



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

November brings us the first real hints of winter and thoughts of thankfulness and the celebration of gratitude. I was reminded by one of my sons that we are so often thankful for what is expected. Not always noticing the small things and how much they do count. So often the living within lives is not something we think of with gratitude. It too is part of the expected that often, in retrospect, is full of our treasured moments. For this month of Thanksgiving I am hoping for us all many of those small moments that do literally count, and many hidden and often unexpected places of understanding and joy. I appreciate each person who through messages and actions of care show all of us at the Museum, and our neighbors, a reason to hold you in gratitude. Thank you. Our best to you!

2023 Dinner Auction

Fun, Food and Friends for a Great Cause!

By Bob McGowan, Board of Trustees President

The Maturango Museum's 2023 Dinner Auction was held on September 30, 2023, and was a great success. All the available tickets were sold out prior to the event and a waiting list was created for those who waited too long to buy their ticket. The Museum's volunteers, staff and board of trustees wish to thank our members, guests and donors for their generosity in making the event successful.

A special thanks goes out to our event sponsors who generously contributed; Desert Valleys Federal Credit Union, Hyla Nursery, Inyokern Airport, NDTI, Ridgecrest Chamber Music Society, Saalex Solutions, Sinclair Legal Counsel, Sinclair Tax Services, The Swap Sheet and Walkers Window Tinting. Thank you all!

Please save the date, Saturday, September 28th 2024 for next year's Dinner Auction. Be sure to get your tickets early as the event committee is planning an even bigger and better event next year.



Nick Panzer
challenged Bob McGowan and
Debbie Benson to get into the big,
giant pants together if \$400 was

Open Studio Tour 2023

Another successful weekend for arts and crafts in Ridgecrest and Inyokern. **Thank You** to all of the **talented artists** that participated and all of the **guests** that visited the studios. Next year will be our 20th annual Open Studio Tour!

Desert Artists' League "Creativity" Gallery Exhibit
November 4 – Dec 30, 2023

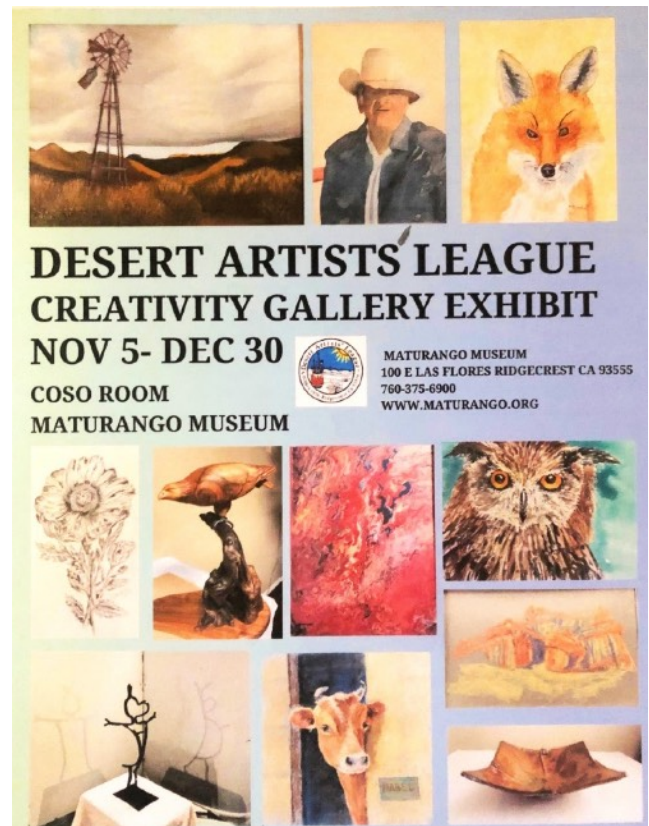
Opening Reception
Sunday November 5, 2 – 4pm

The "Creativity" Exhibit will feature artwork from 22 artists. Various subjects in watercolor, oil, pastel, acrylic, metal, wood, and ceramics. The Opening Reception is free and open to the public.

The Desert Artists' League (DAL) was founded in 1957 by a group of artist friends. We are a talented group of people who work in a variety of media: watercolor, acrylic, oil, encaustic, ceramics, pastel, mixed media and fiber arts. We love to share camaraderie, enthusiasm, tips and techniques.

