

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

Open Monday – Saturday 10 am – 5 pm, Sunday Noon – 4pm 760.375.6900 www.maturango.org

Death Valley Tourist Center Northern Mojave Visitor Center

Museum Director's Notes

Debbie Benson, Museum Director

Feathers, twigs and sand scattered in the desert wind.

Wildflowers taking hold, as a kindness in kindred soil...

March begins that shift towards Spring and the concept of what we see as comfort. This winter has felt a bit more chilly at the Museum as we, much like everyone else, have been more frugal with our heating use. We look forward to what we know will be more sun-warmed days though still cool at night. A perfect time for wildflowers to make their showing as only they can. The many creatures of the desert will be warming as well so our eyes and ears will be more alert to their existence. It's an enlivening time.

We hope to see many of you at some of our events this month. All of them being a pleasant return to some of what we most enjoy; a meeting with the membership, an art opening for Cheryl McDonald, the Manzanar Field Trip, Free Saturday with the docents, an Equinox celebration and our marvelous Wildflower Exhibit.

Hope to see many of you and the pleasure of saying hello! Enjoy the shift of the seasons, the time change and please continue to Be Well!

Museum Annual Meeting - Sunday, March 12 at 4pm

Join your friends to review the museum's accomplishments this past year,

take a look at future events and projects and
vote for the new board members.

Light refreshments will accompany our gathering.

Barbara Bane, M.A, RPA, our Archeology Curator,
will give a presentation on the museum's curation procedures.

See the biographies for the 4
nominated board members
at the end of this newsletter.

What Happens Behind the White Door?

Archeology Curator Barbara Bane explains the mysteries of Maturango Archeology Curation:

- What does a curator DO, anyway?
 - Why do we do that?
 - Is there a law about that?
- What's in the Curation Facility?
- What does the future hold?

The Forest Fairies 1925_Margaret Tarrant illust.



Docent Doings

By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator

Hurrah! The docents welcomed Terry McGuire and Rayne Zurn to the Docent League of the Maturango Museum. Both women bring a wide breadth of experiences to enrich what the docents already know and do; they are very enthusiastic and have already participated in free Saturday activities on Feb. 11. Our free Saturday spent decorating Mardi Gras masks was attended by about 50 people. Both young children and many adults painted and glued on feathers and “jewels” to create some gorgeous masks. I have put some examples on the bulletin board in the main exhibit room (El Paso Gallery).

Docents plan to cut plastic water bottles into various shapes in preparation for the next free Saturday on March 11. Painting these plastic flowers was a fun, creative activity for all our participants last year. We look forward to the creations children and adults will make on March 11. Please join us anytime from 11 am – 2 pm.

Story hour docents have planned an exciting Children’s Hour on March 24 at 10:30 am. The theme is nocturnal animals. The first book is one of my favorite stories, “The Desert Night Shift - a Pack Rat Story”. “The Barn Owl” and Susan Prazak presenting her own poem, “Pack Rat” are also included. Sign up by calling the museum store 760-375-6900

Mike and Paula Herr brought the Beth Armogida Planetarium out of its Covid “isolation” to demonstrate it for the China Lake Astronomy Club. Keith Weisz and Chuck Morgan were very interested in learning how to run it. Hopefully, we can have a day in the Museum with the planetarium in a few months!

Requests for tours and docent educational programs are coming in more frequently so I anticipate that we will be quite busy this spring! You are always welcome to join the Docent League of the Maturango Museum and lend a hand. I am certain you will find that participating is a rewarding, enriching experience! Just call me at the Museum at 76-375-6900 if you would like to join us at our next meeting on March 7 at 10am.

Field Trip to Manzanar

Friday March 17

Join Maturango Museum for a day long field trip to Manzanar National Historic Site in Independence CA. Meet at the Manzanar site; trip times and other details will go out a week before the event to participants via email.

Our trip will include a visit to the Park Visitor Center with interpretive exhibits on the WWII internment of Japanese Americans at the Manzanar confinement camp, bring your own picnic lunch at the re-created mess hall, followed by an afternoon site tour of Manzanar archeological work by nationally recognized NPS Archeologist Jeff Burton.

