

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

"We make a life by what we give." — Winston Churchill

April was such a busy month - it went by far too quickly! May is beginning in much the same fashion. To make it through April I want to give a BIG SHOUT OUT to the Maturango Museum staff and volunteers!!! I THANK them for all of their help in everything at the Museum and Janet's Estate Sale while having the best attitudes possible! Thanks also to Gary from the USO, Sandy, Jerry and Julie and others from the Friends of the Library for your help with books. Also, Red Rock Books and the people with big trucks and friendships. A BIG THANKS to Shane at Equipment Share; He and his workers did the heaviest and biggest of the heavy lifting. Many thanks from us all. I am officially dedicating this month, MAY, to VOLUNTEERS! So many of our local non-profits depend on them and they can really make things happen. Do you want to be one? Just ask! All of the local Museums love and need volunteers and they train the help. Come see us.

Soon will be our Matching Funds Drive; keep your eyes open - It's a chance to double your impact!

Take care and keep a light jacket around for these sudden cool spells.

Be Well.



Field Trip: Manzanar National Historic Site – Friday May 1, 2026

This is a Maturango Museum Member-Only Field Trip.

If you are interested in going on this field trip and you are not a current member of the Maturango Museum, you will need to become a member prior to signing up for the field trip. Go to maturango.org/become-a-member-2/ This is a Maturango Museum Member-Only Event so there is no fee for this field trip, however, donations are appreciated.

Manzanar was one of 10 War Relocation Centers where the US Government incarcerated Japanese American citizens and Japanese immigrants who were ineligible for citizenship during World War II. Most of the internees were from the Los Angeles area, Terminal Island, and the San Fernando Valley. Others came from the San Joaquin Valley and Bainbridge Island Washington; the latter transferred to Minidoka in 1943.

We will be visiting the Visitor's Center, Block 14, and then take the Auto Tour, stopping along the way to visit the various exhibits including Merritt Park and the Cemetery & Monument. What makes this trip unique is that I have arranged for a 30-minute Q&A with one of the Rangers during our time at Manzanar.

Note: Parking can be limited on the Auto Tour so at the Manzanar site carpooling is encouraged.

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 30 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 Manzanar visit. The Interagency Center closes at 4:30pm, gates close at 4:15pm.

From the Interagency Center we'll again head north on 395 to Manzanar. It is about 16 miles. We'll park at the Visitor's Center. There are many different things to see while at Manzanar and I'm expecting us to be at the site for 3-4 hours, including lunch and the Q&A Session.

Please note from the NPS Website: **Visitor amenities are limited at Manzanar.** Visitors must bring their own drinking water, carry out their own trash, and are recommended to bring personal handwashing/sanitizing supplies.

Saturday May 1, 7:30am, meet at the 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.

Sign up at shop.maturango.org (check website) or come to the Maturango Museum Store.

Be sure you have enough gas (approximately 200 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, camera. It is better to have these items and not need them, than need them and not have them.

We will be walking on uneven ground to get to outdoor exhibits and gardens. Parking area also may have uneven ground.

Families are encouraged. No pets. Bring a picnic lunch to eat while we are at Manzanar. Water, snacks, lunch, etc. No alcohol.

**Gift Shop Sale for both Mother's Day (May 8 – 10)
and Father's Day (June 19 – 21) weekends.**

25% discount on all items except books, blankets, and custom pens
Gift shop is open Fri-Sat 10am – 5pm and Sun noon – 4pm



The SACRED WILD

Featured Artists:
Julie Cornett
Janneil Eggleston

05.9.26 | Artist Reception | 3-5 PM
Hosted by Maturango Museum
Runs May 9-June 30

“The Sacred Wild” Art Exhibit Opening Reception Saturday May 9, 3-5pm

The Sacred Wild brings together two distinct yet connected artistic practices that explore the intersection of nature, reverence, and pattern.

Through linocut printmaking, Julie Cornett reimagines desert landscapes, plants, and native birds and reptiles as regal, almost mythic presences. Desert flora shimmer with quiet vitality, while crowned and haloed creatures are elevated beyond the ordinary, inviting viewers to consider

the Mojave not as barren or harsh, but as a place of quiet majesty and spiritual presence.

