

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

Dear March - Come in, How glad I am, I hoped for you before, Put down your hat, You must have walked, How out of breath you are -- Emily Dickenson

As we enter a time of seasonal change, the greening of our hills and the blooming flowers, though somewhat unusual, remind us of the living that has been carrying on all winter. One cannot help but feel that change is now on the move. The early flowers that cannot seem to wait, are giving us the energy to appreciate and enjoy them. I enjoy seeing our gardens come to a greater activity as the lizards spend more days in the sun as the sand and rocks become warmer. The plant life under the care of our garden volunteers, showing us daily how pleasant it is to walk through the paths. The occasional cottontail silent under a creosote and our attendant hummingbird sitting at the very top of a desert willow. The work done by the volunteers is worth so very much and is appreciated by all.

We have work we continue to do, both inside the museum and out, and we appreciate the support and donations from our membership to insure they happen. We have so many positive irons in the fire right now and it is the membership that makes it happen. We also appreciate the work of the docents and volunteers to put on events to support and encourage families to come visit. This is for our community and its visitors and we are glad to be able to share.

On March 23 at 3pm we have our Annual Membership meeting. Hope to see you!

Be well, take care and enjoy the Spring vistas!

Museum Annual Meeting - Saturday, March 23 at 3 pm

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.

See the biographies for the 5
nominated board members
at the end of this newsletter.

Children's Hour – Birds' Fantastic Feathers
Friday March 15, 10:30 - 11:30 am.



Stories and activities will feature the ***Fantastic Feathers*** of birds and the amazing ways they help birds to fly and do so many birdy things. The children will learn that whether flying high in the sky, diving deep in water, or sliding across ice and snow to swim in the cold, cold ocean, birds use feathers in special ways to reach the food they need to live. How do feathers keep birds warm or dry? What do birds do to take care of their feathers when they become tattered and old? Of the many different kinds (species) of birds that live here or visit in the winter their bodies can be large or small, legs short or long, beaks shaped for the food they eat. Each kind of birds' feathers may be different colors, but all have similar kinds to do particular jobs. Everything about birds, including their feathers, is indeed amazing!

Families and young children are welcomed to the Children's Hour **free monthly programs**, September - May. Great stories, action songs, exploring exhibits on the Discovery Table, and a fun craft all promise an especially enjoyable morning. On the schedule for April 26, 2024 are Bees, Humming Birds, & Butterflies - Wildflowers' Pollinators.

Docent Doings

By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator

The Docent League of the Maturango Museum is remarkable; members hosted and delivered programs to over 500 people in January!

At our February meeting Shirley Crouse and Bob Parker provided training on many of our local reptiles. On Free Saturday Greg Watson presented his program on reptiles. It was standing room only that afternoon! Greg told us that the Mojave rattlesnakes here have only neurotoxins (act on the nervous system) while the Mojave snakes in Arizona have both neurotoxins and hemotoxins (act on the cardiovascular system).

Several fun activities are planned for the next few months. Our March Free Saturday will feature a craft activity creating a frame with a selection of dried flowers inside the frame. We will celebrate the vernal (spring) equinox on that Saturday March 9, although the actual equinox occurs on Tuesday, March 19.

On March 15 at 10:30 the Children's Hour team will present a story hour on Birds. The docents will also have training on Birds at our monthly meeting on March 5.

For Free Saturday in April, Melanie Branson, a biology/zoology teacher at the high school, is planning many activities to celebrate Earth Day. There will be craft activities and information on birds, gardening, and water conservation; experienced "specialists" will join us. Earth Day is actually on Monday April 22 but we will celebrate early on April 13.

Many docents will participate in the Wildflower Exhibit and all the preparation needed before the event on April 5, 6, and 7. Some of us will collect the plants and then bottle the samples for display. All of this is done by April 5 so the exhibit is ready. If you are interested in helping to bottle the flower specimens please let me know. It is a fun learning experience!

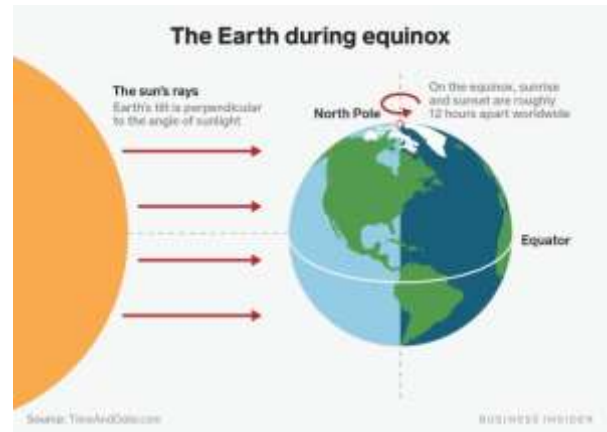
We welcome and need new docents. If you are interested in joining us, please call me, Nora, at the Museum, or come to our next docent meeting on March 5, 10am at the Museum.

