

Maturango News



Sketch by Gladys Merrick
Chia, *Salvia Columbaria*, Mint Family

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

100 E. Las Flores Ave. • Ridgecrest, CA 93555
760.375.6900 www.maturango.org

Death Valley Tourist Center Northern Mojave Visitor Center

Museum Director's Notes

By Debbie Benson, Director

April, come she will... As I write this I am sitting in the morning sun enjoying the Gladys Merrick Garden and being scolded by a hummingbird protecting his space. His shimmering colors as he sits atop the highest branch of the tree are beautiful and minute. This makes me think of all of the great beauty of the Indian Wells Valley being made up of these tiny wonders. The fields of wildflowers made of tiny plants, each putting forth their blooms as a part of the greening of the desert. This time of year, with the flowers and new life, seems to bring about an extra burst of energy. The lizards and ground squirrels run through the bushes as if chased by something that, to me, is unseen. This is a beautiful time of year that brings people out to enjoy and learn about our place in the world. I do hope you are able to take that moment to just stop and admire at least once in your day.

The rumors are true! We are having a Springtime Mirage Sale on April 28 & 29. We are starting a collection of items that need new homes. If you have some that you are ready to donate to the sale, please let us know! debbie@maturango.org or call 760-375-6900. Thank you for everything you do!

Wildflower Exhibit

Friday, Saturday & Sunday – March 31 – April 2 10 am to 5 pm

Admission \$2.00 – children free

•Joy England – Guest Speaker

Sunday April 2 at 2:30 pm.

“Ain’t No Mountain High Enough: Flora of the Upper Rock Creek Watershed”

•Wildflower Fieldtrips – Saturday and Sunday

Meet at the museum at 10:15 am

•Desert Artists’ League will give drawing and painting demonstrations during the exhibit.

News from the Natural History Curator

By Sherry Brubaker

I have found a taxidermist which will hopefully work out for us. I’m working on contacts, logistics, and priorities of the specimens needing to be mounted. There are still a few critters in the freezer who need to be adopted. Contact me here at the museum if you wish to adopt a specific critter, or if you wish to make a contribution to taxidermy. Come in and see the critters already done; they are in the Argus room.

We are currently experiencing warmer weather (with more to come), which also brings some unwanted insects like mosquitoes. These creatures love standing water and it doesn’t take much before you suddenly have them flying about. Keeping vigilant on emptying saucers under potted plants and making sure items that can catch water from irrigation systems are dumped out or moved will help. Those of us who have animals have a bit of a challenge, change water bowls daily or spray with something like Pam (I use what I can find cheap). This won’t hurt your animals and will keep the mosquitoes from laying eggs, and keep larva from developing into adults. Do not spray a fish pond; get fish that will eat the mosquito larva.

**Namibia, by rail and bus -- lecture by Janet Westbrook
Wednesday April 12, 7pm, and Sunday April 23, 3pm**

Namibia (former German SW Africa, independent since 1990) is a desert land on the Atlantic SW coast of Africa, just above South Africa. It doesn't get many US tourists, but it should!

There are many ways to visit this land of wonders, lots of animals, and few people, but I chose to go by Rovos Rail, the Shongololo Express, from Cape Town, South Africa into Namibia and finish at Windhoek, the capital. The train trip itself is an adventure - narrow gauge, meticulously restored rail cars, top notch staff and experience. We explored from the train on buses, since most places involved dirt roads and places where tracks don't go.

This summer in Namibia is setting records for rainfall - so what is usually barren desert was green, GREEN for us - the Kalahari, the Karoo, and even parts of the Namib desert on the coast were green with happy trees, bushes, and tall grasses and lots of ponds of water. Makes it difficult to see animals, but we did see lots of animals - Oryx, Giraffes, Ostriches, Wildebeests,



lots of Impala and smaller antelopes, Zebras, etc. But the outstanding attraction in Namibia is the coral pink sand dune fields, which are red in the morning light! Amazing tall reddish sand dunes!! And Fish Canyon - comparable, (kinda,) to the Grand Canyon, but much older. Bushman pictographs. Diamonds. I'll be emphasizing "ecological equivalents", plants that looks the same as ours, but are definitely not related. A desert defines what can live there.



3200 miles in all, so many amazing things we saw!
Both lectures will be the same, but gives you a choice of evening or Sunday afternoon.

**Larry Blackwood –
“Synthesizing Icons: Composite Photographs from the Animal World”**

This exhibit ends 30 April.

