was used by desert bighorn sheep hunters as a place for ceremonies, rituals and ancestor veneration. Newberry Cave is a likely example of what is called “increase totemism”, and was specifically a place for a men’s bighorn sheep hunting society. Rituals appear to have been carried out to promote the life and health of an ancestral, totemic animal - the desert bighorn sheep. Newberry Cave rock paintings are consistent with, and relate to, a central focus on renewal and fertility.



Dr. Garfinkel is Principal Archaeologist, Western United States and Pacific Rim, with UltraSystems Environmental, Inc. He has many publications in rock art and Great Basin studies, and is Founder and Director of the California Rock Art Foundation, a 501(c)3 scientific and educational charitable organization. The Maturango Museum publishes his 2007 book *Archaeology and Rock Art in the Eastern Sierra and Great Basin Frontier*.

## Funds Needed for Museum Archaeological Interns

During this summer we expect to have four interns working on archaeological collections at the Maturango Museum. All are students at Cerro Coso Community College who are studying anthropology and plan to pursue careers in archaeology. Internships provide valuable experience and are an important part of a resume.

Funding this summer comes from donations by museum members. Our goal is to raise at least \$9,000 to support them, and we currently have a shortfall of \$1,500. Please help us support these young people in their education and career development.



Museum interns last summer at Sheep Springs in the El Paso Mountains. Left to right: Daisy Zajicek, Emma Dauplaise, Kirsten Carroll, Kara Jones. The temperature was about 105°F.

## Fieldtrip to Sierra Meadows with Janet Westbrook

Tired of being HOT? On July 9 we’ll go up into the local mountains to explore Sierra Meadows -- starting at Kennedy Meadows and going on up to the Kern Plateau at 7000+ feet !

***Aaaah, feel the green...***

We will visit Troy Meadows, Smith and Paloma Meadows, Granite Knob Meadow, Bonita and Paloma Meadows, and wind up on top of Sherman Pass, 9200 ft. with outstanding views of the Kern Plateau, Olancho Peak, and Mt. Whitney!! A day of little streams and green surroundings inhabited by frogs, lots of flowers, and nice trees. Guaranteed to be cool, green, and lovely!

More info at [www.maturango.org/field-trips/](http://www.maturango.org/field-trips/)

## Docent Doings

*By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator*

Tours, tours, tours! The Museum is a very popular destination for field trips by the local schools! One Saturday we hosted 86 visitors from Pierce's Head Start program. Many docents helped to make this a wonderful experience for all the parents and children that visited. On a recent kindergarten tour, a child enjoyed the exhibit room so much that he finally exclaimed, "This is the best field trip I have ever had!" He was very excited about the saber-toothed cat! In May we will probably have approximately 300 children visiting us! What a wonderful educational opportunity the Maturango Museum provides for our community!

All visitors enjoy the garden, labyrinth, sundial, and now the new tortoise enclosure. Sometimes we allow visitors to feed the tortoises willow blossoms. The tortoises often sit in the shade or at the entrance to their burrows. They usually come right over when food is made available. Yesterday I decided to feed the tortoises some mulberry leaves. Two of the females promptly went for the same piece of leaf and each had an end in its mouth -- it was a tortoise tug-of-war -- this happened over and over! With several leaves to choose from, they still usually vied for the same leaf!

**Please do not feed the tortoises** unless you have checked with us in the gift shop!  
There are many things they should not eat!

We finished our classroom presentations about Sand Canyon for the fourth graders. During the presentation we focused on food chains and talked about the riparian area at Sand Canyon and how it supports plant and animal life. We showed a photo of the riparian area in the summer when it is very dry and asked the children what will happen to the animals. The students usually respond that many will die and many will move to a different location. They tell us that the plants might die and that they cannot move. During one presentation, a child caught Mrs. Hill and me by surprise -- he responded that some plants do move and was proud to give the example of the tumbleweed! What was so amazing was that during most of the presentation he appeared to be asleep! It is always so joyful to teach because often later you realize you never know how much someone is paying attention!