Spring Equinox Event

Free Saturday March 9, 11 –2 pm

The Maturango Museum is celebrating the Spring equinox on Saturday, March 9th from 11 to 2pm. We will have a sun/earth/moon model to view, a craft and if weather permits, astronomers from China Lake Astronomical Society 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" and daylight and night are almost equal in length in most time zones in the world.



The Spring 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. This equinox is also called the vernal or spring equinox.

For those in the southern hemisphere, this equinox marks the autumnal or fall equinox and the beginning of fall.

The craft for this event is a pressed flower suncatcher.

Recent Donations

Donations

Anonymous
Margaret Anderson
Dan and Brenda Burnett
Shirley Fisher
Pat Gooch
Jim and Janet Haney
Elaine Janson
Sandy and Fran Rogers
Carolyn and James Shepherd
Jim and Deanna Stewart

Jim and Tammy Tucker
Patricia Wharton
Ken Whetzel

Building Fund

Robert Westbrook

Paleolithic Display

Bob and Paula Westbrook
Sherry Brubaker

New Members

Rebekah Herrera
Michele Leonard
Steve and Sharon Oldfield
Chris and Phyllis Stewart
Rich and Marilyn Toborg
Danny Tyree

New Premium Members

Robert and Beverly Charlton
Howard and Linda McCauley

Searles Valley Historical Society Museums Field Trip

Saturday, March 23

Have you ever driven through Trona on your way to someplace else, passing all the wonderful museums and wished you could stop and take a look? I know I have thought about it, but it can sometimes be hard to do spur of the moment since several of the museum buildings are open by appointment only. Guess what? We've made those appointments for this trip.

Come with us to the Searles Valley Historical Society Museums. We'll be visiting the Fire Museum, History House, Trona Railway Museum and Caboose, and the Old Guest House Museum. Docents will be on-hand at each location to guide us through their rich history and their exhibits. Want to peruse at your own pace? You can do that as well during the time we are at each area.

Our journey will start at the Maturango Museum and we'll drive over to Trona through Poison Canyon. Oh by the way, did you know that the "real name" of Poison Canyon is Salt Wells Canyon? I didn't. I've already learned something.

We'll make a brief stop at the Trona Pinnacles turn off to view two monuments; John Searles' Freight Wagon Route Monument and the Epsom Salts Monorail Monument. If you want to learn more about the Epsom Salts Monorail, Maturango Museum has a great book on this subject.



From there we'll continue to the Fire Museum. Inside this museum are two antique fire engines, a 1924 Stutz and a 1938 Ahren-Fox. Displays in the Fire Museum include 20 photographs of major fires in Argus, Borosolvay, and Trona and other fire memorabilia.



We'll then make a quick stop at the Trona Rest Stop to take care of business and proceed to the History House, Caboose, and Railway Museum.

The History House is one of the oldest residential houses in Trona (built around 1920) and is a treasure trove of items from yesteryear. The Trona Railway Museum displays artifacts from the Trona Railway and the Caboose will be open to those able to navigate the steep stairs to get in and out.

We will then return to the Trona Rest Stop for lunch. The kiosk at the Rest Stop was a joint project of the BLM Ridgecrest Office and the Searles Valley Historical Society. There are 16 panels that have information about the local area, local mining, local history, sightseeing and recreational opportunities, and desert safety.

After lunch we'll head to our final stop, the Old Guest House Museum.

This building was built around 1917 and is one of the oldest buildings in Searles Valley. Originally it was built as four apartments and was remodeled as a guest house with twelve rooms for visitors to Trona. The twelve rooms show events in Searles Valley from the early mining days to present plant ownership. Since this is our final stop, once you have finished viewing all the cool "stuff", you can head home, we just ask that you let the of the Field Trip leader know you are leaving.



9am: meet at the Maturango Museum for check in. Participants will be required to sign a liability waiver. Car caravan will be organized and for those that want to carpool, we'll figure it out there.