General meetings are held on the first Monday of the month (unless it falls on a holiday, then we meet on the second Monday) from September through May. Currently we meet at the Church of the Nazarene 571 N. Norma St. Ridgecrest at 6:30PM. Meetings are open to anyone interested in art, whether making art or simply enjoying art. Guests are welcome. There is no charge to attend the first time, afterward we ask guests to pay \$5.00.

See the DAL website at desertartistsleague.org/ for more information.



Docent Doings

By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator

I have been thinking about what a wonderful experience and opportunity it is to be a docent at the Maturango Museum. We get together once a month for a meeting, treats, some fun catching up with each other, and some training. Last month, Shirley Crouse provided an excellent, informative training on bats. Who knew bats could be so fascinating and that there was a way to hear some bat sounds from different bats. Who knew bats could look so cute and not scary. And that is just where the fun starts. I joined a planning meeting to give some bat programs at a few of the schools. 8 docents came to plan. So many ideas, so many questions were brought up. The planning and learning process for docents is so much fun. About six docents came on a Saturday to make pinhole cameras for viewing the eclipse. We did not have many visitors to participate but the docents under Elaine Wiley's guidance made quite an array of different size pinhole cameras and tried them out. Again a lot of laughs, fun, camaraderie, and learning!

Docents are receiving several requests for tours and programs. We are seeking help and would love to add members to our illustrious league. We can offer training and wonderful experiences. You don't need to be an expert, just need to be willing to work with a phenomenal group of people who love to share the wonders of our desert with adults and children. Please call me, Nora, at the Maturango Museum if you would like to work with the Docent League. You can also attend our next meeting on Tuesday, November 7, 10am in the Coso Room of the Museum.

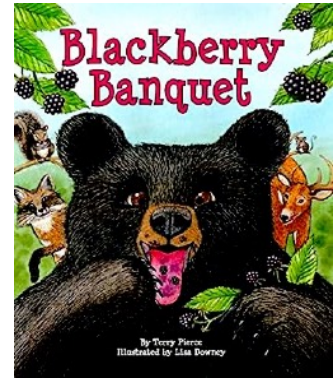
Children's Hour "Our Mountain Animal Neighbors"

Friday, November 10, 10:30 – 11:30am

Young children and their families will be introduced at the next Children's Hour to many of the animals that live in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Through stories and action songs, helped along by docents and puppets, there will be 'visits' from chipmunks, raccoons, bobcats, bears, and even a few skunks! Oh, and a salamander may slip in there, too. After enjoying, the requests for fresh berries may push aside the usual for sweet candies and such! More stories, informative and fun, will be followed by exhibits on the Discovery Table where all questions are welcomed and the ever popular Craft Activity.

Children's Hour is a free, educational and entertaining monthly program from September – May. Our last program of the fall will be Friday December 8. It has become a Children's Hour tradition with special activities that seem always to be greatly enjoyed. The spring programs schedule will be available in early January and published on www.Maturango.org

Call 760-375-6900 to sign up for this program.



Spiders and Their Webs

Sherry Brubaker, Natural History Curator

This past month, when spooky decorations were beginning to appear, spider webs are usually high on the list of must haves. But does one ever stop and think about the types of webs there are? There are spirals, tangle or cobwebs, funnels, tubular, and sheets. The spirals include leaves or other plant material, the tangles are just that, long messy scatterings of sticky silk that we walk into. Funnels are usually near the ground where prey walks into them and get trapped. Same goes for the tubular ones. The sheets are flat looking ones with intricate spiral patterns.

The web design is not random; spiders build their webs to attract as well as capture their prey – mostly insects, but also small fish, and sometimes small birds. The silk is strong and sticky; when an insect gets tangled in the web the spider will quickly wrap the trapped meal in more silk to subdue it. After the spider feeds on this trapped meal the web has to be rebuilt. This process can occur several times a day. The elaborate webs are also a female spider's way of attracting a mate. Most male spiders never build a web.

It should be noted that a spider will build their web larger than themselves in order to increase the odds of capturing something for a meal. Building a web as a decoration makes one wonder just how large a spider would have to be to build one of such size.



