

# MATURANGO NEWS

Death Valley Tourist Center • Northern Mojave Visitor Center

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

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

## Museum Director's Notes

*By Debbie Benson, Director*

This is a time of year that makes us think of family and celebrations and the opportunities we have. I am grateful and thankful for the people who touch my life every day. Each person brings something special to this life and I appreciate it. As a part of my ongoing process of learning, which the Museum gives me an endless source for, I have met people who are always happy to share what they know and what they have found is important. Liz Babcock, one of my very important coworkers and someone who has taken the time to teach me about how the Museum works, is going to retire from her curator position at the Museum. We will not let her go completely as she is, and always will be, a part of the Museum. Liz has made a difference in the function of the Museum and been a great source of knowledge and a friend to me. I wish her well on her next adventure with the understanding that she has a lot of files in that file room that she set up and we expect her to keep working on them! I am so very pleased that our next History Curator, Elaine Wiley, has been able to spend some very productive time with Liz learning so very much and making the job her own.

Every person who works at the Museum, whether volunteer or on the staff, can make a difference. These last few months the Grounds Committee has worked hard to improve the outer appearance of our property. I would like to thank Hockett's for bringing a forklift and moving brick. It made a big difference in how we look to our visitors. A big thanks also to Mike's Tree Service for attaching the hardware to our flag poles. It's a pleasure to be able to fly our new flags and to take them down when the wind is too strong.

Many thanks go out to all of the people who made the Petroglyph Festival tours possible. The drivers, escorts, the DoD employees and the coordination with Peggy Shoaf and Mike Baskerville, Nancy and Barbara, and Julie with our staff at the Museum. You made something special happen for many people who have never been able to see the petroglyphs before. These thanks are also for our Museum docents with Nora Nuckles, Bev Hill and Sarah King and her students from Cerro Coso. They provided an education component for the local 8<sup>th</sup> grade students that encouraged respect for and the need to preserve the petroglyphs here and wherever they are found.

If you are reading this, please know we are grateful for you. Thank you all for everything that you do to support the Museum and the community we serve. You make a difference!

Dear Debbie,

I was so thrilled to see the new placement of the Memorial case for my husband Edward Winnemore. The beautiful purple glass pieces are appropriate for the display. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Love, Eleanor Winnemore



## Maturango Holiday Light Show



Animated light show, cider and cookies, sing-along and Santa - for the entire family! Friday, December 4<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, December 5<sup>th</sup>. Doors open at 6 pm, show begins at 6:20 pm. Please note that space is limited so come on time. The gift shop will be open and everyone will get a 15% discount those evenings.

The Maturango Museum Gift Shop is the place for unique and wonderful gifts. Something new and yummy this year is Prickly Pear goodies. We have jellies, taffy, licorice and more; beautifully packaged with the Maturango Museum's name on the label; the perfect gift for those out of town visitors.

We also have an astonishing array of unique ornaments. The most popular seem to be the enamel and bejeweled butterflies, hummingbirds and dragonflies, articulated geckos and lizards, and traditional stars and bells.



Handmade, one-of-a-kind jewelry is always in style. We have an extensive display of delightful necklaces and earrings designed and created by local artists.

Friday December 4<sup>th</sup> and Saturday the 5<sup>th</sup>, we'll be offering a 15% discount to everyone during the Maturango Holiday Light Show which begins at 6pm.



## Annual Volunteer Appreciation Lunch

All volunteers are welcome to join us.

Staff members provide the lunch and we all get to visit.

Monday, December 7 11:30 am

### Recent Donations

#### Donations

Donald A. Baldwin  
Dennis Burge  
Gary Eagleson  
Jane Honikman  
Sharon Juarez  
Arlyne and Phil Lopez  
Frank and Joyce Markarian  
Sherrill Van Sickle  
Michael S. Vincent  
John Meyers

#### In Memory of Gary Babcock

Don and Charlotte Goodson –  
wildflower exhibit

#### In Memory of Martha Shoaf

Don and Charlotte Goodson – docent fund

#### Building Fund

Robert Westbrook

#### New Members

David Attaway  
Randy Des Bailleis  
David Flack  
Jeanette Shin  
Carole Stanley  
Barbara Tunget

## New Year — New History Curator

By Elizabeth Babcock

After a dozen happy years as the history curator for the Maturango Museum, I have decided to retire on Dec. 13. Although I will miss my regular interactions with Debbie Benson and the rest of our wonderful museum staff, I am looking forward to having a bit more time.