The cost is \$25 for museum members (\$40 for 2 adult members), \$30 nonmembers (\$50 for 2 adults). Pets are not allowed. Buy tickets at <https://shop.maturango.org/field-trip-searles-valley-historical-society-museums-may-13-2023/> or come to the Maturango Museum Store.

Be sure you have enough gas (less than 100 miles round trip), car and tires in good running order.

Usual dress code for field trips applies: hat, sunscreen, comfortable walking shoes, layered clothing, water, and camera (although some of the buildings ask no photographs). It is better to have these items and not need them, than need them and not have them.

Bring a picnic lunch to eat while we are at the Trona Rest Stop.

2024 Wildflower Exhibit
Friday April 5 – Sunday April 7
Admission - \$2.00



Every spring the Maturango Museum hosts the annual Wildflower Exhibit so 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 then set onto tables according to their family. This allows visitors to have a close-up view of the many wildflowers from this area – all in one room!

The exhibit features annual wildflowers and flowering shrubs. The annual wildflowers include species from the tiny white cryptantha (forget-me-nots), to the bright and showy coreopsis (bright yellow wildflower). Shrubs such as the creosote bush and desert senna are also on display. Each species is identified by a group of professional botanists and labeled with its common and scientific name.

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

In addition to seeing the wildflowers, the Maturango Museum has multiple speakers during this year's Wildflower Exhibit.

Friday, April 5 at 6:30 pm, local Glenn Harris will give a presentation on "Holocene Climate Change - How Plants Have Responded."

Saturday, April 6, at 2 pm, Kimberly Schaefer, a master's student studying Botany at Claremont Graduate University and California Botanic Garden, will give a presentation on her study area - the Sacatar Trail Wilderness. The title of the presentation is, "A Vascular Flora of the Sacatar Trail Wilderness, Southern Sierra Nevada, CA."

Sunday, April 7 at 1pm, Eugene Albitre from Bakersfield will give a presentation on Ethnobotany. His presentation is sponsored by the Arts Council of Kern.

Sunday, April 7 at 2pm, Sean Navejas from Bakersfield will give a presentation on the project, "Common Ground." His presentation is sponsored by the Arts Council of Kern.

With the winter rains we have received thus far, this spring promises a colorful and fragrant display of wildflowers for this exhibit!

Holocene Climate Change - How Have Plants Responded
Presented by Glenn Harris on Friday, April 5, 2024 at 6:30pm

Climate change seems to be a hot topic recently. With projections ranging from a crispy burned up earth to an impending ice age. The earth has gone through several climate swings in the past and from these we can learn how plants have responded. The presentation will include a quick tutorial on the glacial periods, theories as to their cause, the climate of the current Holocene epoch and how civilizations have reacted to temperature changes of the epoch. The discussion will include information on vegetation at the end of the last major glaciation. This will be compared to current vegetation. The author will discuss what we have learned and how we can project future trends. The author has spent most of his life observing natural ecosystems. For the last nearly 50 years he has been working in the region. His illustrated talk will include tables, maps, illustrations and photographs of many plants and landscapes.

The last million years are referred to as the Pleistocene period by geologists. It has been labeled a period of Ice ages. The last major Ice age was the Wisconsin glaciation which existed from 60 thousand to 13 thousand years ago. In the Sierra Nevada Mountains the last major glaciation was the Tioga and Reeces Peak period which ran from 28 thousand years ago to 13 thousand years ago. Since that time, we have been in an interglacial period called the Holocene epoch. The Holocene epoch has been characterized by cyclic swings between warm periods and little ice ages.

Scientists have been able to reconstruct prehistoric plants using pollen imbedded in silt and clay deposits in lakes and rat middens. We find that plants have stayed in similar life zones over time, and the life zones have migrated up the mountain slopes or farther north over time. These movements have resulted in new open niches for new species to invade. It has also resulted in disjunct and fragmented populations of some species. This has sometimes been referred to as the island in the sky effect. Looking at the past and current conditions and using a knowledge of plant physiology one can make projections about plant responses to climate changes.

Glenn Harris is a fifth generation Californian. He graduated from Humboldt State College (now University) with a Bachelor's Degree in Rangeland Management, he has a degree minor in Geology and has completed extensive graduate work in Wildland Hydrology. He also has a degree in Administration of Justice from the Riverside Community College.