Bob Parker, one of our docents and a former BLM biologist, participated in a snake program at the Ridgecrest Library. He brought several of our specimens and participated with the fire department to teach the public about snakes and snake safety!

If you know a 9-12 year old that might enjoy our summer school classes, be sure to enroll through Ridgecrest Recreation Department as soon as the classes are advertised. Each class has a limit of 15.

The first class is "Critters," June 6-9, 9 - 11:30 am, at the Museum.

The second class is "Kitchen Chemistry," June 13-16, 9 - 11:30 am, at the Museum.

Be sure to drop in and see the new exhibits in the Discovery Zone -- a "spider" display (nothing live) and a "horns and antlers" display.





Dan Burnett  
Catherine and Ovie Cowles –  
in honor of Dan Burnett  
Margaret Merrow

In-Kind Donations

Milt Burford  
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Lowell McDaniel  
Robert Westbrook

Art Gallery

Judy Fair-Spaulling  
Geraldine Wisdom

Archaeology Intern Program

Anna Benson  
Sarah King  
Sandy and Fran Rogers  
Ed and Fran Van Valkenburgh

Donations as of May 1

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in memory of Lloyd Brubaker

New Members

Jackie Parks  
Laura Sharon Parr

**Concert by Foliás Flute and Guitar Duo**

The Maturango Museum concert series concludes with the Foliás Duo on Friday, June 24, at 7:30 pm. Seats are abundant, but it is still best to purchase tickets soon -- in the museum store or online, [www.maturango.org](http://www.maturango.org). The ticket price is \$15 and \$5 for children 12 and younger.

Flutist Carmen Maret and guitarist Andrew Bergeron perform, compose, teach and are entrepreneurs from Grand Rapids, Michigan. Together they are known as the Foliás Duo. This concert will feature new compositions for flute and guitar from their recent CD, *Viewpoints*, as well as pieces from their tango repertoire. This concert is part of a self-booked 2016 summer tour of the United States which includes 21 performances throughout the southwest.



Foliás' 14 year performer-composer collaboration has taken this nomadic husband and wife duo to stages throughout the United States and around the globe. In addition to extensive touring in the US they have performed in Europe, South America and Africa. Their 5 CD releases feature a bold approach to writing original compositions for flute and guitar, an expertise for arranging Argentine social tango dance music, and a passion for South American folk and other world music. Of Foliás' performing and composing, Robert Schulslaper of *Fanfare Magazine* writes: "Carmen Maret and Andrew Bergeron are facile players... They draw on tango rhythms and melodies sometimes; at other times they write with a scenic sensitivity, mysterious, charming, evocative..." and Todd Gorman of *American Record Guide* calls Foliás, "daring in self-written music" and possessing "a nice touch of originality."

Please join us for this outstanding concert!

## THANKS to the Fantastic Wildflower Exhibit Volunteers!

*By Charlotte Goodson*

Is there ever truly a way to adequately thank people for their huge contributions to a shared cause? This past April's Wildflower Exhibit brought out **67 volunteers** for no other reason than wanting to discover what the desert would yield this spring, a desire to bring its beauty within closer reach of the wider public, the pleasure of working with dedicated old friends and making new ones, and a love for the Museum itself and all that it encompasses. Many completed one assignment, such as a day out collecting plants, and then helping with processing, or hosting on the weekend – to name just the more obvious of the exhibit's activities.

All the volunteers were so very appreciated for their efforts and enthusiasm that made the Wildflower Exhibit such a success. Four young people, Rachel Avery, Aden Thompson, Finn Martinez, and Aleks Keeney, from the **Museum's Gift Shop Staff** pitched in when they could to do anything and whatever was asked of them. Keeping the plants looking their best throughout the weekend with careful watering were Victoria and Caroline Pillers, Brianna and Lisa Murphy, and "Mom" Amy Pillers from the **Girl Scout Troop** of Ridgecrest United Methodist Church. What an invaluable service! Also, lending a hand, or rather tables, from the RCUMC was **Boy Scout Troop 35**.