One thing that makes me happy as I go out the door is that I am leaving my job in the hands of the best possible replacement — Elaine Wiley. I expect most of you know her, since for many years she has been one of the museum's most dedicated volunteers. Still, I'd like to tell you a bit about her.

Elaine grew up in Westminster, CA, and graduated from Cal State Fullerton. She and her husband, Peter, married in 1978. Pete, who was going to Sacramento State at the time, transferred to the UC Davis, and Elaine began working as a phone company information officer.

In 1980 right after Pete graduated from Davis, the couple moved here, and Elaine enrolled in the machinist's technician program at Cerro Coso Community College. Soon she got an apprentice job in the China Lake machine shop.

During her year and a half as a machinist, she worked for George Pruitt. Soon George encouraged her to learn more about computers, so Elaine moved into the computer wing at Michelson Lab, where she worked for Karen Lucas and took calculus during her lunch hour. (Whew!)

Then Elaine and Peter had two sons, Brian in 1988 and Nathan in 1991. While she was homeschooling her youngsters, Elaine learned from a friend about the Docent League. Ever a person to grasp opportunities, Elaine offered to coordinate a homeschoolers' tour at the museum. She liked what she saw of the Docent League.

"Then I decided to participate a bit," said Elaine. "I would bring the kids in tow, starting when they were 7 and 10, and go to the meetings." When the docents needed a secretary, she stepped in — and continued in that position for eight years or longer. Other things she has done for the docents include giving programs, particularly on weather and on bones, and helping others when they give programs. She has also taken many delightful photos (many of them published in local newspapers) of youngsters enjoying our Children's Hour.

She also became increasingly involved as a collector for the Wildflower Show. "I was tasked to collect up one of the canyons with Joanna Foster, who taught me a lot. The second year I was sent to the Rademachers. I didn't know what I was collecting, and sometimes I would come back with many specimens of the same wildflower."

She recalled that Camille Anderson (then our natural history curator) suggested making a disk of wildflowers from each collection location. Elaine took some pictures for that project, then asked Judy Breitenstein for advice. Judy encouraged her to frame her shots to show the leaves and the flowers at various stages of their lives (not just the blooming closeups that most of us tend to take of wildflowers).

As a result, Elaine began taking photos that would relate back to what she was picking. She soon devised a numbering system to keep track of exactly where she picked particular specimens. The ultimate result was her book, *What's Bloomin' in Them Thar Hills? A Photo Study of the Rademacher*



Liz Babcock and Elaine Wiley

*Hills for the Years 2008-2011*, which Elaine says she created for herself, but which has also sold numerous copies to other wildflower aficionados.

That book, by the way, shows traits Elaine has in abundance. She saw the need, so she stepped up to the plate. She hadn't known all that much about wildflowers, photography, or book creation when she began — so she consulted experts, took classes, and approached the task with determination, emerging as a winner.

As you can see from this writeup, when Elaine decides to do something, she does! By the way, another Wiley asset has come to the museum as well. After Pete retired from the base about a year and a half ago, he began volunteering here. He joined the Building Committee, but as Elaine phrased it, “He wants to be the person who digs the holes.” So she goes to the meetings for him and he concentrates on building and repairing chores (much appreciated!).