November in the Gift Shop: "Double Dip Sundaes" for Museum Members

Enjoy 20% discount on Sundays throughout November. The Double Dipping begins November 5 and goes till November 26th.

If you're not a member call, come in, or go online to Maturango.org to purchase your membership.

Almost everything in the store qualifies with a few exceptions: books, playing cards, blankets, and DVDs.



Suggestions for Local Native American Venues

The petroglyph tours for which we have been justly famous have been temporarily on hold for quite a while now. The Coso Petroglyph site, known as the best petroglyph site for quantity and quality in the

western hemisphere, is located within the boundaries of the Naval Air Warfare Center, China Lake, which is the size of Rhode Island. Tours are by prior arrangement with the Navy. At this time, we have no indication from the Navy when tours might resume.

Here are some alternate suggestions; other sites for learning about the First Californians...

Coming from the south on Highway 14, check out: Antelope Valley Indian Museum, Palmdale (www.avim.parks.ca.gov, 661-946-6092). There is an amazing building built over a rock cliff, with stairs cut into the cliff face, which houses a former private Native American artifacts collection; and is now a state park. Gift shop, restrooms.

Coming up Highway 14, you'll find Red Rock Canyon State Park (661-942-0662, www.RedRockRRCIA.org), a good place to spend the night. (Dry camping.) There is a nice interpretive center. Check to see if ranger talks and nature walks are scheduled while you're there. The interpretive center features a small gift shop and displays of Native culture and local fossils. You are now only a 30 minute drive away from Ridgecrest.

In Ridgecrest is the Maturango Museum, with the China Lake Museum right next door. (Features military history of Navy base and some of the weapons developed there.) Both have gift shops, restrooms, and outdoor displays. A block south on China Lake Blvd. is Petroglyph Park, with reproductions of rock art where you can get up close. Picnic areas, restrooms.

Check in with us at the Maturango for more info on local points of interest--we have maps, brochures, etc. Outdoor areas include shaded picnic spots, botanical garden with walking trails, labyrinth, an historic bell, solar system model, human sundial, artistic sculptures based on petroglyphs, and a visitor's information kiosk.

Fossil Falls lies 30 minutes north of us, which does have a few glyphs but they're hard to find. As you go north on 395, just before Lone Pine is the Eastern Sierra Interagency Visitors Center. (760-876-7222.) I highly recommend a stop in there. Loads of great information, handouts for self-guided tours of Alabama Hills, etc.

The Lone Pine Film History Museum is also worth a stop (760-876-9909; www.lonepinefilmhistorymuseum.org). Then on to Independence, and the Eastern California Museum (760-878-0258; www.inyocounty.us/ecmuseum). Lovely collection of local Native basketry. Ask about their mile-long rabbit drive net, made of human hair! Nice to just walk around the grounds--they have moved old "ghost town" buildings and rusty antique equipment into their backyard; very pleasant to walk around.

Are you going to be in the Bishop area? You might enjoy looking up www.easternsierranevada.com and search for: Petroglyphs at Volcanic Tablelands.

Stop by either the White Mountain Ranger Station (351 Pacu Lane, Bishop) or the Bishop Visitor's Center (www.bishopvisitor.com; 690 N. Main St, 760-873-8405, Host@BishopVisitor.com) and ask for directions to Petroglyph Drive. Once you get there, you can drive up fairly close to the petroglyphs, then just a short walk. As with all petroglyph sites, please be respectful and do not touch the glyphs--the oils on your hands can degrade the rock over time. These places are of important cultural heritage to both Native Americans and visitors alike.

Also while you're in Bishop, check out the Paiute-Shoshone Cultural Center on Line Street--nice examples of local Native cultural items, including a full-sized wickiup. (760-873-8844.)



Take only photographs, leave only footprints.



Bodie Presentation

"The town, the people and the gold – history and tall tales from a California ghost town."

Thursday, November 9, 6:30 pm

Gary Staab will give a presentation on the ghost town of Bodie and the adventures he had there as a State Park aide.