Larry combines various parts of photographs of animals, landscapes, textures and graphics to create mandalas, mazes, and painterly scenes. He personally does all the photography, computer work, printing, and framing of images. The finished artwork is surface mounted to wood panels so that there is not glass between the viewer and the image. This creates a clean, modern look to the images.



Larry says, "I have been involved in photography since my teens. By combining creativity with mechanical and technical skills, photography meets the needs of both the left and right sides of my brain. With my composite images I am able to move past the traditional boundaries of the medium of photography, opening new paths for expressing my creative thoughts. The animal world (particularly crows, ravens, and magpies), symbology, and references to literary, cultural, and mythological icons form the basis of my creations.

I use symbols and abstract shapes to move the images beyond mere documentation of the subjects. For backgrounds, I draw on a photographic library of textures and colors patterns that I have acquired over the years. Recently, I have begun to incorporate elements from classic paintings in the compositions as well. In all cases the goal is to create a story or concept in the viewer's mind that takes them far beyond the constraints of representational photographs."

Children's Hour : Friday 21 April : 10:30 am :
"Spring – The Blooming Time of Year"
Plants are awake and flowers are wild !



Docent Doings By Nora Nuckles

We are so happy to see spring! Moving our specimens and equipment in the rain is more difficult; we have to protect them from the moisture. A very wet coyote specimen doesn't smell very good either! Our bird specimens do not take baths!

By now, many of the art requests have progressed to the art element, "form". The primary classes get the opportunity to make small clay pots -- pinch or coil style. The children really enjoy this activity. One of the teachers, Mrs. McLaughlin, made a wonderful pinch pot! The older students create a three-dimensional "tower" from double-sided colored cardstock with pieces cut in various shapes.

Speaking of art, Carol Dezellem and Cam Alden gave a wonderful presentation to the Desert Artists' League. After giving an overview of the art experiences geared to the art elements of line, shape, form, and color they provided a fun activity based on line called "11 points." All the docents thank the Desert Artists' League for donating \$500 for art supplies.

With spring and warmer weather, Susan Moore brought Rosy, our pet rosy boa, to visit the Museum and its visitors for Free Second Saturday. The snake was a beautiful rosy gold and tan and very smooth since she had just recently shed. Many visitors had the opportunity to hold her. In addition, Bob Parker brought a desert tortoise, a leopard tortoise, and a sulcata. We had a lot of fun with the many visitors. The tortoises in the Museum tortoise area are also coming out to sun themselves now that the weather is warmer!



What's ahead for us? We have many requests for reptile, desert alive, birds, and art programs. In addition, it is time for the Sand Canyon Environmental Education Program for 4th graders. Docents will visit the classrooms prior to the canyon field trip to give the children an overview of the canyon, how it formed, and its animal inhabitants. We are also planning for a four-day summer camp from June 12-15 for children ages 9-12. Registration will be through the Ridgecrest Recreation Department.

We presented 36 programs in February to a total of 980 people. We can always use other helping hands so feel free to volunteer just a bit of your time. You will have fun and learn new things!

If you are interested in checking out the docents join us at our April 4 meeting at the Museum at 8:45 am or give me a call at the museum.

Donations and New Members as of March

Donations

Thom Boggs – in memory of
Dixie Chantler
Dan Burnett – for annual
meeting speaker
Rod and Judy Ditzler
Nancy T. Miyakawa Hogg
Nora Nuckles – in honor of
Sue Gilbert and Fred Hartson
Dave Palmer – in memory of
Gwyn Jensen
Craig and Carol Porter
Robert Westbrook
J. D. Williams
Alan Woodman

In memory of Bev Atkins

Beth and Frank Armogida –
outdoor entrance and
parking lot lights
Russ and Linda Bates
Eugenia Wu Chang, Frank,
Jane, Frank and Frances
Naomi Norris
Janice McCalester
Elaine and Peter Wiley –
outdoor light and
operating fund

Student Anthropology Program

Camille D. Alden – in memory
of Ed Alden
Milt and Jane Burford
Naomi Norris
Don Snyder

In memory of Ed Alden

Thom Boggs
Jack and Joanne Latimer

Taxidermy Fund

Naomi Norris
Ellen Wiley

Docent Fund

Tara Brandt (Pack 341)
Kathleen R. Dwyer

Jeffrey and Marcia Ihnem
Cindy and Joe Klissus
Duane and Anita McConnell
Jerome E. McMullen
Linda L. Rolfs
Barbara Murray
Howard J. Verone
Gordon Worley

Art Gallery

Judy Fair-Spaulling

New Members

Craig Bansmer
John Burmeister
Thomas and Anna-Maria Daley

Spring Field Trips with Janet Westbrook - “weather permitting”