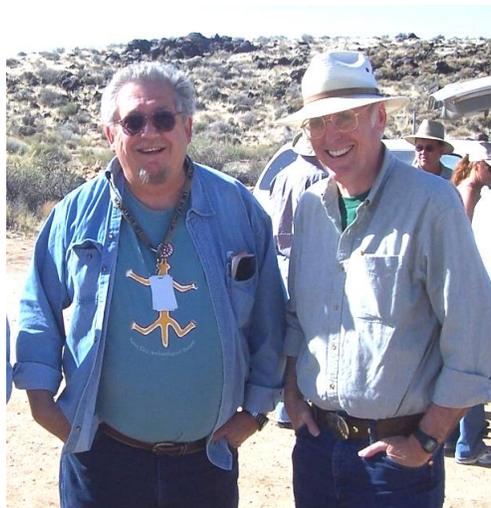
When Debbie asked Elaine if she'd consider being our history curator, Elaine said, “It looked a little overwhelming, but I decided to try it.” Asked what she sees herself as bringing to the job, Elaine said, “I'm a very organized person.” Yes, she is that — and a whole lot more. She's been working with me since June and says she enjoys it so far. I have found her to be a treasure!

### Lecture on Trona History

On Wednesday, December 9, the Museum will host a lecture and book-signing on the history of Trona. The lecture, which starts at 7:00 PM, will be by James Fairchild and Russell Kaldenberg, and will include introduction to their new book. Trona was once the most populous community in the Upper Mojave Desert. Originally explored by the Death Valley 49ers in 1850, Searles Valley was formed by remnants of the Owens River Lakes. The small towns of Borosolvay, Magnesium, Burnham, and Slaterange City prospered for a period before fading. Homewood Canyon, Westend, Argus, Pioneer Point, and Trona continue to provide pleasant housing for Searles Valley residents. The valley is dominated by mining history, and Searles Valley Minerals still produces products for worldwide markets. Wyatt Earp played cards and gambled at Poeville and was arrested in 1910 in Searles Valley for claim jumping. In 1913, Stafford Wallace Austin helped create the planned town of Trona. Amelia Earhart's husband, George Putnam, died at the Trona Hospital in 1950.

*Around Trona and Searles Valley*, the newest addition to Arcadia Publishing's popular *Images of America* series, is by James L. Fairchild and Russell L. Kaldenberg. It was released in conjunction with The Searles Valley Historical Society. The book includes 224 vintage images, many of which have never been published, and copies will be available for sale and signing.

Coauthor James L. Fairchild has lived in Trona since 1963 and has investigated the history of mining methods on Searles Lake for 15 years. Russell L. Kaldenberg is former State Archaeologist for the BLM, and has worked extensively throughout the West on cultural resource projects and oral histories.



Russell Kaldenberg and James Fairchild

## Docent Doings

*By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator*

"Hi, I know you! You work at the Museum! My mother brings me there all the time," said a child to me when I was at Faller School today. The next boy in line said, "My mom won't bring me to the museum. I want to go." Such remarks are heard every time docents travel to local schools to present programs. It is really fun to see so many children interested in our Museum. After we do a program we pass out bookmarks that allow parents to visit the Museum for free with their children.

Debbie Benson, our director, mentions another remark made by a bright Kindergarten student when he came to the Museum on a classroom tour from Las Flores School. The children are fascinated by our animal specimens and the pelts. Their most frequently asked question is "Are those real?" They always have to know what happened to the eyes when we display the pelts. So we have to mention a few things about taxidermy. We always let the children know that the Museum never kills animals. We explain that sometimes an adult finds an animal dead and brings it to the Museum where we have permission to take it to a taxidermist. With one group this week it was necessary for me to remind the children that we only took in wild animals, not a deceased pet!

We are happily busy! We presented programs to over 500 people in November and over 1100 people in October. We expect to do fewer programs in December but I never know until all the requests come in before the first Tuesday of the month.

A highlight for December will be the Children's Hour which includes a special story "*The Snow Tree*". Children even get a chance to decorate a small tree. Children and adults will enjoy this program set for Dec. 4 at 10:30. We thank Charlotte Goodson and her Children's Hour committee for their dedication to presenting such fun, wonderful programs.

Watch for our special docent programs on Free Second Saturdays each month. We try to have special activities from 11-2 each free Saturday of the month.

