



Maturango News



Death Valley Tourist Center • Northern Mojave Visitor Center
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April 2009

April Lecture on Coso Rock Art

By Sandy Rogers, Archaeology Curator

The April lecture will feature archaeologist Dr. Alan Gold, who will present a new interpretation of Coso rock art as part of a hunting religion complex that featured animal ceremonialism. His research draws upon cross-cultural studies of religion and symbolism among hunter-gatherers, along with an analysis of the oral traditions of local Native American groups. He emphasizes the importance of hunting magic models, increase rites, and a supernatural being, the master of the animal world, who seems to be represented in rock art. This is in contrast to another currently popular theory which interprets rock art as associated with vision quests by shamans.

Dr. Gold earned his Ph.D. in prehistoric forager ecology in 2005 from the University of California, Davis. His research interests include peopling of the Americas, linguistic prehistory, hunter-gatherer religion, and aboriginal rock art studies. Currently he serves as an adjunct faculty member at Bakersfield Community College and is an Associate Environmental Planner/Archaeologist for the California Department of Transportation in Fresno, California. Over the last thirty years, he has actively pursued prehistoric studies in California and the Great Basin, including significant work in the Indian Wells Valley. He is the author of a monograph published by the Maturango Museum, *Archaeology and Rock Art of the Eastern Sierra and Great Basin Frontier*.

This lecture should be of interest to all petroglyph tour leaders as well as anyone who is fascinated by our Coso rock art. The lecture is on Wednesday, April 15, at 7:30 p.m., in the Sylvia Winslow Gallery.

Paonessa Exhibit Continues

By Rosemary Lackaye, Gallery Coordinator

Continuing this month in the Sylvia Winslow Exhibit Gallery is the outstanding exhibit of the digital photography of Ralph Paonessa.

Paonessa is a professional photographer, lecturer, and workshop leader based in Ridgecrest. Hundreds of his images have been published in magazines, newspapers, calendars, and books, including numerous covers. Paonessa's archival digital prints are produced on a professional digital inkjet printer to the highest standards.

For this exhibit, the artist is presenting a range of fabulous nature images from the Ridgecrest area, including wildflowers, local mountain ranges and canyons, and Death Valley. In the artist's words, "The images in this exhibit are a selection of those I have made over the years from this area. I hope they convey a sense of the natural beauty and



wonder that lay just a few hours' drive in any direction, where an endless landscape provides solace and inspiration."

We encourage you to stop by and see Paonessa's riveting works of art. And the best part is, all the prints are for sale and a portion of all sales will go to benefit the Museum. Consider this a

stimulus payment for your spirit! The show continues through May 13. As a fortuitous addition to your enjoyment of this month's activities, this exhibit will be a perfect backdrop to the Museum's Annual Wildflower Show slated for April 12 and 13.

A sincere thank-you to our generous sponsors for the Paonessa exhibit: Judy Fair Spaulding; Phyllis Hix, in honor of Hyle and Myrtle Houston; Aletha S. Benson, RPT Physical Therapy; and Vaughn Realty.

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Maturango Museum
100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555
The Museum is open every day (except
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Wildflower Show at the Maturango Museum

April 10-12, Friday through Sunday, 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

We have had a relatively mild but periodically damp winter. The desert is green with newly-sprouted annuals (some actually began to bloom in early February) and regenerating perennials and shrubs. Come see what spring wildflower treasures have been uncovered within a 50-mile radius of Ridgecrest. Volunteer teams with BLM permits will search for flora on the east-facing slopes and in the canyons of the Sierra Nevada, in the Coso and El Paso Mountains, as well as the Indian Wells Valley itself.

On Saturday, April 11, at 2:00 p.m., Ilene Anderson, Biologist with the Center for Biological Diversity, will speak on Teeny Tiny Desert Beauties. The West Mojave Desert is a great place to look for "belly" flowers (you have to be on your belly to see them) of the creosote bush scrub. Ilene's presentation will show the diversity of species in our most ubiquitous desert plant community. She promises lots of colorful images that will have us all planning excursions to look for these beauties.

Message from the Executive Director

By Harris M. Brokke

Our dinner/fundraiser that was held on March 20 was a success. At the time of this article we do not have the final totals for the amount of money raised to support our Museum operating expenses. Thanks to everyone who participated in any way – as sponsor, advertiser, donor of an item for the auction, and, of course, to all who attended the event and purchased one or more items.

