

Maturango Museum 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

By Debbie Benson, Director

December is that time where we celebrate our journey through another calendar year and our friends and family. After we celebrate the Winter Solstice our days will begin to lengthen again. Because of our recent rains the desert is greening and we are actively pulling sticker weeds and hoping for flowers in the Spring.

We have so many things to celebrate at the Museum! We celebrate our Members and the Volunteers who make so much possible. If you are wondering what to give for gifts, think about memberships for those who might like the gentle push to belong; and the membership comes with a Gift Store discount all year long!

We celebrate everyone who makes a difference. Our members and volunteers make a difference in the culture of Ridgecrest and we welcome those who want to contribute not only to the Maturango Museum but to Ridgecrest and its neighbors. If you have some time to donate, come see us - we are all better together!

We are enjoying our monthly events. Free 2nd Saturday continues to be a great opportunity for families to come to the Museum. The Docents continue to be the best source of fun information for the kids. Keep an eye on our events calendar for our activities! The monthly newsletter also lists activities and events at the Museum; see www.maturango.org to sign up for the newsletter or come in to the gift store.

We have a campaign for our Fundraising Bricks; buy your own piece of history as a gift for yourself or your people!

Have a great December, please be safe as you explore our desert and its beauty.

Take Care and Be Well!

Holiday Gift Giving is Easy with a Gift Certificate from the Maturango Museum



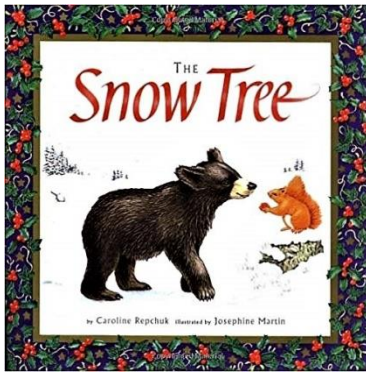
Buy a Brick is Back!... Missed it last time? Now's Your Chance.

The QR code takes you directly to Maturango's Fundraising Brick's
online ordering.

This Brick Campaign ends on December 31, 2025. Thanks!

<https://maturango.org/fundraising-bricks/>





**Children's Hour: "Snow Tree" – A Tradition! –
Animals Gather Gifts from Nature to Decorate a Winter
Tree for All to Enjoy!
Friday December 5, 10:30 – 11:30am**

Young children and their families are welcome to come enjoy educational and fun stories, as well as creative activities.

Through the featured story, "The Snow Tree" by Caroline Repchuk, the children will hear a tale of friendship, sharing, and appreciation of nature's gifts. Repeating the animals' actions by

decorating a special snowy tree has become a much-loved tradition. Another wintry story, singing with bells for each child, and a fun craft will round out a joyous morning for everyone!



Free Saturday December 13: Clay project

For Free Saturday on Dec. 13 docents plan to have participants make ornaments/winter symbols from Sculpey Clay. Docents activities on Free Saturday begin at 11am and end at 2pm.

Docent Doings

By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator

What a wonderful, busy day docents had with about 25 children from Trona on Nov.10. The students came at 9am, broke for lunch at the park at 11:30, and returned to the Museum from 12:30 to 2:45 pm.

Terry McGuire and Fran Kelty presented programs in the Beth Armogida Planetarium while other docents taught about our solar system. Students used stick-on stars to make copies of some of the constellations. Then they studied the outdoor solar system model and searched for the planets to answer question card prompts. Children love the outdoor solar system model. Glenn Harris presented a program on rocks and geology in the afternoon. Sherry Brubaker gave a "fossil" tour through the El Paso Exhibit Room. Then the students dug for fossils located in small fossil kits we had purchased. A lot of learning in one day! So many docents volunteered; Thank you to Terry McGuire, Fran Kelty, Bob and Sue Parker, Ingrid Carroll, Glenn Harris, Susan Moore, Dave Kurdeka, and Shirley Crouse. Thank you to Sherry Brubaker, Museum Natural History Curator for contributing her time and expertise. Thank you also to Barbara Ingle, our weekend Museum assistant for stepping in and helping us that day.

Thirty-six 2nd graders from Vieweg Stem School visited the Museum on Nov. 18. Several docents presented a Desert Alive program. It was really encouraging to watch the students as they constructed food chains/webs of our common desert animals. They were so quick to grasp the ideas and use their knowledge. They also worked so well together in teams of three. No disagreements occurred!

Our art docents presented art experience programs to Mrs. Buby's fifth grade at Inyokern, Mrs. Holden's 6th grade class, and to the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades at Pierce Arts Academy. Carol Dezelle and Cam Alden are wonderful art docent leaders!

We thank Mark Pahuta for showing his Hidden Ridgecrest videos to the residents at High Desert Haven. So, in that way he is also acting as one of the Maturango Docents!

If you would like to consider becoming a Maturango Museum docent, please join us at our next meeting in the Coso Room on Oct. 7 at 10am.

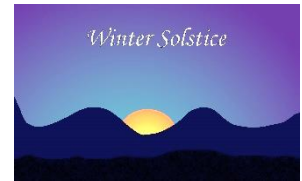
The Winter Solstice Is Coming!