Limit 30 participants, all mobility accessible, tour walking options up to 3 miles. Vehicular loop road gives closer access to sites on grounds for those with limited mobility. Tickets, \$40, must be purchased in advance. This price includes a donation to Friends of Manzanar. Purchase tickets online at the Maturango website shop.maturango.org/events-trips/ or call or visit the Maturango gift shop at 760-375-6900.

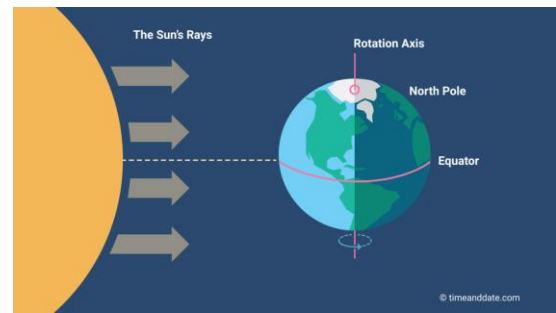


Spring Equinox Event Sunday March 19, noon – 3 pm

The Maturango Museum is celebrating the Spring equinox on Sunday, March 19, 2023 from noon to 3pm. We will have a sun/earth/moon model to view, a craft activity, and if weather permits, astronomers will set up their telescopes for viewing the sun.

A solar equinox is a moment in time when the sun appears directly above the equator rather than north or south of the equator. On the day of the equinox, the sun appears to rise "due east" and set "due west"; daylight and night are almost equal in length in most time zones around the world.

The March equinox is the moment the sun crosses the equator from the south to the north. For us in the northern hemisphere, this moment in time marks the beginning of spring. The March equinox is also called the vernal or spring equinox. For those in the southern hemisphere, the March equinox marks the autumnal or fall equinox and the beginning of fall. The actual March equinox for Ridgecrest is Monday, March 20 at 2:24pm.



Back to the Pleistocene: Adventures with a Forgotten Taos Modern by Ann Japenga

Ann Japenga's latest article in "California Desert Art" encompasses the life and work of Emma Lou Davis. Emma Lou Davis, born in 1905, was a painter and sculptor in her early years and appeared in the Museum of Modern Art's Americans magazine in 1942. Emma Lou changed the direction of her life from artist to archaeologist in 1957 when she took courses in anthropology at the University of New Mexico then moved to Los Angeles to attend UCLA where she was awarded her doctorate in 1965 at the age 59. She was curator of the San Diego Museum of Man from 1966-1971 but her passion was studying the Paleo-Indian archaeology in the California desert including the area now contained in the Navy facility at China Lake. She was a strong-minded force in the field of archaeology, founded the Great Basin Foundation and authored over 70 books and articles.



Dr. E.L. Davis and David Fortsch; date 1970 or 1971. China Lake

Ann Japenga is a Palm Springs writer specializing in stories about the California deserts and the West. As a staff writer for the Los Angeles Times, she developed a love for tales tied to the Western landscape. After moving to Palm Springs, she zeroed in on "deserata" -- the natural and human history of the California deserts from the San Geronio Pass to the Colorado River.

Ann's work has appeared in the New York Times, People, Utne, Palm Springs Life, The Los Angeles Times Magazine and many other publications. She has also written extensively about health and medicine for the Time, Inc. magazines Health and Hippocrates. Her desert essays are included in the anthologies "True Tales of the Mojave" and "The New Desert Reader".

She is co-editor of the book "Postcards From Mecca: The California Desert Photographs of Susie Keef Smith and Lula Mae Graves" and founder of the website californiadesertart.com.

You can read Japenga's article through the link: <https://www.californiadesertart.com/back-to-the-pleistocene-adventures-with-a-forgotten-taos-modern/>



Natural History News

By Sherry Brubaker, Natural History Curator

Desert Tortoise *Gopherus agassizii*

The tortoise is a large reptile that eats plants (herbivore). This threatened species used to be common in our desert area, but humans (urbanization, off-highway vehicle activity, large scale energy projects, and non-native plants) and predators (especially ravens) have greatly impacted tortoise populations to the point recovery is in danger.

The tortoise requires 13 to 20 years to mature and reproduce. Predators such as foxes and coyotes will dig up egg nests, and eat the eggs. Ravens will eat newly hatched and young tortoises which adds to the rapid decline of the species.

