

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

“Freedom is nothing else but a chance to be better” ~ Albert Camus

July is that point in the year where we have gone past the midway point in the number of days remaining on this year’s calendar. The heat is on for us here in the Upper Mojave Desert and we are all grateful for the coolness of that moment of walking into a conditioned room. It is a time of celebration for the birth of our Nation. Please be safe and respectful of our very dry desert that is currently covered with “flashy” fuels from the rain growth in the early days of the year.

We are in the first weeks of our Annual Matching Funds Drive. Thank you to all of the Matching Funds Donors and those willing to match! Many thanks to our Membership and Friends for keeping us in your lives! We have until August 1 to match the 25K!

We have a team working on the Fundraising Dinner Auction on September 26. There are tickets and Sponsorships available on the website and in the Gift Store. If you have a little something, or even something big to donate for the Auction, please bring it in. Hopefully by September 10!

We are so thankful for Bernie’s Landscaping for their time and expertise in laying our engraved bricks. There is room for more! We have them for sale on our website and forms are in the Gift Store.

Thanks Equipment Share for another great movement of some of our big old History!

Many thanks to C&L Construction and our donors for more work on our roof in preparation for possible storms in the future.

Please be safe in the heat, respect the critters and carry water with you!
Come by to see us in our cool rooms and see what we are doing!
Be Well



Annual Museum Dinner / Auction 
Saturday September 26
Doors open 4:30pmpm, Kerr-McGee

Tickets on sale NOW! Maturango.org/events

For Sponsorship Opportunities e-mail [Debbie@maturango .org](mailto:Debbie@maturango.org)

Donations needed by Monday Sep 14.

- ✓ Items for gift baskets, activity ideas (workshops, field trips, house rental, catered meal or dessert...)
- ✓ Items of artwork, furniture, ephemera, antiques, ...

Matching Fund and Membership Drive

You can double the impact of your donation from now until August 1. Generous donors have pledged \$25,000 to match donations given to the Museum’s operating fund during that time.

See the Museum’s website www.maturango.org or scan the QR code to be directed to the donation page.



Barry Howard Paintings
Jim Hunolt Sculptures
July - August 2026

REFLECTIONS in Colors and Forms

Opening Reception
Friday July 3, 2026 5 – 7pm
Receptions are free and open to the public.

Jim Hunolt’s Sculptures in Granite, Marble, Bronze, Wood, Steel

My sculptures are in traditional materials and are carved, cast, or welded.

My basic intention is to create forms and content that express my understandings of our Human Condition. Most of my efforts are generated in human forms, semi-abstracted. Others are considerations of abstract concepts essential to our existence. I believe that the purpose of Art is the exploration of the Human Spirit.



Having been a professional sculptor since 1965, I have had the opportunity to work in a number of mediums, and with a master sculptor, Gordon Newell for 35 years until his passing in 1998. The Coast gallery in Big Sur has represented my work for 55 straight years, 1969-2024. They closed their Gallery in 2024.



Barry Howard’s Paintings in Oil

Barry Allen Howard is a self-taught painter who works primarily in oils. He draws inspiration from nature and moves back and forth between realism and abstraction, often blending the two together. He has lived and painted all over the country from the rugged Big Sur Coast to the deserts of Arizona and New Mexico as well as the tropical beaches of Maui. Currently his home is in a tiny ghost town near Death Valley.

Maturango Museum “Call to Artists” for the Open Studio Tour 2026

The Maturango Museum is now accepting applications (due by August 23) from local artists for the **Maturango Museum’s Open Studio Tour 2026**. Artists open their studios for the 2-day event so guests can visit and purchase artwork. The tour will be Saturday and Sunday, October 24,25, 10 am – 4 pm each day. Each artist will also have a sample of their artwork displayed in the 2-month Open Studio Tour Exhibit (Sep 5 – Oct 31) at the Museum.

For information and applications send an e-mail to Andrea gallery@maturango.org requesting Open Studio Tour information.

Free Saturday July 11: Reptiles and “Reptile Bingo” 11am – 2pm

Free admission - Museum open 10am – 5pm



History Preservation

By Terry McGuire, History Curator

Darwin Ore Cart Has a New Home

The Darwin Ore Cart has finally been given a new home in the curation building. Thanks to volunteers and some hard work, we accomplished this necessary task. The first step was getting the iron rims back on the wooden wheels. Bob McGowan, Peter Wiley, and I were able to



stabilize the wheels and reattach the rim using zip ties. Then Peter and Bob built a wooden cradle to support the undercarriage. With the groundwork done, Equipment Share and crew, Shane McGuire, Jon Schmidt, and Bruce Muldoon, were able to move it. The precision of their work and attention to the grounds and facilities are appreciated. A huge thank you to Equipment Share and Shane, a new



company in our community, that is trying to help and make a difference.