Saturday, December 20th, from 11 am - 2 pm

The shortest day of the year is coming up! This day marks the turning point from the days getting shorter to days getting longer.

Due to the Earth's axial tilt, the northern hemisphere is at its farthest point from the sun at the winter solstice. We plan to celebrate this turning point near the time of the winter solstice.

A winter collage card craft will be provided, and members from the China Lake Astronomical Society may be on hand with their solar scopes, allowing the public to view the sun safely. Join us!



Video: "Hidden Ridgecrest 7"

Sunday, December 28, 2pm

This video has several stories in it, the main one being the history of fire departments in the area, and what it was like to be a volunteer fireman. That story is based on the Historical Society book by Tex Hoppus, "A History of Fire Stations in the Indian Wells Valley".

There are other surprise stories in the video perhaps presented by "surprise presenters." The video runs a little less than one hour. Producers, Mark Pahuta and John Daly will be present for some comments before the screening, and to answer any questions after the show. As usual, admission is free but seating is limited.

Ray Wood's "Singing DAX/Instagram Girl" Exhibit

After 40 years, Wood is back with another solo show at the Maturango Museum to share his paintings of models and actresses from around the world posing by request with his dog "DAX".

DAX is half black labrador retriever and bloodhound and loves to sing and fluctuate his voice to TV programs and music. DAX made his debut singing on Instagram about 2 years ago and Wood discovered people not only loved DAX



for his singing ability but also his charm and the way

he would interact with people. As time went on, models from around the world asked to be painted with DAX and things began to take off. Singing DAX is now a household name on Instagram and people ask to be painted with him daily.



DAX usually poses with models, but in his time off, he has models wearing his Singing DAX hat or his logo in the paintings. Wood discovered that art is an

excellent way to bring people together and gives them a common ground to discover each other and their cultures. DAX now has over 750 followers from around the world and not only brings a positive message to people enjoying beautiful models but also a subliminal message with a little humor.

Instagram is an excellent forum for artists because it allows them to get immediate feedback and stimulates good positive conversation. Posting paintings daily on Instagram with music has also been very inspirational and has motivated Wood to do hundreds of paintings. By allowing everyone to translate easily it enables people from around the world to be able to communicate freely and feel comfortable while talking with one another.

Please enjoy the show and you can always enjoy seeing DAX on Instagram @ singingdax



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In Honor of Museum Staff

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In Honor of Nick Rogers

Debbie Benson

In Memory of Cheryl

McDonald

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Building Fund

Robert Westbrook

Docents

Brenda Radtke

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Freezer for Curation

Andrea Pelch

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Sherry Brubaker

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 Richard Klabunde
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E. Norman and Suzanne
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New Members—Sponsor Gifts

From 2025 Auction Dinner

Michelle Brouchaud
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 Chester and Brenda Cornelius
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 McCauley
 Haley Cornelius and Nathan
 Stuart
 Bryon and Tom Dodson
 Karen Eichman
 Rabih Hamseh
 Abbey Horning

Free Second Saturday Speaker: Sean Scruggs Saturday January 10 at 1pm

Eastern Kern County Resources Conservation District (EKCRCD) has invited Sean Scruggs, a Piute native tribal representative from Fort Independence Reservation, to speak on the importance of nature in his culture.

EKCRCD is starting up a certified resilient backyard Habitat program here in Ridgecrest to promote eco-friendly, wildlife compatible, sustainable gardening practices. We are planing a series of speakers and workshops as part of this program. All members and public are welcome. Hope to see you there!



**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)

Staff

Debbie Benson, Museum Director

Maureen Goff, Store Manager/Buyer

Barbara Bane, M.A., RPA, Archaeology Curator

Nadia Mohsen, Curation Technician

Elaine Wiley, History Curator

Sherry Brubaker, Natural History Curator

Andrea Pelch, Art Gallery Coordinator,

Newsletter Editor

Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator,

Museum Assistant

Linda Saholt, Membership, Donations

Leslie Layfield, Accounting Bookkeeper

Heidi Farmer, Accounting

Addie Reyes, Website

Nick Rogers, Museum Assistant

Barbara Ingle, Museum Assistant

Committee Chairpersons

Elaine Wiley, Publications

Bob Westbrook, Strategic Planning

Bev Hill, Gardens

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Dan Burnett

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Upcoming and Ongoing Events

- **Children's Hour:** "The Snow Tree", Friday December 5, 10:30 – 11:30 am
- **Free Second Saturday:** December 13: Clay project. 11am - 2pm
- **Video: "Hidden Ridgecrest 7":** Sunday, December 28, 2pm
- **The Winter Solstice:** Saturday, December 20th, Card-making activity 11 am - 2 pm
- Museum **closed** for Holiday: 3pm December Wednesday 24 – Thursday 25
- **Ray Wood's** "Singing DAX/Instagram Girls" **Art Exhibit** ongoing until mid-January 2026
- **Free Second Saturday Speaker:** Sean Scruggs, Saturday January 10 at 1pm

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December 2025 Newsletter