The Board of Trustees has conducted a thorough review of the building plans for the Museum expansion and has provided the comments to Valley Steel, including low cost and intermediate cost plans for finishing each room. To come up with this information, we solicited input from the staff, docents, and gallery committee members. Our next step is to meet with Valley Steel to finalize the plans, at which time Valley Steel will provide us with the total construction costs for the project.

April is another busy month with numerous Museum activities which are shown in our calendar of events. To access our entire calendar of events, check out our website at www.maturango.org.

While this monthly newsletter is a great way to communicate information to our members, events happen so fast that I believe a weekly e-mail

communication would be extremely useful to send to our members in addition to the monthly newsletter. I will send a weekly e-mail to a non-disclosed e-mail distribution list so your e-mail address will be protected. If you would like to be added to the distribution for this weekly e-mail, please reply back to me and I will add you to the e-mail distribution list.

In these tough economic times, the Museum revenues are down and we are looking for additional sources of revenue. In the next newsletter, I will be announcing a membership drive – so stay tuned for that. In addition, I would ask that you consider the Museum when you are doing estate planning and also when you consider making tax deductible contributions.

We continue to need volunteers to work in the Museum Store. For more information, please check with the store manager or the volunteer in the Museum Store. We also are looking for new docents. For information, please stop in or call and ask for Nora Nuckles.

Our goal continues to be to provide a museum that you will enjoy so that you will come back often and will encourage your friends to visit and consider Museum membership also.

“First Californians” Exhibit Updated

By Alexander (Sandy) Rogers, Archaeology Curator

An update of the “First Californians” exhibit in the main gallery has been in the works for the last two months and is now complete. As you probably remember, the exhibit has long consisted of three display cases: a case on the west wall exhibited stone tools, a case spanning the corner contained a replica of a small rock-shelter, and the third case, on the north wall, exhibited basketry. In addition, there is a stand-alone pottery exhibit case near the children’s area.

The update provides a more focused exhibit of artifacts, with improved explanatory signage to place the artifacts in a cultural context. In the west display is new signage describing the cultural and climatic background of Native American cultures in this area, and a chronology of occupation. The artifacts in the case are mostly lithic – projectile points, pendants, cutting tools – along with parts of a snare and a fire-starting kit. In the north display, the new signage describes local hunter-gatherer life ways, including social organization and a map of local Native American groups, and highlights basketry and cordage implements related to those life ways. The corner display now includes new signage explaining human use of caves and rock shelters, with an exhibit of pottery and ground stone tools. Also included in the cave itself are three fiber artifacts from Ray Cave, exhibited by courtesy of NAWA China Lake. The stand-alone pottery display near the children’s area has not been modified.

The previous exhibit served us well over many years, but it was time for a change as scholarship has progressed and our collection has evolved. I invite you all to come see it.



2009

An invitation for local artists

Every day the world around us is changing, and with each new direction we find the chance for innovative opportunities. One of these prospects for local artists is to be a part of the Maturango Museum's Open Studio Tour for 2009. Local artists open their studios and share the process and the resulting products of their creativity with the public. For those who have participated in the past, you know what a positive event this is for our community and for the artists. For those of you who have held back, this is your chance to share your talents, your studios, and your creativity with others! The tour will be held on the weekend of October 24 and 25, 2009. Each artist will have an art piece for sale in the month-long Open Studio Tour show in the Sylvia Winslow Gallery and will be a part of the artists' reception on October 9, 2009.

The Open Studio Tour committee is now accepting applications from local artists for this event. The non-refundable entry fee for individual artists is \$15 for Museum members and \$25 for nonmembers. Due to the attention we want to give each artist, we do not have group rates. This event has received funds from the Arts Council of Kern.

For information and applications, please contact Rosemary Lackaye at the Maturango Museum, 375-6900 (matmus5@maturango.org) or Debbie Benson. 375-1300 (rbenson82@mchsi.com)

The applications are due back by May 15, 2009, so call or e-mail us now! The Open Studio Tour committee is looking forward to hearing from you.

Field Trip to Museums in Owens Valley

On Saturday, April 25, the Maturango Museum will host a field trip to several museums in the Owens Valley, including the Eastern California Museum, Manzanar Relocation Center, and the Beverly and Jim Rogers Museum of Lone Pine Film History. We will meet at the Museum at 7:00 a.m. for check-in, and all participants will be required to sign a liability waiver. We will depart by bus promptly by 7:30 a.m.