Jumping back in time, not to the very beginning of the who's and what's of planning, but to all the mighty flower hunters that traversed our canyons and valley over the course of three days. **Collecting Teams** with annually issued permits from BLM followed specific protocols when picking to ensure seed banks for the future. This meant sometimes passing up a beautiful species, such as *Phacelia Nashiana*, that while spreading some in the Eastern Sierra, is still an indigenous threatened population.

By assigned locations, the collectors were: Cow Heaven Canyon – Paula and Mike Herr; El Paso Mtns. & Sheep Springs – Glenn Harris; Fossil Falls North & Cinder Cone Road and Poison Canyon South – Wendi Elkins and Andrea Pelch; Fossil Falls South – Lloyd and Bea Smith; Grapevine Canyon – Jerry and Mike Mumford, Kitty and Bill Ferguson, and Joanna Foster; Horse & Sage Canyons and Lower Aqueduct Rd.– BLM Biologist, Carrie Woods, Loren Dunham, & BLM Interns, Robbie Wood and Erin O'Connell; High Aqueduct Road – Gene and Judy Breitenstein and Karen Commodore; Indian Wells Canyon – Pat Sorensen and Julia Horney; Nine Mile Canyon – Kathy and Rich LaShure; Poison Canyon North – Camille Anderson; Rademacher Hills – Elaine and Peter Wiley; Sand Canyon to WB– Oasis GC, Wanda Hewett and Merrilee Ray; Short Canyon Lower – Nora Nuckles, Cam Alden, Shirley and Don Crouse; Short Canyon Upper - Bev and Brian Hill; Walker Pass Road to WP – Marianne Kistler and Richard Villegas.

For processing the incoming collections, we used our new workroom, aka. 'messy room,' with 3 sinks and space to spread out. Faithful volunteers, many returning year after year, found the just-right bottles or jars for each of the flower specimens. Working at a steady pace under the guidance of the alternating supervisors – Elaine Wiley, Bev Hill, and Nora Nuckles – the well-organized tasks were accomplished amidst periodic bursts of hilarity! Al and Joan Woodman, Terri Middlemiss, Marsha Lloyd, Susan Hueber, Susan Prazak, Deanna Stewart, Libby Vincent, Joanna Foster, Pat Moore, Cindy White, Aden Thompson, Finn Martinez, Judy Breitenstein and her visiting daughter, Karen Commodore rounded out Wednesday's "flower processing" team. Continuing on Thursday, the Woodmans, Judy, Karen, Aden and Finn were joined by Chris Tuthill, Leslie Layfield, Pat Silberberg, Karen Bowling, Tine Brouwer, Rachel Avery, Robbie Wood, Erin O'Connell, and Dan and Brenda Burnett. Hard work, great fun, wonderful results!

With the opening of the Wildflower Exhibit on Friday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, fresh-in-spirit volunteers stepped up to serve as **Hosts throughout the weekend**. Answering questions and making all the visitors feel welcome were Tine Brouwer, Leslie Layfield, Peter Wiley, Libby Vincent, Dan Burnett, Sherry Brubaker, Rich LaShure, Debbie Benson, Penny LePomme, Terri Middlemiss, Susan Hueber, and Charlotte Ostermann.

The Coso Gallery was filled to the brim with wildflowers and plants, once again more than meeting everyone's expectations in this spring's highly variable weather conditions. Adding to the visual and scent pleasures, was the return participation of members of the **Desert Artists' League** on each of

the exhibit days. Their sketches and paintings enlivened the scene for the visitors observing them at work and enjoying the display of finished work. So greatly enjoyed and appreciated were Joan Welsh, Donna Davis, Cynthia Damiano, Pat McCain, Cheryl McDonald, Janice Allen, Mike Mumford, Nancy Crawford, Penny LePomme, and Helen Baker. We hope they will join us for many more years.