He started work for the Bureau of Land Management in 1974 as a Desert Ranger and Range Conservationist working in the eastern Kern County area. In 1989, he was reclassified as a Natural Resources Specialist. He worked for nearly 24 years in that position as the BLM expert in Botany, Soils, Water Resources, Hydrology, Air Quality, Range Management, and Fire Management. He served on the Indian Wells Valley Cooperative Groundwater Management Group and chaired the technical advisory committee. He taught courses at the BLM National Training center in Phoenix and in field locations through the western states. He has received numerous awards for his work including the Department of the Interior's Distinguished Service Award, its highest award. He retired from the Bureau of Land Management in 2013 with nearly 39 years of federal service and continues to live in the valley.

He is familiar with the desert area having worked in the region for over 45 years, 39 of them for BLM. He is currently chairman of the Kern County Weed Management Area group. He also serves as a volunteer with the BLM and a docent with the Maturango Museum. With the museum, he takes environmental education into the classroom and public groups giving talks on Geology, earthquakes, volcanoes, and insects. He has worked with the Annual Wildflower Show as both a collector and Taxonomist identifying collected specimens for many years. He has been a volunteer for the Sand Canyon Environmental Education Program (SEEP) since its beginning working both the plant and aquatics stations.

A Vascular Flora of the Sacatar Trail Wilderness, Southern Sierra Nevada, CA. Presented by Kim Schaefer on Saturday, April 6 at 2pm

Kim Schaefer, a master's student studying Botany at Claremont Graduate University and California Botanic Garden will be giving a presentation on her location of study, the Sacatar Trail Wilderness.

The Sacatar Trail Wilderness (STW), approximately 20 miles northwest of Ridgecrest, CA, occupies a unique ecological transition zone. This part of the southeast Sierra Nevada occurs at the interface of the vast Mojave Desert, Great Basin Floristic Province, and highly diverse California Floristic Province. The 90 mi² area encompasses a significant elevational gradient from 3,500 to nearly 9,000 feet, and supports a diverse array of vegetation communities, from creosote scrub to montane meadows. The STW is a "botanical black hole," an area with little to no previous documentation of the plants that occur there. The absence of weather stations within the STW make it difficult to understand the precise microclimates its plants are subject to, especially considering that conditions vary within such a wide elevational range. With more study, this region of the eastern Sierra could potentially serve as a setting for future research on plant migration in response to climate change.

Over the course of two years, (2022 & 2023), Kim made a total of 27 trips to the STW and collected 1,496 plant specimens representing 73 plant families and 400+ minimum rank taxa. Several new populations of rare taxa were found, including Chimney Creek threadplant (*Nemacladus calcaratus*), Nine Mile Canyon phacelia (*Phacelia novemmillensis*), and DeDecker's clover (*Trifolium dedeckerae*). All specimens collected as part of this research will be deposited and preserved in multiple herbaria, and corresponding data will be shared with the Consortium of California Herbaria (CCH2) database portal to be utilized by scientists and the public.

Kim always knew she wanted to study plants. She grew up in the Pacific Northwest and spent her summers hiking and picking wild berries in the Cascade Mountains. She moved to California to earn her B.S. degree in Biology with an emphasis in Botany from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona in 2018. She went on to work for California Botanic Garden as a Field Botany Technician and later as a Seed Conservation Technician, where she fell in love with California's rugged desert habitats. After defending her thesis research later this year, Kim hopes to work towards a Ph.D. in Plant Ecology and eventually become a research professor specializing in desert plant communities. Outside of schoolwork, Kim loves hiking, camping, road trips, and spending time with her two younger sisters and her fiancé.

Ethnobotany

Presented by Gene Albitre on Sunday April 7, 1 pm

On April 7, 2024, Gene Albitre, a retired Native American spiritual leader, will give a presentation on Ethnobotany. Ethnobotany is the study of a region's plants and their practical uses through the traditional knowledge of a local culture and people. What plants were utilized by the Native Americans in this area? Gene will answer this question and others.

Gene grew up on a ranch outside of Bakersfield. Since the age of 14, Gene has worked all aspects of rawhide, using buffalo, elk, deer, and other animal skins. His Native American culture has taught him to work on animals so that nothing would be wasted. He crafts rattles, drums cookware, and practices the art of beading. He is a writer and presenter and believes that gaining a better understanding of the past will reflect on our connection with nature and the world at large.

Through his leadership and practice of the arts, Gene helps to preserve the legacy and facilitate connection among the Native American peoples and to educate others on the history and significance of Native American Culture in modern times. He is one of the four Common Ground artists sponsored by the Arts Council of Kern, the Creative Corps, and the California Arts Council.