When out enjoying the desert be aware of this slow-moving reptile. A collision with a vehicle is always fatal to the tortoise. Do not remove a tortoise to take home as a pet, this further reduces the wild population and is not healthy for the animal. If you want a pet tortoise contact the local turtle and tortoise club and they will help you adopt one that has already been in captivity.

Desert Tortoise Research Natural Area's 50th Anniversary Celebration in Cal City
Saturday March 25 at 9am. www.tortoise-tracks.org

Donations in February 2023

Donations

- Anonymous
- Dan and Brenda Burnett
- Don and Shirley Crouse
- Goro Ike Fujiwara
- Jim and Janet Haney
- David Kurdeka
- Carolyne Lynch
- Jann Philpott
- Sylvia Sotomayor

- Julie Stephens
- Bill and Pat Walters
- Patricia Wharton
- Ken Whetzel

In Memory of Don A. Brath
Michael S. Vincent

Building Fund
Robert Westbrook

Children's Activities and Children's Hour

Dorolyn Groshens

New Members

Jim and Cheryl Fallgatter

New Premium Members

Mark Barela and Candy Valencia

2023 Wildflower Exhibit Friday March 31 – Sunday April 2 Admission - \$2.00

Each spring the Maturango Museum hosts the annual Wildflower Exhibit. Visitors can see the wide variety and abundance of wildflowers that grow in the Indian Wells Valley and surrounding canyons. Collectors with the proper BLM permits spend multiple days gathering the wildflowers which are placed into bottles or vases and displayed according to their family.

(continued next page)



The exhibit features annuals and flowering shrubs - from the tiny white cryptantha (forget-me-nots) to the bright and showy coreopsis (bright yellow wildflower) to the common desert creosote bush. Each species is identified by a group of professional botanists and labeled with its common and scientific name.

The Maturango Museum will have two speakers for this year.

On Saturday April 1 at 3pm, Nina House will present “A Vascular Flora of the Manter and Salmon Creek Watersheds in the Southern Sierra Nevada, Tulare County, CA”.

On Sunday, April 2, at 3pm, Glenn Harris will give his presentation on “The Changing Floristic Landscape Through Time”.

As in past years, local artists from the Desert Artist League will be drawing and painting selected wildflowers throughout the weekend.

With the winter rains, this spring promises a colorful and fragrant display of wildflowers for this exhibit!

Glenn Harris

Guest Speaker for the Annual Wildflower Exhibit

Glenn Harris is a guest speaker for the 2023 Maturango Museum Wildflower Exhibit. Glenn will give a presentation titled, “The Changing Floristic Landscape Through Time” on Sunday, April 2 at 3 pm at the Maturango Museum. This presentation will be on how plants changed or migrated since the ice age.

Glenn is a retired Bureau of Land Management (BLM) who specialized in Botany, Soils, Water Resources, Hydrology, Air Quality, Range Management and Fire Management. Since retirement, Glenn has been a docent with the Maturango Museum and is a BLM volunteer. He has volunteered for the Annual Wildflower Exhibit as both a collector and an identifier of specimens for many years.



Nina House

Guest speaker for the annual Wildflower Exhibit

Nina House is a guest speaker for the 2023 Maturango Museum Wildflower Exhibit. Nina will give a presentation of her study area on Saturday, April 1 at 3 pm at the Maturango Museum.



The title of her presentation is, “A Vascular Flora of the Manter and Salmon Creek Watersheds in the Southern Sierra Nevada, Tulare County, CA”. Her study area encompassed a 51 square mile section of the Kern Plateau including 25 square miles of the Domeland Wilderness area. Conducting a systematic floristic inventory of this under-documented region provided an opportunity to record rare plant locations, new county records, species at the edge of their range, and disjunct plant populations. Documenting this diversity is vital, as there are several ongoing impacts from land use and climate change. Cattle grazing, off-highway vehicular use, logging, severe drought, and an altered fire regime were all documented during the study. These disturbances will have lasting

impacts on the flora. Throughout the project, Nina completed a total of 24 field trips, totaling 90 field days, and resulted in the collection of 1,412 herbarium specimen records.

Nina received her Biology B.S. degree in 2017 before working toward her Master’s degree in Botany from Claremont Graduate University. She is currently a Museum Scientist at the UC and Jepson Herbaria, at the University of California Berkeley. She works on coordinating the Jepson workshop program and revising the Jepson eFlora.