This acknowledgement of all the fantastic volunteers for the Wildflower Exhibit cannot be complete without a special thanks to Kathy LaShure for her beautiful and informative presentation of **“Day Tripping with California Wildflowers.”** In spite of the room being set up with what seemed enough chairs, more and more had to be added to accommodate the enthusiastic audience! Helping to ensure a great turnout for the exhibit was the custom **poster designed by Liz Babcock**, retired Museum History Curator, using wildflower photographs by Kathy.

All that is left to tell is the **“Getting It All Together, Launched, and Finally Put to Bed” Team.** The team was comprised of the thankfully expanded group of volunteers including Judy Breitenstein, Elaine Wiley, Kathy LaShure, Al and Joan Woodman, Bev Hill, Nora Nuckles, and Charlotte Goodson. Each of us did whatever was needed – and enjoyed it all. Lending professional identifying support were Naomi Fraga, Phd. Botanist, and new to us this year, Joy England, Masters student, both from Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden. We always learn so much from Naomi and appreciate her invaluable assistance.

At 5 o'clock, Sunday, April 10, 2016 the **“Take down/Put to Bed”** commenced. The process was something to behold, though with bittersweet undertones. Achieving a “Leave No Trace” pristine Coso Room were Peter and Elaine Wiley, Sherry Brubaker, Rich LaShure, Debbie Bensen, Andrea Pelch, Matt Anderson, and Charlotte Goodson. Simultaneously, selected plants were being pressed for the Herbarium by Kathy LaShure, Judy B., Karen Commodore, and the ever- interested BLM Interns, Robbie Wood and Erin O'Connell.

Whooh! Where's the magic genie to wash all bottles??

**Michael Maas : "Development of Themes ;  
The Evolution of an Artist's Work from Realistic Botanicals to Patterned Abstraction."  
Exhibit through June 30<sup>th</sup>**

Michael Maas became a full-time artist in 1996 after having been, among other things, a bicycle racer in France, a meat-cutter in Illinois, and a life insurance salesman in Newport Beach, California. Primarily self-taught, his paintings are in collections in Australia, Canada, England, France, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, and throughout the United States. He shows regularly with galleries and museums throughout Southern California. He currently has a studio in Ridgcrest called the Art Project Space on Balsam Street, and another in Fallbrook, California, where he has had a home since 2007.

He is best known for his illusionistic, patterned-abstract “Alhambra Series” paintings. This exhibit will show how his work evolved from straight-ahead realistic botanicals, using examples from the mid 1990's to 2016.

How does an artist get from this



to this ?



You can see more of his work by visiting his website at [www.michaelmaas.com](http://www.michaelmaas.com) or by searching the web for “Michael Maas”+”Alhambra”

## Maturango Museum of the IWV

100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Open every day (except major holidays)

10 am - 5 pm

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## Regularly Scheduled Meetings

- China Lake Astronomical Society: 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of each month, 7 pm
- China Lake Photographic Society: 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month, 7 pm
- Kerncrest Audubon Society: 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday bi-monthly [Jan, Mar, May, Sep, Nov, not July], 7 pm
- Docent League: 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of each month, 8:45 a.m., anyone welcome to attend



Desert Iguana in our garden

## Calendar of Events

- June 11 - Free Day
- June 16 - Pizza Factory Fundraiser
- June 24 - Folias Flute and Guitar Duo Concert - 7:30 pm.
- June 26 - Lecture : "Newberry Cave: Ritual, Ceremony and Symbolism of the Desert Bighorn Hunters" by Alan Garfinkel - 3:00 pm
- July 9 - Field Trip to Sierra Meadows with Janet Westbrook

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