In dialogue, Janneil Eggleston's intricate string-based geometric works translate sacred geometry into luminous, intricately strung compositions. Carefully constructed with balance and precision, these radiant patterns evoke harmony, interconnectedness, and the underlying structures that shape both the natural and unseen worlds.

Together, these works frame the desert as both wild and sacred—a space where reverence emerges from the natural world itself.



Children’s Hour: “Garden Adventures” Friday May 8, 10:30-11:30 am



We are looking forward to welcoming families to our traditional end of the school year outdoor event at the museum in the Gladys Merrick Garden; join the fun with books, a scavenger hunt game with a checklist of nature items and interesting things to find in the garden, and a craft.

The land around us, both desert and mountains, has so many stories to tell! Sightings of a variety of wild critters, such as hummingbirds, ravens and migrating hawks, lizards and tortoises, small ground squirrels and rabbits or hares, bumblebees plus other insects or spiders are all possible finds. The children will become ‘Nature Detectives’ as they search for signs or clues of them. Hmmm, those holes spotted in the ground just might be tunnels to small animals’ shelters, such as mice, or even snakes. The ants may live in the tiny dirt mounds. Feathers or nests or bits of broken eggshells are signs of baby birds. What other signs and clues can be found on the garden? Perhaps, chewed leaves, tracks or scat may be scattered around. Whether exploring nature in the desert, mountains, forests, lakes and streams, children’s curiosity is bound to lead to questions and for answers to be sought. The children can look for the sun dial, the solar system, or labyrinth while in the garden; and, also, play the wonderful new musical outdoor instruments in the shapes of flowers and ladybugs. Not only is learning happening, but the experience is a lot of fun!

Children’s Hour, begun by a group of volunteer docents in 2009, continues to encourage both learning and appreciation of books, and the Mojave Desert/nearby mountains. Each program theme is explored through storybooks, songs, and action activities, crafts and natural history exhibits from the docents’ collection. Curiosity and questions from children are warmly received!

We hope to see you for this free and educational event! The May Children’s Hour will be the last one for the season but will begin again monthly in the Fall. For information about Children’s Hour Fall 2026 Schedule, please check maturango.org in late August/early September 2026 or by calling 760-375-6900.

Recent Donations

Donations

Dan and Brenda Burnett
Wanda Church
Michael Flanigon
Janet and Jim Haney
Elaine Janson
Linda and Dan Long
Naomi Norris
Mark Pahuta
Deanna and Jim Stewart
Patricia Wharton and Ken Wetzell

Facility Improvement

Paula and Bob Westbrook

Wildflower Exhibit

Dan and Brenda Burnett

In Honor of Elaine Wiley for

Wildflower Exhibit

Kathryn La Shure

In Memory of Janet Westbrook

Liz Babcock
Michael Flanigon

Winter Appeal Roof Project

C & L Construction
Shirley and Don Crouse
Susan Prazak

Operating Fund

Dan and Brenda Burnett
Linda and Dan Long

New Members

Nancy Baumeister
Barb and MarkO’Connor

New Premium Members

Elaine Chow and Joshua Drais
Michael Flanigon
Janet and James Haney



History Curation: “Very Cool Donation” By Terry McGuire

Being the History curator is a rewarding position; however, weaving around the museum’s events this month seems to leave little time to get everything done. This month, we have received a few new items to document and eventually add to our collection.

One item connected to the community's history was recently donated by a member. It is a yardstick with the words: “NWC FEDERAL CREDIT UNION, P.O. Box 5097 China Lake, California Phone 466-2592” painted on the measurement side. The reverse side contains charts that list weights, measurements, distances, speeds, and various other informational tables of interest. The yardstick came in a beautiful case that was hand-woven by Jo Downing. This is a nice treasure to add to our collection.

A goal I have for the near future is to get the ore cart and other items out of the weather and into the curation building for protection. There is never a dull moment as our museum continues to grow.



Maturango Sunday Speakers presents Curtis Alcantar, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for Tejon Indian Tribe Sunday May 31, 2pm

The **Tejon Indian Tribe** is a federally recognized tribe of Kitanemuk, Yokuts, Paiute and Chumash Indigenous people of California. Their ancestral homeland is the southern San Joaquin Valley, San Emigdio Mountains, and Tehachapi Mountains. Tribal headquarters are located in Bakersfield California. Curtis (Kitanemuk) will discuss the past history, present, and future directions of the Tejon Tribe.