**MYSTIC
DREAMS
OF
TRANSFORMATION**

Art &
Poetry
by
Cheryl
McDonald

Inspired pencil drawings
and poetry that personify
transformational, spiritual,
and experiential dreams.

Presented by
Maturango
Museum

March 11- May 31, 2023
Opening Reception
March 19th, 2023
12-3pm

100 E. Las Flores Blvd.
Ridgecrest, CA
93555

Cheryl McDonald’s Art Exhibit “Mystic Dreams of Transformation”

In the Coso Room March 11 – May 31.

Opening Reception, Sunday March 19, noon – 3pm.

Cheryl will be signing her new book that accompanies this exhibit.

“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 museum store.



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

Elaine Wiley, Publications
Bob Westbrook, Strategic Planning

Board of Trustees

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

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Kristy's Family Restaurant
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McDonald's Restaurant
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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



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.

We were very pleased to receive two checks from the insurance company covering the entire cost of the new sign! During this last year we have received personal donations for the sign. After paying the deductible and any related bills incurred by the incident, we have put the remaining funds into the Operating Fund. If you donated to the sign and have any questions or concerns about the designation of your donation, please contact Debbie (debbie@maturango.org) or Julie (julie@maturango.org)

Many thanks!



Pizza Factory and Beanster's Espresso Fundraiser

All day Wednesday March 8.

20% of your purchase is donated to the Maturango Museum

You must mention this fundraiser when ordering.



Upcoming Events

- Mar 11: Free Saturday, 11am – 2pm: paint plastic flowers.
- Mar 12: Museum Annual Meeting, 4pm.
- Mar 17: Manzanar Field Trip
- Mar 19: Spring Equinox Activities, noon – 3pm
- Mar 19: Cheryl McDonald's Art Exhibit Opening Reception, noon – 3pm
- Mar 24: Children's Hour 10:30 am:.. Sign up by calling the museum store 760-375-6900.
 - April 19: The Audubon Traveling Exhibit featuring the 2022 Photography Award Winners will be on display in the Sylvia Winslow gallery for one month.

Biographies for the nominated board members:

Diane Foucher

I have lived in Ridgecrest for 41 years after growing up in Bartlesville, OK and attending Oklahoma City University. My career in Federal Government Contracting included four years as an Intern for the Army at Rock Island, IL and 34 years at China Lake. As a Procuring Contracting Officer (PCO) my teams wrote and administered major contracts in support of various technical programs. Other experience includes Contract Management Advisor (acquisition planning), PCO Team Leader, Lead Procurement Analyst, Supervisor and Senior PCO. I provided coaching and mentoring to other PCOs and Technical requirements owners on complex acquisition issues including compliance and implementation of policy. I was a facilitator for several process improvement teams, I delivered training, planned and directed developmental training programs. I retired in 2014 and since 2015 I have worked on a part-time intermittent basis focused on acquisition streamlining, training, research and analysis and support of Procurement Analysts in the Business Systems Office. My career prepared me to work well with diverse groups, negotiate win/win agreements and develop and implement innovative solutions.

I have been on the Museum Board of Trustees since January 2021 filling the remainder of a vacated position. Strengths that I bring to the board include creative thinking, identification of options, research and analysis, risk assessment, problem solving and fiscal responsibility. I have experience as a Contract/Business Management Advisor including the ability to 'find a way' while working within a regulatory and policy framework. Working with the other Trustees, we have drafted a plan to increase the number of tours offered by the museum including a list of potential tour destinations and a Procedures Guide for new tour leaders. We also have brainstormed quite a few other ideas and have implemented some to increase revenue and cut operating costs at the Museum. I am friends and well connected with many of our local artists, archeologists and desert rats. Maturango Museum is a treasured and irreplaceable resource in our community. I feel my capabilities are a good match with the needs of the Board and the Museum. I would appreciate your vote to elect me to a full term.

I served many terms as the President of the Ridgecrest/China Lake chapter of the National Contracts Management Association (NCMA) and subsequently represented the Southwest Region on the NCMA National Board of Directors. I am on the Kern Community College District Bond Oversight Committee for Measure G & J. At Ridgecrest United Methodist Church I sing in the choir, previously served as a Trustee and am currently the Recording Secretary for the Administrative Council. I enjoy traveling, scuba diving, 4 wheeling, exploring the desert, hiking, music and dancing.