April 1-2, ½ day trips to local area for flowers - Flower Show weekend

Meet at 10:15 a.m. FREE

Saturday, Aqueduct Road from Walker Pass to Short Canyon - lots of poppies! Safe dirt roads.
Sunday - behind Ridgecrest - safe dirt roads south of town and up behind the College (back in time for 2:30 lecture)

April 8 - Flowers in Death Valley, and pupfish antics; flowers in higher places of DV

\$25 single / \$30 2 people

April 15 - Flowers around Lake Isabella, Keysville, Lower Kern Canyon

Meet at 8 a.m. Poppies, and all manner of pretty things; around Lake Isabella, into Keysville, and the “old” road in the lower Kern River Canyon. Foothill flowers at their best. \$25 single / \$30 2 people

April 22, Flowers in Foothills, Walker Basin, Tehachapi Loop

Meet at 8 a.m. \$25 single / \$30 2 people

To Bodfish and join the stage road into Havilah, the first Kern Co. Seat and gold country. Over into Walker Basin and the Rankin Ranch area. Over the Lion’s Grade down to Caliente, always lovely, but wiggly drive. From there up the old road from Keene to the Tehachapi Loop and watch for trains. To Tehachapi and down Oak Creek canyon through huge wind turbines to Mojave. The hills are exceptionally green and lovely this year; the roads all paved, kinda... one of my favorite foothill places to go during wildflower season!

May 6, Flowers in the Alabama Hills, Southern Owens Valley

Meet at 8 a.m. \$25 single / \$30 2 people

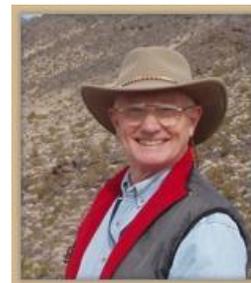
We’ll poke around getting to Olancha, poke into the Alabama Hills, etc. and just see how the day goes. Side roads not always paved, but good enough. Might get as far as Manzanar and the Owens River. Might go out onto the lake. Just depends where it’s prettiest.

Petroglyph Tours

We have had an amazing response to our Spring Petroglyph Tour season! If you have not yet submitted an application for a petroglyph tour this season, now is the time—the only remaining dates are in late May and early June. Please check the website at www.maturango.org for remaining dates.

**Sandy Rogers’ Petroglyph Lectures
Sandy is our Archaeological Curator**

Mar 25, Apr 22, and May 20 : 7 pm : free and open to the public



Maturango Museum of the IWV

100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555
Open every day (except major holidays)
10 am - 5 pm

Staff

Debbie Benson, Museum Director
Maureen Goff, Store Manager/Buyer
Sandy Rogers, Archaeology Curator
Elaine Wiley, History Curator
Sherry Brubaker, 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.
Sam Stephens, Museum Assistant
Deanna Stewart, Museum Assistant
Sue Gilbert, Museum Assistant
Nora Nuckles, Museum Assistant
Nick Rogers, Museum Assistant
Andrea Pelch, Newsletter Editor

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Fran Rogers, Concerts
Bev Hill, Docent League
Dan Burnett, Finance
Sandy Rogers, Lectures
Elaine Wiley, Publications
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The Swap Sheet
Tax Time Services
TJ Frisbee Bicycles, Inc.
TOSS
WACOM
Warren's Automotive



Regularly Scheduled Meetings

- China Lake Astronomical Society: 1st Monday of each month, 7 pm
- China Lake Photographic Society: 1st Thursday of each month, 7 pm
- Kerncrest Audubon Society: 3rd Thursday bi-monthly [Jan, Mar, May, Sep, Nov, not July], 7 pm
- Docent League: 1st Tuesday of each month, 8:45 a.m., everyone welcome
- California Turtle and Tortoise Club: 2nd Monday of each month, 7 pm

Quick Check Calendar

Spring Field Trips with Janet Westbrook : See article in this newsletter

Children's Hour : Friday 21 April : 10:30 am : "Spring – The Blooming Time of Year"

Museum's Annual Wildflower Show : March 31 - April 2 : 10 am – 5 pm

Joy England's wildflower presentation April 2 at 2:30 pm.

FREE field trips to local wildflower "hot spots" : Saturday April 1, Sunday April 2 : 10:15 am

Sandy Rogers' Petroglyph Lectures : Mar 25, Apr 22, and May 20 : 7 pm : free and open to the public

Pizza Factory Fundraiser : all day Thursday 20 April :
30% of your purchase is donated to the Maturango Museum.

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