In the summer of 1859, W. S. Bodey and 'Black' Taylor filed a claim after finding a placer deposit in the hills 10 miles north of Mono Lake, in what became known as the Bodie Mining District. This single and seemingly meek gold strike was to become the focus point of many prospectors over the next 15 years, each searching for that vein of gold which would make men rich. Meanwhile, other strikes like those in Virginia City, Aurora and Cerro Gordo competed for men and women seeking fame and fortune throughout the 1860's and into the 1870's.

Although the mining activity here was slow compared to other mining districts, it was relatively consistent. That all changed in 1875, when a very large deposit of gold ore was discovered by accident. Prospectors came by the hundreds, followed by saloon keepers and business proprietors of everything imaginable while investors stood in line to capture some of this new found wealth coming out of the hills around Bodie. This bonanza gave birth to a town of 1,000 buildings and 7,000 residents within two years that included a China town on the north end and a horse-race track on the south end of town.

Arrastras (a primitive mill for grinding and pulverizing (typically) gold or silver ore: its simplest form is two or more flat-bottomed drag stones placed in a circular pit paved with flat stones, and connected to a center post by a long arm) were replaced with state-of-the-art stamp mills with equipment that was transported from San Francisco via train and mule teams. The boilers that were used to power this equipment in the mills and mines required 20 cords of firewood each day that had to be harvested and brought to town originally by the Chinese and their mules. In 1881 a railway was built to bring wood up from the south side of Mono Lake to keep up with the demands of a growing community. However, within the first 12 months of the railway's operation, Bodie's population began to decline as new gold strikes became scarce.

Bodie's decline progressed with the help of two large fires and economic downturns resulting in mining being reduced to only the most productive of the mines on Bodie Bluff. In the face of economic hardships and a dwindling population, the Standard Mill and Mining Company sought out more efficient and less costly methods to operate and extract gold. In 1892, the mines and mill were converted to electricity and two years later, the cyanide process was introduced to recover additional gold.

All mining operations ceased in 1942 by order of the U.S. Government and most of the remaining people in town left to seek new employment. A handful of residents remained until the State of California purchased the town site and designated it a Historical Park in 1962.

Gary Staab, has worked as a Park Aide in Bodie the past two summers and will give an insider's presentation on both the history of this world-famous ghost town and what kind of adventures he experienced while living and working there.

Gary came to Ridgecrest in 1983 as the Administrator of Drummond Medical Group until 2002. While in Ridgecrest, Gary sat on several boards including Maturango Museum where he also served as a Petroglyph tour guide. In 2002, Gary relocated to Monterey County as an independent consultant specializing in health care delivery systems. Returning to Ridgecrest in 2017, Gary retired from health care after 50 years. His interests include the history and geology of the eastern sierras and preserving the history of the Indian Wells Valley.



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**Maturango Museum
of the IWV**

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

Open Mon - Sat 10 am – 5 pm,

Sunday noon – 4pm, (except major holidays)

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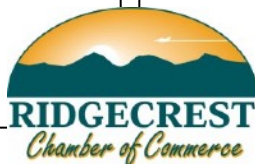
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**Pizza Factory and Beanster's Espresso
Fundraiser**

All day, Wednesday, November 8.
20% of your purchase is donated to the Maturango
Museum

**BEANSTER'S
ESPRESSO**

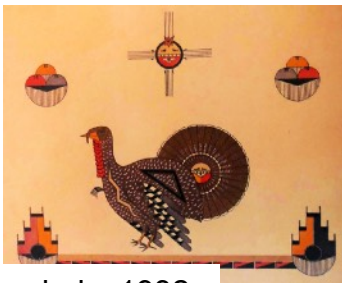
Upcoming and Ongoing Exhibits and Events

- Desert Artists' League "Creativity" Gallery Exhibit
 - November 4 – Dec 30, 2023, Maturango Museum
- Opening Reception Desert Artists' League "Creativity" Gallery Exhibit
 - Sunday, November 5, 2 – 4pm, Maturango Museum
- Bodie Lecture: Thursday, November 9, 6:30 pm
- Children" Hour: Friday, November 10, "Our Mountain Animal Neighbors"
- Free Saturday: Nov 11, 11am – 2pm. Activities being planned...

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Ridgecrest, CA 93555



November 2023 Newsletter



an symbols, 1932.
Ildefonso Pueblo.