Dorie Cornell

I have been a replacement member of the Maturango Museum Board of Trustees since October 2022. Originally from Staten Island, New York, I have lived in Ridgecrest since 1982. We have also lived part time in Kennedy Meadows since 1987. I have a BA and an MA in Special Education. I retired from Sierra Sands Unified School District as an itinerant special education specialist in 2014.

I have always been fascinated with antiques and archeology. I visited New York museums while growing up. During the summers of 2016-2018, I was a non-credit student/volunteer at Adirondack College Archeology Field School with 200 field school hours under the late Dr. David Starbuck (renowned French and Indian War archeologist/author/professor). Training included excavation, artifact cleaning/classification, and documentation. Lectures included display/exhibit design in small museums. I am a member of the Friends of China Lake Archeology and have also participated in three public archeology projects at Manzanar.

I have had a wonderful experience in volunteering at the Maturango Museum with history curator Elaine Wiley since 2016. Assistance consisted of researching, labeling and storing collections as well as helping to design and set up exhibits. My husband and I have volunteered and collected wildflowers the last several years on Nine Mile Canyon Road for the annual wildflower show.

I am interested in helping to preserve, display and share the varied history of our area. Thank you for your consideration.

Howard McCauley

"I was born in Ridgecrest and have fond memories of the little Maturango Museum when we both lived on base. The exhibit that was my favorite was a display of colorful pin mounted insects in a horizontal glass case. We moved off base in the 1970s and for a time, I had little opportunity to interact with the museum. I rediscovered the museum at first through its gift shop purchasing gifts that acted as ambassadors for the natural and cultural history of the Indian Wells Valley. Then there were the open studio tours, festivals and an occasional field trip. In 2014, the Maturango Museum and its volunteers supported my youngest son's Eagle Scout project. The museum provided him the opportunity to organize a work party that improved the landscaping on the South East side of the building. In 2017, the museum hosted a showing of my Dad's most recent artwork - art that proudly beautifies our community service boxes. When my wife & I retired in 2020, the Maturango Museum offered us the opportunity to help with landscape maintenance and grounds cleanup. Considering the offer to serve on the museum Board of Trustees lead me to reflect on all these ways the Maturango Museum has touched my life. Thinking about the museum's mission and the impact on our community strengthened my perspective that the natural and cultural history of our valley is rich and a broadening appreciation will help us enjoy it in a socially responsible way. A museum is a community resource that enriches the lives of its residents and visitors alike. Serving on the Museum Board of Trustees is not an opportunity looked for, but having been asked and if selected; I would do my best to support the Museum as it has supported me and my family. The strengths I would bring include project management and a curiosity for symbiotic relationships such as between the museum and the local community."

Stephen Fine is an accomplished Licensed Clinical Psychotherapist with over 30 years of experience in the mental health field and financial market. Stephen always ensures survivability of programs for the long-term.

Stephen is efficient at his job and understands the difficulties that many types of businesses experience as they navigate through both economic and emotionally turbulent times. Stephen has the ability to take unhealthy mental health/organizational programs and transform them into healthy and thriving ones. Because of his skills, Stephen can produce productive and long-lasting changes that support organizations and clients alike.

Stephen works with for-profit, non-profit organizations, and hospitals. He works well with senior corporate executives and can provide consultations for individual and corporate development that includes wellness and resiliency.

More than his role as a Director or Clinical Supervisor, he is curious and effective at persuading and influencing individuals for organizational change and growth. His opinions are highly valued, people trust and respect his judgments. Stephen earned a BA degree in Psychology back in 1986. Through his course, he developed a passionate interest in organizations and how people interact within them. Stephen participated in the business market for some time prior to completing his MA in Clinical Psychology in 1991.

Since that time, Stephen has had a successful private practice that coincided with successful program management and development within various mental health organizations. While working at Ridgecrest Regional Hospital providing clinical oversight, he also has expanded services to include Wellness Programming (whole person approach) and a Suboxone Clinic for those struggling with substance use. Additional development includes grant writing to support immediate care access with the addition of a Substance Use Navigator to link clients to services.

Since coming to Ridgecrest 5 years ago Stephen continues to be drawn to a dynamic community that is continuing to grow.