The deadline for reservations is April 22. The cost is \$60 for members and \$75 for nonmembers. The member price applies to members only, not nonmember guests. Price includes bus transportation. Space is limited to 46 people, so make your reservations early. We will have lunch at The Pizza Factory in Lone Pine, and lunch is included in the price.

This trip provides an opportunity for members and friends to see some Inyo County sights while Keith does the driving! We'll stop first in Lone Pine to visit the Film History Museum. A

22-minute film in the Museum's special theater provides a wonderful orientation about the area's connection with western films. Next, we'll head for Independence to visit the Eastern California Museum, known for one of the largest collections of Owens Valley Paiute and Shoshone basketry in the world. Finally, we'll stop at Manzanar to visit the Interpretive Center, featuring extensive exhibits and audiovisual programs. "Remembering Manzanar," an award-winning documentary, sets the stage for what we'll learn about the area's history.

If the Museum cancels the trip, you will be given a full refund, or you may transfer the money to a different trip. No cash refunds will be given for cancellation by the participant, unless the trip is full and we can sell your space, in which case a full refund will be made. If you must cancel, please notify the Museum as early as possible so that people on the waiting list can be notified. Thank you.

Special Astronomy Event at the Maturango Museum

The China Lake Astronomical Society is inviting all members of the public to participate in the International Year of Astronomy (IYA 2009), a series of events being held worldwide to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first observations of the heavens through a telescope. Local observance will include events on Saturday April 4 and Sunday April 5, as part of the "100 Hours of Astronomy" marathon to be held in early April. The goal is to get as many people as possible to look through a telescope, especially those who are new to the experience.

Local events will be held at the Maturango Museum, and will be hosted by members of the China Lake Astronomical Society. On Saturday, April 4, from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. there will be observations of the sun and international webcasts featuring well-known astronomers from various observatories. In the evening from 6:00 to 9:00 we will observe the night sky from the Museum's observatory and continue with the webcasts. Sunday, April 5, will again feature solar observations from 1:00 to 5:00 and webcasts inside the Museum.

Southwestern Desert Bats

Dr. Pat Brown-Berry will offer a class on Southwestern Desert Bats sponsored by the Maturango Museum to be held at the Desert Studies Center (DSC) at Soda Springs (ZZYZX) south of Baker, California, from the evening of May 15 until noon on May 17. She has taught this class (or variations) at the DSC for the past 26 years.

Bats are important components of the desert ecosystem, yet because of their nocturnal nature they are usually difficult to observe. This course will introduce the participants to the world of bats and to some of the techniques used by scientists to study these amazing mammals. Bonnie the Big Brown Bat (of Jay Leno show fame) will greet students. Nightly field work will allow participants to use ultrasonic bat detectors and night vision equipment and to observe the mist-netting of wild bats (unless it's windy). Diurnal lectures and videos will supplement the field experiences.

Bring a field notebook, camp chair, and flashlight (headlight preferred). A camera and binoculars are desirable. Course fee includes two nights' lodging at the Center, a snack Friday evening, and five meals beginning with breakfast on Saturday.

Patricia Brown-Berry, Ph.D., has conducted research on bats for the past 41 years, is a Research Associate at UCLA, and former Director of the Maturango Museum (1982-92).

About the Desert Studies Center: The California State University System operates this field station within the Mojave National Preserve. Throughout the year, DSC hosts a variety of desert-oriented courses in several disciplines. Students will stay in dormitory rooms with desks and bunk beds (students bring their own bedding and towel). Couples will be accommodated in bungalows with double beds, if available. Other facilities include classrooms, library, laboratory, kitchen and restroom facilities, and a pool. The DSC is "off the grid," and power is by solar, wind, and a back-up generator. The meals are provided by Eric, a gourmet chef. If you have special dietary needs, let us know in advance.

Soda Springs (a.k.a. ZZYZX) has a rich history, with Native American petroglyphs in the vicinity. Subsequently, it served at times as a fort along the Mojave Road, railroad stop, and health spa under Dr. Curtis Springer before becoming part of the CSU Preserve system. You will enjoy your stay at this fascinating facility.

Cost: \$225 per person includes accommodations, meals, and instruction. A detailed itinerary will be sent upon registration. You can register by calling the Maturango Museum (760 375 6900) or through the website, www.maturango.org. Enrollment is limited to 25 students.