Recent Donations

Donations

Elizabeth Babcock
Debbie Benson
Dr. Kristen Berry
Dan Burnett
Sally Franklin
Bill and Kathy Martin
Ray and Minnie Miller
Jann Philpott and Larry Sawyer
Jim and Deanna Stewart
Laura Stockton
Patricia Wharton & Ken Wetzel
Donnie Woods

Art Gallery Exhibits

Sheila Rockwell

Facility Improvement

Bob and Paula Westbrook

Matching Funds Pot

Debbie Benson
Sherry Brubaker
Dan and Brenda Burnett
Jacqueline Burnett
Peggy Chun
Diane Foucher
Bob McGowan
Michael Mumford
Nora Nuckles
Mark Pahuta
Andrea Pelch
Jan Philpott
Peter and Elaine Wiley

New Member

Karen Morrione

New Premium Members

Jim and Judy Martin

Matching Funds

Cam Alden
Linda Anderson
Michael Ford and Denise Moliterno
Charlotte and Donald Goodson
Esther Hart
Jerry and Carol Hartman
Sharon Juarez and Jimmie McCaleste
Terry and Andrew Mitchell
Robert Nichols, Jr
Carol Pearson
Sheila Rockwell
Lloyd & Bea Smith
Andrew Sound
Gary Staab

Docent Doings

By Nora Nuckles

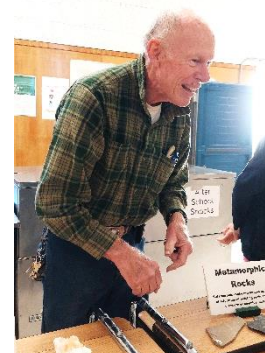
The Docent League of the Maturango Museum gave 10 programs to 445 people in May. Seven of the programs were given in the Museum and 3 were outreach.



A wonderful presentation occurred this month! Marla Cosner collected art work from every student at the Pierce Arts Academy and put up a display in the Sylvia Winslow Gallery; the art covered the walls for two weeks. Three tables were also set up with three-dimensional art works that were completed during the art presentations by Cam Alden and Carol Dezelle and other docents.



We presented two programs for Science/STEM nights at Richmond and Vieweg schools. Terry McGuire with help from Bob Parker, Ingrid Carroll, Fran Kely and I brought the Beth Armogida Planetarium to Richmond School and gave several presentations. Glenn Harris brought all his rocks to a geology presentation for Vieweg STEM night while Terry McGuire, Judy Martin, Fran Kely, Bob Parker, Ingrid Carroll, and I assisted. Glenn knows nearly all there is to know about the geology of the Mojave Desert! He is also incredibly strong so much so that Terry McGuire and Fran Kely have deemed him a "Superman."



We did many tours for elementary school students; these tours involve dividing each class into 3 groups so all children get an opportunity to see the art gallery or even do some art, see the exhibit room and tour the garden areas. Sometimes children are fortunate to see the live tortoises in our tortoise enclosure. Sometimes Bob Parker brings young tortoises to share. When out in the garden the children love the tortoises! The model solar system is also a HUGE attraction. The students love to travel to the outer planets. I often line them up two by two and let them race down to Pluto. Then we can have the discussion about Pluto being a dwarf planet. And of course, the labyrinth is always a MUST. But for the docents the MUST in the labyrinth is that each child MUST walk. The tufa rock that form the labyrinth are very sharp so can be dangerous. Now another very fun attraction in the garden is the collection of outdoor instruments. Children usually discover where the best place to hit the mushrooms is! You can either make a great sound by hitting on the rim or a thud if you hit it in the middle.

The Children's Hour docents gave their last story hour until September. It was a Garden Adventure! Children heard stories and then went outside for a scavenger hunt and then some treats. What a wonderful way to finish story hours for the school year! Charlotte Goodson, Sue Parker, Shirley Crouse, Ingrid Carroll, Susan Moore, Judy Martin have produced outstanding Children's Hour programs each month! Renee Sloane was gracious to help when extra hands were needed.



At High Desert Haven, Bob Parker brought a small tortoise to share and some "fake" tortoises that attendees could decorate.

A docent's life at the Maturango Museum is full of fun and surprises! If you would like to consider becoming a docent, please join us at our next meeting on September 1 at 10:30am in the Coso Room of the Museum. 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
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
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

Committee Chairpersons

Bob Westbrook, Strategic Planning
Bev Hill, Gardens

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Robert McGowan – President
Patty Wharton – Vice-president
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Jann Philpott - Treasurer
Peggy Chun
Alisha Mondragon
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Rochelle Fulton
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Hyla Plant Nursery
IWV Self Storage
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McDonald's Restaurant
Meith Operational Solutions
Michael's Certified Air
New Directions Technologies, Inc.
Oasis Garden Club
The Car Wash
The Pizza Factory
Red Rock Books
Ridgecrest Area Convention
and Visitors Bureau
Saalex Corp.
St. Ann Catholic School
Searles Valley Minerals
Sierra Sands Unified School District
Sinclair Legal Counsel
Sinclair Tax Service
SpringHill Suites by Marriott
Stafford's Pest Control
The Swap Sheet
TJ Frisbee Bicycles, Inc
T&T Alignment, Inc.
Vaughn Realty
WACOM



Upcoming and Ongoing Events

- **Art Gallery Opening Reception for “Reflections”:** Friday July 3, 5 - 7pm
Sculpture by Jim Hunolt and Paintings by Barry Howard
- **Free Saturday July 11:** “July 11: Reptiles and “Reptile Bingo” 11am – 2pm”
- Annual Dinner / Auction: Saturday September 26, Kerr-McGee, doors open 4:30pm

Sponsor an Art Exhibit

If you are enjoying our Art Gallery Exhibits and really enjoying the Opening Receptions, especially meeting the artists, 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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