

Maturango News

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
10 am – 5 pm every day. 760.375.6900 www.maturango.org
Death Valley Tourist Center Northern Mojave Visitor Center

Museum Director's Notes

Debbie Benson, Museum Director

There are many paths to a meaningful sense of the natural world... Blackfoot proverb

A New Year to fill with the patterns of living is the gift of January. We all have our own way, our own dreams to guide us on our paths. As the days gain in length it becomes possible to go for longer hikes in the local hills as we see the first hints of possible growth while hoping for a few more rains. We are already putting plans in place for wildflowers and viewing the activities of our wildlife after a rather stark year.

I would like to thank each person who helped the Maturango Museum be a positive place for our community and our visitors. Every smile given and each activity makes the time given worth it. You are worth it! Thank you!

Docent Doings

By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator

In December Cathy Heseman presented art lessons to 135 students in Trona. She taught them about the art element "shape" and had them follow up with art projects. Cathy and Carol Dezellem will present an art lesson to Mrs. Vaughn's Kindergarten class before school recesses for the winter holidays. Thank you, Cathy and Carol, for your giant contribution to the Maturango Museum docents!

We docents are just getting back in the groove. We are very mindful of the various viruses, colds and flu that seem to be on the upswing with winter approaching. I think limiting Children's Hour attendees is working fairly well. Our December Snow Tree presentation was delightful! Charlotte Goodson, Ingrid Carroll, Sue Prazak, Penny LePome, Tina Rockdale, Sue Parker, Debbie Hillis, Shirley Crouse, Susan Woodman, Judy Breitenstein, and Sherry Brubaker presented a fun, heartwarming program complete with everyone shaking jingle bells! If you are interested in bringing your child to our next Children's Hour on January 20, please be sure to sign up. Check our website for the next sign up dates. Call the Museum at 760-375-6900 to



reserve a spot.

Many children and adults came to Free Saturday on Dec. 10 and made holiday ornaments and plastic cup luminaria.

The docents and the Museum staff thank Karin and John of the Breakfast Burritos for bringing 4 mini donkeys on Dec. 9. Many people had an opportunity to pet the burros and take pictures with the mini burros who wore Santa hats!

The docents are always interested in recruiting new people. We like to share our fun in the joy of learning. Please give me a call at the Museum if you are interested in learning about the docent program or becoming a member of the Docents of the Maturango Museum!



Images of the Trona Pinnacles – Photos by Hernan Godoy

Coso Room Jan 7 – March 6, 2023

Hernan has been involved in different styles of photography spanning many years, although his passion resides in photographing nature and landscapes. Hernan's primary focus is the California Sierra, where he has captured numerous images over two decades. He is constantly seeking the perfect combination of light, color and subject matter to compose a striking image.

He is a self-taught and award-winning photographer. Hernan leads fun and educational photographic workshops in the Eastern Sierra including the great Mojave Desert, and one of his favorite areas, the dramatic Trona Pinnacles. He often provides lectures, serves as a guest speaker and judges photo contests in local photo clubs in the greater southern California area. www.hernangodoyphotography.com



Natural History News

By Sherry Brubaker, Natural History Curator

The other day I was attempting to clean my office; the layered piles reminded me of sedimentary rock layers. Anyway, I found a box someone had donated with a note saying the box contained fossils of camel bones and *coprolites*. New word for me, though I have heard it before.

Coprolites (thanks to the internet) are fossilized faeces of animals that lived millions of years ago. Yup, fossilized poop. The word itself comes from the Greek *Kopros Lithos* meaning “Dung stone”. Coprolites are called trace fossils which means they are not the animals themselves; in this case it is their waste. From these coprolites, determination can be made as to what the animal ate and how their intestines are shaped (modern sharks are spiral in shape so ancient sharks must have been as well). Depending on what the animal ate can reveal if the animal was prey (grass/plant eater) or predator (meat eater). Determining who the animal was specifically is difficult, coprolites and actual animal fossils are not always together. It's good to know that coprolites do not smell like poop – they smell like rocks. (What do rocks smell like?)