Common Ground

Presentation by Sean Navejas on Sunday, April 7, 2 pm

Common Ground, a dynamic initiative orchestrated by the Arts Council of Kern, stands as a vibrant celebration of Native American arts and culture. This program brings together a quartet of exceptionally talented indigenous artists: Alan Salazar, Gene Albitre, Lori Myers, and Sean Navejas. Common Ground's mission is to foster appreciation and understanding of Native American artistry through a series of educational events and outreach activities. Throughout the program's duration, these artists will embark on a journey throughout Kern County, sharing their rich heritage, knowledge, and artistic skills, and illuminating the profound cultural significance behind their work. Common Ground is a testament to the power of art to promote unity among diverse communities, while also preserving and celebrating the invaluable traditions of Native American cultures.

Sean Navejas, is a dynamic photographer/videographer from Bakersfield, California. His journey began as a production assistant at Andher Visuals in Los Angeles, where he refined his skills in the world of visual storytelling. Sean moved back to Bakersfield and became a full-time content creator for Fineline, boosting their business and gaining thousands of views. Today, as the full-time videographer for the Arts Council of Kern, Sean combines his passion for storytelling and art, capturing the essence of local talent through his lens and inspiring the community.

Sean is one of the four Common Ground artists sponsored by the Arts Council of Kern, the Creative Corps, and the California Arts Council.

Conservation in the IWV: Birds, Gardens, and Water
Earth Day Activities and Information
Saturday April 13, 11am- 2pm

Would you like to learn more about birds, wildlife, and plants in our Indian Wells Valley (IWV)? Come to Maturango Museum to learn more about local birds and other wildlife, sustainable vegetable gardens, gardening with native plants, and providing vital water access for birds in our high desert. Crafts, art, and game challenges will be available for all ages, too.

Owens Valley Fish Hatchery Field Trip
Saturday April 13 with Terry Mitchell

As a child, my parents took me on lots of different field trips expanding my knowledge and love of many different subjects. Some of my favorite places to visit were fish hatcheries. As a parent and grandparent, I made sure to continue that legacy of sharing knowledge and experience by taking my kids, and later my grandkids to the Owens Valley to visit the fish hatcheries. Going to the fish hatchery, learning, viewing, and feeding the fish has always been an experience that brings a smile to my face, even as an adult.

Come with us on April 13 to visit the two operating fish hatcheries in the Owens Valley. We'll be visiting Fish Springs and Black Rock Fish Hatcheries. California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) personnel will be available.

Our journey will start at the Maturango Museum and arrange carpools (if people want to carpool) and ultimately head north on 395 to the Owens Valley trying to stay together as much as possible without annoying others on the road. We'll stop at the Interagency Center just before Lone Pine to use the facilities and look around a bit (about 45 minutes). The Interagency Center has a lot of information and if you feel that you need more time to peruse, I encourage you to do that after we've completed our last stop at Black Rock Fish Hatchery and you are heading back to Ridgecrest where you'll travel at your own speed. The Interagency Center closes at 4:30pm, gates close at 4:15pm.

From the Interagency Center we'll again head north on 395 to Fish Springs Fish Hatchery. The plan is to go to our northern-most destination and then make the additional stop on our way south back towards Ridgecrest.

Fish Springs Fish Hatchery was originally constructed in 1952; in 1972 the Hatchery was modernized to a system of concrete raceways where water is supplied by two groundwater wells. Constructed in 2009, the facility's hatchery building houses a total of twenty deep tanks. The building is primarily used to hatch out eyed eggs which are received from other facilities and rearing the resulting fry (approximately 2 inches long) until they are large enough to be moved to the outdoor raceways. In the raceways you'll find fish grouped together by size. Fish Springs raises fish year-round and "plants" the fish from April to October. Restroom facilities are available at Fish Springs.



From Fish Springs Hatchery we'll head south on 395 about 12 miles, making a stop at the Division Creek Caltrans Rest Area to eat lunch at the picnic area. Prior to leaving the rest area we'll use the bathroom facilities because there are not reliable facilities for public use at Black Rock Fish Hatchery. I guess they are always having issues with the plumbing. When we leave the Division Creek Caltrans Rest Area we will again head south on 395 to Black Rock Fish Hatchery on the eastern side of 395. It is only about 5 miles.