We always welcome people to our docent meetings on the first Tuesday of each month. Join us on Nov. 2 at 8:45 am for snacks, 9:00 am for the meeting. Please call me at the Museum if you have any questions!

## **Mary Adler Retrospective Art Exhibit Opening Reception Sunday, January 17 at 3 pm.**

Since Mary will be moving away soon, she has graciously agreed to let us exhibit some of her artwork. Mary has quite an extensive "body of work" including paintings and metal repousse wall art. Many items will be for sale.

Please join us to say thank you for her many years at the Museum as our financial coordinator and wish her a "Happy Next Retirement".



## Elvira Dayel -- "Drawing"

Reception: Saturday, December 5, 2015 at 3 p.m.

Exhibit: Saturday Dec 5 -- January 26, 2016

"A Ukrainian native, I am currently based in San Francisco Bay Area. I work in series of large abstract works of drawings done in soft/dry pastel on paper. My work may be described as conceptually surreal influenced by modern architecture / spatial organization, design & thought of what occupied spaces should be and how they ought to function. In my work I reference the 20th century Russian avant-garde, the Constructivism and Suprematism, as well as such early modernists as Matisse, specifically his "cut-outs". I'd like to think of my work as having its own original XXI century voice.



Trained as an artist & an architect, I also work in new media including digital rendering (surface & space visualization) and 3d-printing. My work is interwoven and interconnected between and within the media I use. Using strong, carefully considered color and bold geometric form, I frequently incorporate depictions of the female archetype. The female figure is often placed alone in an invented landscape; color and line announce her presence. Her voice, her presence, are loud, vivid, red.

I see myself as a minimalist using only as much as needed to convey an idea. The color I use carries its own vision. Invented landscapes are new realities, they are constructs. They provide a vision for an abstracted notion of a place and space. In my work the landscape is deconstructed and re-imagined as a new notion. My work is my metaphor for searching, and my landscapes & invented places implicate the presence of the unknown. Creating sculpture begins in the same way as my drawings, as a conceptual idea evolves, I begin the process of the sculpture either in a 3D program or by hand sketching. There is a deeper relationship between the works of pastel on paper and sculpture that is intriguing to me. Both are rooted in the same thinking and begin as powder: the powder compressed as chalk for the works on paper, and the powder in the 3D printing process assembled into a new material and shape."

Artist website: [www.elvira-artist.com](http://www.elvira-artist.com)

Dear Maturango Museum and all associates,  
Note to inform you of the death of Gary B. Bailey. He really loved Ridgecrest/ China Lake, and I know he was thrilled to see the growth of the museum.  
Thank you,  
Rebecca Manning (step-daughter), Trustee of The Gary B. Bailey Living Trust

## Maturango Museum of the IWV

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

Open every day (except major holidays)

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

### Staff

Debbie Benson, Museum Director  
Maureen Goff, Store Manager/Buyer  
Sandy Rogers, Archaeology Curator  
Elizabeth Babcock, History Curator  
Maria Getusky, Natural History Curator  
Julie Stephens, Finance Manager  
Fran Van Valkenburgh, Membership  
Andrea Pelch, Art Gallery Coordinator  
Joann Barbee, Assistant Bookkeeper  
Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator  
Linda Saholt, Petroglyph Tour Coord.  
Sue Gilbert, Museum Assistant  
Nora Nuckles, 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  
Sandy Rogers, Lectures  
Liz Babcock, Publications  
Bob Westbrook, Strategic Planning  
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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



### Calendar of Events

- Children's Hour : "The Snow Tree" : Friday Dec 4 : 10:30 am
- Holiday Light Show : Friday, December 4 and Saturday, December 5  
Doors open 6 pm, show at 6:20 pm.
- Art Gallery Opening Reception : Elvira Dayel "Drawings" : Sat Dec 5, 3 pm
- Volunteer Appreciation Lunch : Monday, December 7 : 11:30 am
- History of Trona lecture : Wednesday, December 9 : 7 pm
- Free Saturday : Dec 12 : special children's activities 11 - 2
- December 24 Museum closes at 3 pm – closed all day December 25

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