The first person to study coprolites was a woman named Mary Anning. Mary lived in Lyme Regis, Dorset England in the early 1800's. She is well known for discovering long extinct animals, including ichthyosaurs and plesiosaurs – reptiles that lived in the sea. Mary was the first to look inside coprolites finding remains of fish, scales and bones. Thus, proving that the odd shaped “stones” were actually fossilized animal waste, or poop.

Not sure what I'm going to do with this box of goodies, but I'm thinking I'll put them in the Discovery Area.

Recent Field Trip Reports

Barbara Bane, Archeological Curator

Kern County Museum

In November, Maturango toured our county museum in Bakersfield, now successfully run by a non-profit foundation. We visited the Collections Archive of photographs, newspapers, books, and maps documenting everything Kern for the last 160 years. Director Mike McCoy then showed us around the extensive grounds containing historic buildings, an oil derrick, and a neon sign “forest” of advertising from past favorite Bakersfield businesses and restaurants.



My personal tour favorites pertained to country western music. Merle Haggard's childhood boxcar home – “Straight Outta Oildale” - is on the grounds and open for touring the tiny interior.

Bakersfield Sound is a tribute to the stars who put Bakersfield country music into the honkey-tonks and recording studios in the 1950s-60s. A detailed collection of memorabilia from performers (Buck Owens, Merle Haggard, Bonnie Owens) as well as music venues and dives from Bakersfield gone by. Alas, almost all of the old spots are gone; only Trout's survives. A long look at everything from matchbooks to guitars, stage clothing, barstools, stars' personal notes, and photographs brings the glory days back for a few moments.



Buck Owen's Nudie Suit. Barb Bane photo.

Rocky Hill

In December, Maturango traveled to the outskirts of Exeter CA to the Yokuhl Valley, a traditional homeland for the Foothill Yokut Indians. We toured the south side of Rocky Hill Archeological Preserve, a granite-studded knoll containing a boulder garden of pictographs, caves, bedrock mortars, and spiritual places. The Archeological Conservancy purchased the site in 1969 to prevent development; tours are available only by arrangement with site stewards. The Yokut Tribes used the site for thousands of years



before the coming of Anglo ranchers in the 1850s and still use the ritual and healing places on the hill today.

We gathered at the southern edge of the large hill at the Welcoming Panel for an introduction and blessing for our visit. Our guides, led by long-time site steward, Manual Andrade, gave us some history of the area and its meanings for the Yokuts people: healing, food gathering, rites of passage, and birthing.

Yokuhl Valley from the foot of Rocky Hill (Bane photo 2022).

The Welcoming Panel (Bane photo 2022).

For the next three hours, we explored the site, sometimes seeing clearly visible “public” pictographs; other times climbing far into boulder caves to view more private panels containing life scenes, condors, birds, bears, and other beings. The light rain and mist made the panels especially visible; ochre red, white, and black pigments against wet granite stone.



Bedrock mortars throughout the lower site elevations (Bane photo 2022).

Maturango hopes to return to Rocky Hill early next year to view the private land sites on the north side of the knoll. Look for announcements in the newsletter.

Donations in November 2022

Donations

Dan and Brenda Burnett
Catherine Douglas
Michael J. Ford
Karen Haden
John R. Mathews
Denise Moliterno
James Nichols
Janice Philpott
Robert Westbrook
Patricia Wharton
Ken Whetzel

In Honor of Barbara Bane, for Archaeology Curation

Deborah Benson
Nora and Richard Nuckles

New Members

Leslie Barkman
Erik Duncan
Kurt C. Hill
Donna and Greg Ogilvie
Randall K. Peterson

Diana Said
Robert Steele

New Lifetime Members

Sue and Chuck Johnson

New Premium Members

Nate Fisher and Bri Meyer
Robert M. Johnson
Rebecca McCourt

“In My Backyard” – photographs by Michael Walsten

The animals photographed in Michael Walsten’s yard are now on exhibit in the Argus Room for you to view. The animals include the Antelope ground squirrel, California quail, local and migratory birds, insects and reptiles. Information about the different animals are posted next to the high quality, detailed close-up photographs by Michael Walsten.