Black Rock Fish Hatchery was once called Black Rock Rearing Ponds. The ponds were created (1941) when the Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (LADWP) built a dam for diversion purposes near the source of Black Rock

Springs. The ponds were stocked with 450,000 rainbow fingerlings and though some doubted success, in the following spring, 274,385 trout, averaging 5" in length, were planted from the ponds. In 1976 Black Rock Fish Hatchery had its own modernization of a system of concrete raceways constructed that increased the capacity and ease of loading, cleaning and care of the trout. The old rearing pond became the hatchery's broodstock pond. Visiting there this past spring I saw some of the most beautiful (and big) rainbows I've ever seen in my life.

CDFW personnel will be available at both operating Fish Hatchery locations.

Black Rock Fish Hatchery is our "final stop" of the organized tour. Since this is our "final stop", once you have seen everything you want to see you are welcome to head back to Ridgecrest, we just ask that you let the Leader of the Field Trip know you are leaving.

As you head south on 395 back to Ridgecrest there are some potential places to stop. Since Black Rock Fish Hatchery does not have reliable bathroom facilities for the public, just a few miles south in Independence are a couple of places that you can stop and use the facilities.

If you want to let the kids play, Dehy Park in Independence is a great option. The bathroom facilities are normally clean and there is playground equipment. Also, Independence Creek runs along the north side of the park. Be sure to watch the kids around the water if you make this stop. There is a bridge that crosses the creek.

Another option in Independence is the Eastern California Museum. It is not on the main drag (hwy 395) but easy to find. If you have never been there this is a great stop. The bathroom facilities are clean and they have lots of cool stuff, including an extensive native basket collection.

In Lone Pine there is of course the Interagency Center at the south end of town. Remember, Interagency Center closes at 4:30pm (gate gets closed at 4:15).

Saturday April 13, 7:30am: meet at the Maturango Museum for check in. Participants will be required to sign a liability waiver. Car caravan will be organized and for those that want to carpool, we'll figure it out there. Families are encouraged.

The cost is \$25 for museum members (\$40 for 2 adult members), \$30 nonmembers (\$50 for 2 adults). Pets are not allowed. Sign up at <https://maturango.org/event/fish-hatchery-trip-along-395/#tribe-tickets> [tickets-form](#) or come to the Maturango Museum Store.

Usual dress code for field trips applies: hat, sunscreen, comfortable walking shoes, layered clothing, water, camera. It is better to have these items and not need them, than need them and not have them.

Will be walking on uneven ground to get to the fish runways and facilities. Parking area also uneven ground. Be sure you have enough gas (without side trips, 250 miles round trip), car and tires in good running order.

Bring a picnic lunch to eat while we are at the Division Creek Caltrans Rest Area. Water, snacks, lunch, etc. No alcohol.

Cancellation Policy: If the Museum cancels your trip, you will be given a full refund or you may transfer the money to a different trip. No cash refunds will be given if you cancel.

Frances Nichols' Retrospective Art Legacy Gallery Exhibit January 6 – March 31, 2024



The artwork in this exhibit will include many subjects from around the world painted over a lifetime of experience. The art will be for sale but mostly this will be an experience to view a body of work from a very lovely lady with outstanding talent. The paintings are made in watercolor, pastels and oils – some framed, some not.



Frances Nichols passed away a few years ago and left an abundant amount of artwork. Her family has been gracious to share her artwork with us. The spirit of this exhibit is to spread Fran's Art Legacy to people who like and appreciate her work.



For her 2020 exhibit at the museum, Frances said, "My passion is landscape. I try to etch a memory of a place, beginning with an idea of the finished piece, but leaving myself open to the work evolving. I work in plein-air on site or from my own photos in the tradition of the early California Impressionists. Realistic representation is balanced with Impressionistic play of light and color on the landscape. For me, the landscape is a prism where the time of day can transform the light moving through it into constantly changing color.

My subject matter is the Indian Wells Valley, Owens Valley, Antelope Valley, and the Eastern Sierras, ranging from desert washes, mountain canyons, to the explosion of spring color in the desert.



This exhibit includes works in pastel, oil, watercolor and gouache. As the song says, 'Love the one you're with!'

I enjoy working in all media and my favorite is the one I'm using that day. I do love the immediacy of pastel with its instant color and layering, and the drama underpaintings can bring, but I also like the richness of oil and the fresh luminosity of watercolor."



Pizza Factory and Beanster's Espresso Fundraiser

All day, Wednesday, March 13.

20% of your purchase is donated to the Maturango Museum

You must mention this fundraiser when ordering.