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Docent Doings

By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator

Is a specimen really a “stuffed animal?” No! The specimens that the docents have in their collection are pelts that are artfully built over forms. Mike Dorner of Oak Creek Taxidermy explained the process of preparing an animal specimen. Mike has recently prepared several animals for the Museum and docent collections. Mike visited the docents on Monday, March 2, and came with “goodies”—the tools of the trade plus the gray fox to add to the docent collection. We learned that a talented taxidermist such as Mike starts with a dead animal in good condition (well, think about that) and performs many tasks to prepare the animal for its final presentation. Do you know that the eyelids of the animal skin have to be turned inside out before it is tanned? That’s only a bit of the story. Mike showed us a plastic coyote jaw. BINGO! Judy Breitenstein noticed that the plastic jaws of certain animals would help us in our work with the children. The real skulls and jaws in the docent collection are fragile. Using the plastic jaws and teeth, we could more easily present the dentition of various animals and allow the students to handle the jaws. Mike gave us several catalogs exclusive to taxidermists! The docents appreciated learning the details of preparing a specimen. Mike’s work is art!

Several docents and I finished the planning for the two stations used in the classroom for SEEP (Sand Canyon Environmental Program). The docents made SEEP presentations to St. Ann,

Gateway, and Las Flores schools in March and to Pierce School on April 1. Many docents also helped with presentations in Sand Canyon when the students took the field trip.

Susan Hueber presented us with a Rock Art Contest sponsored by the American Rock Art Research Association. Susan, Cam Alden, and I have made some presentations to a few of the schools to encourage participation. We have delivered information to all the elementary schools in the district.

Judy Breitenstein led us on a Wildflower field trip. Some docents recognize many of the different wildflowers and can identify them by their correct botanical names. Others of us try to add a few to our memories each year. It is simply delightful to realize that there are many different species of yellow flowers and try to meet the challenge of identification! The greatest joy, of course, is seeing the beauty of our desert in the spring.

There are more field trips to capture our attention. We hope to visit Tomo Kahni in Tehachapi and the Feline Compound in April. We hope to do the Twilight Tour at the Feline Compound in Rosamond on April 25. Dan and Brenda Burnett will lead a birding trip at the Kern River Preserve on May 2.

Hurry! Time’s a wasting! Better join the docents NOW. Call Nora at the Museum.

JazzTones Present May Concert

By Fran Rogers

The JazzTones will present the sixth concert in the 2008-2009 Maturango Museum concert series in the Sylvia Winslow Exhibit Gallery on Friday, May 8, 2009. The concert will begin at 7:30 pm. Seats are limited to 60, so to avoid disappointment get your tickets now in the Museum store. The price is \$8 per adult and \$5 per child 12 and younger.

This is the third performance of the JazzTones in the Museum concert series. The JazzTones is a jazz ensemble hailing from the Kern Valley with members: Phyllis Hix (piano/keyboard and commentator), Rick Fankhauser (percussion), Jane O'Hara (trombone), Bill O'Hara (trombone), Pete Pappas (trumpet), Larry Hayes (trumpet), Bob Shrode (trumpet), Dean Buck (baritone), Bill Whities (sax/clarinet) and Phyllis Ash (sax).

Jazz is the umbrella descriptive term for a collection of very different styles and tempos. Styles include blues, slow, moderately fast, rock, Latin, and ballad. "Cool" jazz is innovative, personal, interactive, and ever changing, with influence from the social times and the personality and unique talents of the performer,.

This concert, entitled "An Evening of Jazz, Then and Now", will present examples of the "old" jazz styles, some of the "new," and some popular songs that have been improvised upon periodically by various musicians, thus bringing the styles of their own times and personalities. The program will include a progression through time of jazz, as it has been infused with many diverse styles as they appeared on the Nation's musical, economic, and social scene.

2009—a Year of Commemorations

By Camille Anderson, Natural History Curator

The year 2009 is a year of important anniversaries in the sciences. This year is the 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of the publication of his seminal work, *On the Origin of Species*. It is also the 400th anniversary of Galileo's first observations of the universe through a telescope. In fact, this year has been recognized by the International Astronomical Union and the United Nations as the International Year of Astronomy. The scientific work of both Darwin and Galileo is recognized as turning points in the life sciences and astronomy.

