

# 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](http://www.maturango.org)

Death Valley Tourist Center Northern Mojave Visitor Center

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## Museum Director's Notes

*By Debbie Benson, Director*

*"Remember to be gentle with yourself and others.*

*We are all children of chance and none can say why some fields will blossom while others lay brown  
beneath the August sun." - Kent Nerburn*

August is that month where I remember, as a child, it being the last of summer. The big family trip was not yet complete. The respite from the heat being pools, sprinklers and the possibility of thundering monsoon rains. For today's child, it is the scramble to gather all the supplies and clothes for the start of the school year. August is bringing the possibility of thunderstorms along with the school traffic patterns. Please stay aware! The Docents are already making plans for the new school year - that is always fun!

August 1 marks the end of our **Annual Matching Funds Drive**. Thank You to all of the Matching Funds Donors and those who have matched! If you are reading this on or before August 1, THERE'S STILL TIME FOR YOUR CHANCE TO DONATE! We are very close to 100%, please help; a little goes a long way.

Our team is working hard planning the **Fundraising Dinner Auction** on September 26. [Tickets and Sponsorships are 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 by September 10. We are looking forward to it!

It's such a pleasure to be planning for the Open Studio Tour in October! The local artists put so much into preparing for guests in their studios. The information and applications are available on the website (click on the OST poster on the opening page which will take you to the events calendar information) or in the Gift Store.

Come by to see us in our cool rooms and see what we are doing! We have begun the Creosote Display remodel which is the first step in the Discovery Area transition. Our Curators, Education Coordinator and Valuable Volunteers have been working on these plans for a while now. These displays and the Discovery remodel are paid for with specified donor funds and a grant from the Virginia and Alfred Harrell Foundation. Many thanks to all!

Please be safe in the heat, respect all the critters and carry water with you!

Be Well



## Annual Museum Dinner / Auction

**Saturday September 26**

**Doors open 4:30pm, Kerr-McGee**

**Tickets on sale NOW!     [Maturango.org/events](http://Maturango.org/events)**

**For Sponsorship Opportunities**

**e-mail [Debbie@maturango.org](mailto:Debbie@maturango.org)**

**Donations** needed by Monday Sep 10.

- ✓ Items for gift baskets...we always put together fantastic baskets!
- ✓ Gift certificates
- ✓ Activity ideas (workshops, field trips, house rental, catered meal or dessert...)
- ✓ Items of artwork, furniture, ephemera, antiques, ...

## 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 [galler@aturango.org](mailto:galler@aturango.org) requesting Open Studio Tour information or see [maturango.org](http://maturango.org)

**Free Saturday August 8: “Rocks”, 11am – 2pm**

Free admission - Museum open 10am – 5pm

## “Reflections in Color and Form” now in the Coso Room Art Gallery

**July – August 30, 2026**



### Jim Hunolt’s Sculptures in Granite, Marble, and Bronze

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 had represented my work for 55 straight years (1969-2024) until their gallery closed 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.

### History Contends with Summer Heat and Acquisitions

*Terry McGuire, Museum History Curator*

July has fulfilled the promise of summer heat, but I was able to escape the desert heat for a few weeks and visit family and friends in Montana. The weather was very nice in Montana, and it had a little rain. I was happy to get back to our desert home though; heat and all.

While in Montana, I went to the Museum of Freedom in Polson, Montana. After looking at the displays and the structure of the museum, I can say I appreciate and respect the integrity and professionalism of the Maturango Museum.

Our curation building, while warm, is providing the much-needed shelter for the items being housed there. I have been trying to organize it a little and sweep away the webs and spiders that have also taken up residence there. We have many items I am working to document and find ways to display said items later.

The equipment in the yard is interesting, but also can be a hazard to young people who like to climb. Therefore, I have been making signs for the items to warn them to stay off. There will soon be metal signs to replace the paper that fades so quickly under the desert sun.

We have received a few interesting donations that I am processing and researching the items' historical values to our area. History is always growing with time. I will soon be asking for some volunteer help to continue the work needed....