“Glimpses Thru Time; Early 1900s”

The exhibit in the Sylvia Winslow Gallery includes information on the construction of the Los Angeles Aqueduct from 1908 - 1913. The aqueduct construction attracted many workers to the eastern sierras. Once the Nevada and California Railroad (now the Southern Pacific) lines were established, Brown (Railroad Siding #18) became a construction camp for the Los Angeles Aqueduct and grew in population to between 2,000 and 3,000 people. A post office was established in 1909, and the town of Brown drew in business and homesteaders. The aqueduct workers left the area in 1913 after the completion of the aqueduct and the population dwindled to 50 in 1920.

Further north toward Little Lake are the Coso Hot Springs. Long before people of European descent came to the Indian Wells Valley, local Shoshonean tribes used the bubbling mud and highly mineralized waters of Coso Hot Springs for therapeutic purposes. By the early 20th century a health resort was flourishing there. In the 1920s the water was bottled and billed as the “finest in the world for arthritis, rheumatism, sinus, stomach ulcers, asthma, acute gastritis, and all kidney and liver ailments.” Today, the Coso Operating Company leases the land from the Navy and produces about 145 net megawatts of power using geothermal energy directed to Southern California Edison.

This current exhibit, “Glimpses Thru Time”, combines a small fraction from previous historical exhibits created by the museum’s former History Curator, Liz Babcock. Over Liz’s 13 years as History Curator, she created and displayed over 15 different historical exhibits for the Maturango Museum. For this current exhibit, we bring back the popular “Town of Brown” exhibit and add “Aqueduct”, “Coso Hot Springs” and “Early Indian Wells Valley” exhibits.



Maturango Rocky Hill Rock Art Weekend Saturday, April 13 and Sunday, April 14



Join Maturango Museum on a special weekend field trip to Rocky Hill, a Yokuts pictograph and village site near Exeter CA. This is a rare opportunity to visit this closed preserve on day 1 and an adjacent private ranch site on day 2. The Preserve is owned by the Archeological Conservancy. Guided by site stewards, we will explore and learn about the numerous pictographs, painted caves, and village features in this large granite outcrop, still a living and used sacred site to the Yokuts people. Our site steward will also guide us to some rock art sites in nearby Sequoia National Forest on Sunday afternoon.

Cost: \$200 per person for Maturango members, \$275 per person for non-members; includes fees for our guides and a donation to the Archeological Conservancy. You may register for the trip at the Maturango Museum website’s Online Store <https://maturango.org/event/maturango-rocky-hill-rock-art-weekend-trip/> or by calling our museum store at 760-375-6900. Limit 12 participants.

**Maturango Museum
of the IWW**

100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555
Open Mon - Sat 10 am – 5 pm,
Sunday noon – 4pm, (except major holidays)

Staff

Debbie Benson, Museum Director
Maureen Goff, Store Manager/Buyer
Barbara Bane, M.A., RPA, Archaeology Curator
Molly Dickinson, Curation Technician
Elaine Wiley, History Curator
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The Nominating Committee is pleased to forward five candidate statements for the three vacant positions for this year's Board of Trustees election. The biographies are in alphabetical order by first name.

Thanks,

Diane Foucher

Nominating Committee Chair

Robert (Bob) McGowan

I am a 50+ year resident of the Indian Wells Valley (IWV) where as a child I attended local schools and eventually started a career at the Naval Air Warfare Center, China Lake. I worked for 37 years in Information Technology, supervision, and management before retiring a little over 5 years ago. I currently volunteer with several non-profits in the IWV and I have been a regular volunteer at the Maturango Museum since 2016. In 2021 I was asked to serve on the Board of Trustees to fill in for a member who left unexpectedly. In addition to being a member of the Board of Trustees, I have held the positions of Vice President and President during my tenure.

The museum has a great team of staff, docents, and volunteers who give countless hours to the betterment of the organization. Over the years, I have had the pleasure of helping them with many different projects including construction of new displays, installing new air conditioning units on the annex building, performing building maintenance, and working in the garden. The Maturango Museum has a wonderful legacy within the community and I would like to be part of the leadership team to continue building on the great things that have been accomplished since the museum's inception in 1962.

Mick Benton Bio

I was born in Ridgecrest in 1954 and attended grade school and high school here as well. During my younger years, we spent much of our free time as a family in the nearby outdoors, including camping, hiking and backpacking in the Sierras. I went on to earn a BS degree in Physics at UCSB, and later in my career an MBA degree from UCLA. The first 10 years of my career were spent at National Semiconductor Corp in Santa Clara/Silicon Valley. I then had an opportunity to move back to the Ridgecrest area and worked an additional 31 years at NAWC China Lake, primarily as a system engineer, but also held branch head and team lead positions, including a 2-year assignment as a science advisor to the Surface Navy in Washington DC. All of the positions had their challenges but I enjoyed them very much. I finally called it quits and retired in 2019 after a total of 41 years of employment.