It is interesting to note that both Galileo and Darwin studied medicine and thought about becoming clergymen. They both were also interested in a wide variety of sciences. Both were scientists that made their biggest discoveries through observation and their willingness to change their dogma based on those observations. Neither formulated their ideas in a vacuum, as they were aware of the current state of different sciences in their time.

We are celebrating their anniversaries this year because they are recognized as great scientists that contributed immensely to the foundation of today's scientific knowledge. Galileo contributed immeasurably to the Copernican theory of the sun being the center of the solar system, and started modern observational astronomy. Darwin's theory of evolution has been expanded and modified, but still builds the basis of all biology.

Today, scientists are landing rovers on Mars and discovering planets in other solar systems. We have flown satellites by the Galilean moons of Jupiter and through the rings of Saturn. Biologists are studying the smallest forms of life and are investigating constructing designer life forms. They are investigating the effects of environment on DNA and how it is expressed in organisms. The state of astronomy and biology today is rapidly changing, and new discoveries are happening all the time.

If you would like to know more about Charles Darwin, many scientific journals and magazines have recent issues devoted to his life and works. Some books recommended by the *Wall Street Journal* are *The Tree of Life* by Peter Sis (this is a children's book age 8+), *The Beak of the Finch* by Jonathan Weiner, *The Politics of Evolution* by Adrian Desmond, and *Charles Darwin* by Janet Browne. Of course, there is also the original work by Darwin.

To find out more about the International Year of Astronomy, the NASA website (<http://astronomy2009.nasa.gov/>) has a number of links to stories and events commemorating the year-long celebration. The Griffith Observatory in Los Angeles is also having a program commemorating Galileo. The website is <http://www.griffithobs.org/>.

Call for Entries

The Prospectus for Artists wishing to be considered for a one- or two-month exhibition in the Sylvia Winslow Gallery at the Maturango Museum in 2010 is now available.

The Maturango Museum is a cultural and natural history museum. It endeavors to serve the community by offering high quality art exhibits in the Sylvia Winslow Art Gallery. For a Prospectus, visit, call, or write the Museum for an application. If you wish, we will e-mail you a copy of the prospectus, or you can find a link to download it at our website. E-mail Rosemary Lackaye, the gallery coordinator, at matmus5@maturango.org.

Entry deadline is May 31, 2009.

New members

Marie Bannister
Russ and Linda Bates
Robert J. Bechtel and Family
Dawn Beigel
Bill Brown
Jennifer and Arjuna Fletcher
Marcia Burnett
Ruth Greyraven
Hans Walter Mroch
Columbia Nelson
Larry Page
Joleigh S. Rafalski
Diann Severson
Dusty and Barbara Stiles
Buddy and Launa Strickland

Calendar of Events

April 2009

Fri., April 3 – concert, "We Friends" by Catherine Douglas, Ruthann Sutton & Friends, 7:30 p.m.

Sat., April 4 – bus trip to the Getty Villa Museum; reservations required

Sat. & Sun., April 4 & 5 – Astronomy Star party, 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Sat. and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sun.

Tue., April 7 – docent meeting, 9:00 a.m.

Fri. - Sun., April 10 - 12 – wildflower show, 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Wed., April 15 – lecture, "New Interpretation of Coso Rock Art," Dr. Alan Gold, 7:30 p.m.

Mon., April 20 – Board of Trustees meeting, 7:00 p.m.

Tue., April 21 – gallery meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Sat., April 25 – bus trip to E. California Museum; Manzanar Relocation Center, and Lone Pine Film Museum; reservations required

Calendar of Events

May 2009

Tues., May 5 – docent meeting 9:00 a.m.

Fri., May 8 – Concert, Jazz Tones, Phyllis Hix and Kern Valley Friends, 7:30 p.m.

Fri., May 15 – gallery reception for Monika Steiner, abstract oils & bronze sculpture, 7:00 p.m.

Sat., May 16 – car caravan to Little Lake Ranch

Mon., May 18 – Board of Trustees meeting, 7:00 p.m.

Tues., May 19 – gallery meeting, 9:30 a.m.

Wed., May 20 – lecture, "A Sailor in the Sand - Adventures in Iraq", Cdr. Ian Anderson - 7:30 p.m.

Sat., May 30 – car caravan to McFarland Toll Road & the Greenhorns

Petroglyph Trip Schedule

April 19, 25, 26
May 2, 3, 24, 30, 31
June 6, 7

Reservations required. Note: some dates may be full, so call before you submit an application.

Maturango Museum
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