The house finch, one of the species in the exhibit, is a common bird in this area that has an interesting history. This colorful finch is native to the southwest United States. But in 1940, pet shop owners in New York, who illegally owned house finches, released them to avoid prosecution. These adaptable birds survived and began to colonize the New York suburbs. By 1990, the finches advanced halfway across the continent to meet their western kin. Today, these birds are seen in cities, suburbs and farms as well as their original southwestern habitat of desert, chaparral, oak savanna, riparian areas and open coniferous forests.

This exhibit showcases many detailed views of animals such as the dragonfly, iguana lizard, and hummingbirds. Reprints of these photographs are available to order in the museum’s gift shop.

Valley Night Skies – Twilight to Twilight in the Sylvia Winslow Gallery

The uplifting, colorful and mesmerizing photographs of sunsets, sunrises and night views are currently on display in the Sylvia Winslow Gallery. The room lights are low to give the effect of twilight; so come sit for a spell in the Sylvia Winslow Gallery and absorb the beauty of the photos.

These photographs, taken by Bruce Heydlauff, are accompanied by Skip Gorman’s metal animal silhouettes that add a touch of whimsy to the exhibit. Reprints of these photographs are available in multiple sizes; order in the gift shop.



Maturango Museum of the IWW

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
Barbara Bane, M.A., RPA, Archaeology
Curator
Elaine Wiley, History Curator
Sherry Brubaker, Natural History Curator
Julie Stephens, Finance Manager
Andrea Pelch, Art Gallery Coordinator,
Newsletter Editor
Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator
Linda Saholt, Petroglyph Tour Coord.,
Membership, Donations
Leslie Layfield, Accounting Bookkeeper
Kelly Goff, Museum Assistant
Deanna Stewart, Museum Assistant
Nora Nuckles, Museum Assistant
Nick Rogers, Museum Assistant
Jacque Ahlin, Curation Tech

Committee Chairpersons

Dan Burnett, Building
Elaine Wiley, Publications
Bob Westbrook, Strategic Planning

Board of Trustees

Libby Vincent - President
Robert McGowan - Vice-president
Renee Lesniak - Secretary
Jann Philpott - Treasurer
Peggy Chun
David Kurdeka
Diane Foucher
Sue Parker
Dorie Cornell

Businesses and Organizations Supporters • Contributors • Sponsors

Please support the businesses and organizations
that support the Maturango Museum

Act Too Consulting, Inc.
AltaOne Federal Credit Union
Ashley Furniture HomeStore
Beanster's Espresso
Best Western China Lake Inn
Boulder Creek RV Resort
Clarion Inn
Coldwell Banker Best Realty
DART
Daily Independent
Eastern Sierra Custom Framing
Epsilon Systems Solutions, Inc.
Friends of Jawbone
Oasis at Death Valley
Gary Charlon State Farm
Hampton Inn & Suites
High Desert Haven
Historical Society of the Upper
Mojave Desert
Hockett's Builder's Supply
Inspire Charter School
KPartners Hospitality Group
Kristy's Family Restaurant
Law Offices of Phyllis M. Hix

McDonald's Restaurant
New Directions Technologies, Inc.
News Review
Oasis Garden Club
PackWrap Business Center
The Pizza Factory
Rodeway Heritage Inn & Suites
Ridgecrest Area Convention and
Visitors Bureau
Ridgecrest Regional Hospital
St. Ann Catholic School
Searles Valley Minerals
Sierra Sands Unified School
District
SpringHill Suites by Marriott
The Swap Sheet
The Table
TJ Frisbee Bicycles, Inc.
WACOM
Warren's Automotive



When you purchase through Amazon,
select Amazon smile and direct the Amazon charitable
contributions to
Maturango Museum.
We'll all smile...

How do you like our new electronic sign?

Want to post a brief appropriate message for an event or personal endearment?
Come in to the museum store for details. We suggest a donation to support our programs.



Pizza Factory and Beanster's Espresso Fundraiser

All day Wednesday January 11

20% of your purchase is donated to the Maturango Museum –

You must mention this fundraiser when ordering.



happy new year

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Ridgecrest, CA
Permit #26

Return Service Requested

Maturango Museum of the IVV
100 E. Las Flores Ave.
Ridgecrest, CA 93555-3654