### The Root of the Word

**“Museum”** From the ancient Greek *mousion*, meaning the “Seat of the Muses” (the Goddess of Arts and Sciences). Literally a place for study and contemplation.

**“Docent”** From the Latin *docere*, meaning “to teach”. A person who acts as a guide typically on a volunteer basis in a museum or zoo.

**“Archive”** From the Greek *árkheion* meaning the home of the Arcion who was the Chief Magistrate and keeper of all documents and papers.

**“Curator”** From the Latin *curator* meaning “one who looks after, a superintendent or guardian.

## Recent Donations

### Donations

Anonymous  
Dan & Brenda Burnett  
Eric LeMieux

### Matching Funds

Kristianne & Philip Aberer  
Camille Alden  
Dan and Mary Anders  
Anonymous  
Frank Armogida  
Jim & Linda Bego  
Edith Ann & Wildon  
Blackburn  
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William Burns  
James Carlblom  
Pat Childers  
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Tom & Barbara Frisbee

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Evelyn Knierim  
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Michael Vincent  
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Wetzel  
Cindy White  
Terri & Wally Wright  
**New Member**  
Ray & Susan Witcher  
Ted & Nancy Ribultan  
**New Business Member**  
Gemini Therapeutic Solutions

## Docent Doings

*By Nora Nuckles*

The docents hosted Cap K families at the museum on July 17. The families enjoyed the tortoises in their enclosure with Mr. Bob; they fed the tortoises the willow tree's pink blossoms. Then inside the cool museum Mr. Bob showed a few baby tortoises and the children made their own pet tortoises from paper bowls, scrapbook paper, markers, googly eyes and sparkly stickers. A few docents read from a big book about the desert and showed many of our taxidermied animals. The children also had fun playing the garden musical "flowers" (payed for by the Ridgecrest Rotary Club and installed by Howard McCauley and friends).

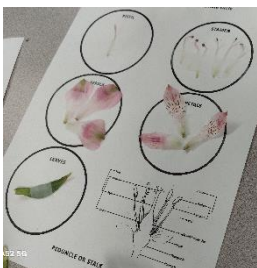
Elaine Wiley, Debbie Breitenstein, Mr. Bob and Sue Parker, and Kate Goodson, presented a wildflower program and four activity stations to the Ridgecrest and Rosamond libraries. Docents also presented a Desert Alive program to the Ridgecrest library.

Greg Watson presented a "Bees" program at the High Desert Haven.

Cam Alden, Carol Dezelle and I met with Marla Cosner to plan Fall semester programs for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> grades at Pierce Arts Academy. Charlotte Goodson, Shirley Crouse, Sue Parker, Judy Martin Susan Moore and Ingrid Carroll are planning the Fall Children's Hour programs – the dates will be available on [www.maturango.org](http://www.maturango.org) soon.

Glenn Harris will present a "Rocks" program for Free Saturday August 8; he will show how to identify rocks. Our craft activity, 11am – 2pm, will be rock painting.

The museum docents will hold their first meeting of the school year on Tuesday September 1 at 10am at the museum. Call Nora at the museum 760-375-6900 if you'd like to join us.



Elaine Wiley's activity for the library.



Young visitors and their "pet tortoise" craft.

**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

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

Board of Trustees

Robert McGowan – President

Patty Wharton – Vice-president

Dan Burnett - Secretary

Jann Philpott - Treasurer

Peggy Chun

Alisha Mondragon

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Sierra Sands Unified School District

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The Swap Sheet

TJ Frisbee Bicycles, Inc

T&T Alignment, Inc.

Vaughn Realty

**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](mailto:gallery@maturango.org)

## Upcoming and Ongoing Events

- **“Reflections in Color and Form”**: now through August  
Sculpture by Jim Hunolt and Paintings by Barry Howard
- **Free Saturday August 8**: “Rocks”, craft activity 11am – 2pm
- **Annual Dinner / Auction**: Saturday September 26,  
Kerr-McGee, doors open 4:30pm

**Donations** needed by Monday Sep 10.

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**Ridgecrest, CA 93555**

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