Retirement has been enjoyable as well, and I have spent much of it finishing all those homeowner projects I put off until I retired. When I heard the Maturango Museum was looking for tour guides a few years ago, I took the required petroglyph training and first aid classes and became an associate tour guide for visitor trips to Little Petroglyph Canyon on the Navy's north ranges. After helping with a few petroglyph tours, the Covid pandemic arrived and caused the Navy to put a hold on those trips, but I am hopeful they can be resumed soon. While the Navy holds those cards, I would like to do whatever I can as a museum trustee to help facilitate their return. In closing, I believe I have the skills and maturity necessary to be a member of the museum board. I am also easy to work with, get along well with others, and am interested in helping set future direction for the museum.

Dan Burnett

Dan Burnett was born and raised in Los Angeles area. He graduated from Cal State Long Beach with a degree in Political Science followed with graduate work in Business Administration at Cal State and USC. He worked as a civil service employee in several administrative positions for the US Army and the Navy. After retiring from the Naval Weapons Center he somehow ended up working as a field biologist with DUDEK and a few other firms.

A member of the Maturango Museum since the early 1970's, Dan has been actively involved as a volunteer since 1984 and is presently the Vice president of the Board of Trustees. A fairly good birder and an avid reader he uses spare time to camp and serves on the boards of the Ridgecrest Chamber Music Society and the Kerncrest Audubon Society.

Patty Wharton

I moved to the valley in 1967 and have lived here since. I earned an AS, in electronics technology, from Cerro Coso, before completing my BS in management with Emery Riddle. I started my career in electronics at Texas Instruments in 1969 and moved to civil service 1995, when TI closed its doors. AT NAWC, I was a member of the Electronic Warfare Team on the F18 program until retirement in 2012.

I have always loved the history of the valley and how it has evolved over time. My interests include, the wildflowers of our area, the mountains/hiking and backpacking. I have always loved visiting the museum and enjoy the exhibits. I believe the museum continues to improve with more exhibits and activities to be shared with the public.

I am an active member of the Rotary Club of China Lake and served as President in 2012-2013; and went on to serve as Assistant Governor after. I have also served as the Rotary Interact Director, of the BHS Interact Club, our local youth Rotary, as well as other director positions.

I love being able to give back to our community, and I believe serving on the Museum Board is another way to highlight/serve our community and its history.

Ted Fiske

I have deep roots in the Indian Wells Valley having arrived to work on the base in the summer of 1981. I was a Contracting Officer in the Procurement Department until I retired in 2010. Since then I've worked as a contractor primarily with acquisition support for the F/A-18 Program.

Besides working on the base, I have been involved with the Music team at the Methodist Church and previously with local theater. I've always enjoyed living in the desert and found it a good break from the hectic city life. I would like to support Maturango Museum in sharing our unique desert environment with its members and visitors.

I have a daughter and her family in Logan, UT and sisters in Southern California as well as nephews and nieces scattered around.

Dance the yellow,
Spring the green,
We have **wildflowers** to be seen.



Lavender, orange, pink and white,
Thanks to rain and warm sunlight.



From all over the Indian Wells Valley
they do come,
to the **Maturango Museum!**



April 5 to April 7,
Join us for a bit of wildflower heaven.

Upcoming and Ongoing Exhibits and Events

- Free Saturday: March 9, Spring Equinox activities, 11am – 2pm
- Pizza Factory and Beanster's Espresso Fundraiser: All day, Wednesday, March 13
- Children's Hour: Birds - Friday, March 15, 10:30 – 11:30am
- Museum Annual Meeting: Saturday, March 23, 3pm
- Searles Valley Historical Society Museums Field Trip: Saturday, March 23
- Annual Wildflower Exhibit: weekend of April 5 – 7
- Free Saturday April 13: Earth Day and local Conservation activities, 11am – 2pm
- Owens Valley Fish Hatchery Field Trip: Saturday April 13
- Rocky Hill Rock Art Weekend Field Trip: Saturday, April 13 and Sunday, April 14
- Frances Nichols' Art Legacy Gallery Exhibit: January 6 – March 31, 2024

Maturango Museum
100 E Las Flores
Ridgecrest, CA 93555



March 2024 Newsletter