Curtis holds a B.A in Anthropology from Cal State Bakersfield and is currently enrolled in the Applied Anthropology graduate program at Cal Poly Humboldt. He serves as the Tejon Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and manages cultural resources for the Tribe. His work focuses on Section 106 consultations, Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act consultations, protecting archeological sites, GIS mapping, excavations, landscape preservation, habitat restoration, pictographs/petroglyphs, and lithic identification.

Admission is free.

Docent Doings

By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator

The Docent League of the Maturango Museum gave 20 programs to 385 people. Eight of the programs were given in the Museum and 12 were outreach. We did not give a Free Saturday program because that was Wildflower Weekend. Children’s Hour docents presented a wonderful program on Wildflowers to over 30 parents and children. Many docents participated in the collection and bottling of flowers. Some docents came on the weekend to greet visitors and answer questions. They pointed out a very interesting plant identified as *Nemacladus sigmoideus*, commonly called a thread plant. Its little limbs truly looked like thread.

The art docents under the leadership of Cam Alden and Carol Dezelle presented several art presentations on Texture to TK/K students at Pierce and 1st graders at Richmond School. They also presented a program on Perspective to the 5th graders at Inyokern School. Glenn Harris presented a

geology program to the 3rd and 5th graders at Trona Elementary School. Dave Kurdeka, Shirley Crouse, Diane Youngblood and Judy Martin helped with a program on Endangered Species. Terry McGuire gave shows in the Beth Armogida Planetarium to parents and students at a Science Night at Las Flores School. Members of the Audubon Club (Dan and Brenda Burnett and Bob Parker) made bird feeders with the residents of High Desert Haven! We also had a tour from Clarvida and a tour with 54 Cap K participants from the Bakersfield area. The Children’s Hour docents are hard at work planning for the “Garden Adventure”, the final Children’s Hour presentation for the spring season!

A docent’s life at the Maturango Museum is full of fun and surprises! If you would like to consider becoming a Maturango Museum docent, please join us at our next meeting in the Coso Room on May 5th at 10:30am. We always provide great breakfast goodies and coffee! If you have any questions, please call me, Nora, at the Maturango Museum, 760-375-6900.

**Maturango Museum
of the IWV**

100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555
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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
Terry McGuire, Local History Curator
Sherry Brubaker, Natural History Curator
Andrea Pelch, Art Gallery Coordinator,
Newsletter Editor
Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator,
Museum Assistant
Barbara Ingle, Membership, Donations,
Museum Assistant
Leslie Layfield, Accounting Bookkeeper
Heidi Farmer, Accounting
Addie Reyes, Website

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Bob Westbrook, Strategic Planning
Bev Hill, Gardens

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Upcoming and Ongoing Events

- Maturango Museum **Member-Only Field Trip to Manzanar: Friday May 1**
- **Debbie Newton's Art Exhibit:** in the Coso Room through May 5
- **Children's Hour: "In the Garden", Friday May 8, 10:30-11:30 am**
- **Museum Store Sale for Mother's Day weekend:** 25% discount, Fri May 8 - Sun May 9
- **Art Gallery Opening Reception "The Sacred Wild": Saturday May 9, 3-5pm**
Linocut Prints by Julie Cornett and String Art by Janneil Eggleston
- **Maturango Sunday Speakers presents Curtis Alcantar,**
Tribal Historic Preservation Officer for Tejon Indian Tribe: Sunday May 31, 2pm
- **Museum Store Sale for Father's Day weekend:** 25% discount, Fri June 19 - Sun June 21

Sponsor an Art Exhibit

If you are enjoying our Art Gallery Exhibits and really enjoying the Opening Receptions, especially the food, please consider sponsoring a specific exhibit or a time period. Sponsorships can help cover the cost of visiting artist's hotel rooms, supplies, upkeep of the Coso Room and refreshments. Suggested donation is \$25 - \$50 for one exhibit.

E-mail Andrea at gallery@maturango.org

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