



# Maturango News



Death Valley Tourist Center • Northern Mojave Visitor Center  
Maturango Museum • 100 E. Las Flores Ave. • Ridgecrest, CA 93555

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## Maturango Museum to Hold Fund-raiser

*By Harris M. Brokke, Executive Director*

The Maturango Museum of the Indian Wells Valley will be hosting a dinner/auction on Friday, March 20, 2009, at the Kerr McGee Center to raise funds in support of Museum operating expenses. There will be a silent auction, a raffle, and a live auction. A cash bar will be set up starting at 5:00 p.m., with dinner, catered by Farris', to be served at 6:00 p.m. Entertainment will be provided by the Scholastico & Kardia Trio. The silent auction and raffle will begin at 5:00 p.m., and the live auction begins at 7:30 p.m. with Cowboy Huckleberry as the auctioneer.

The Museum is looking for donations of items for inclusion in the auction and is also seeking sponsors for the event. If you have an item that you would like to donate for auction, please call Harris Brokke at 375-6900 or Ron and Bev Atkins at 446-6700. We will make arrangements to have the item picked up and will make sure you are recognized for your donation.

If you would like to be a sponsor, the following options are available:

- For a \$1,500 corporate donation or a \$1,000 family/small business donation, the sponsor will have a reserved table for eight complete with eight dinner tickets and complimentary wine. These sponsors will also receive 20 raffle tickets, one-year Museum memberships

See FUND-RAISER, Page 2

## Listen to the Drum, Watch the Dance

*By Rosemary Lackaye, Gallery Coordinator*

It is with great pleasure that the gallery committee announces that Linda Ortiz, handmade paper artist from Santa Rosa California, will be the January-February exhibitor in the Sylvia Winslow Exhibit Gallery. A reception for the artist will be held on Friday evening, January 9, at 7:00 p.m., with the artist's talk at 7:30 p.m.

Linda Ortiz's artwork is influenced by her origins. Born in Santa Fe, New Mexico, she is the product of the blending of Native American, Anglo, and Hispanic cultures. Her art reflects her heritage and the voice it gives her work. Her handmade paper is made from cotton, abaca, and assorted fibers cut into small pieces and blended together with water. Color comes from the fibers themselves or from pigment added to the wet pulp. After the majority of the water is extracted



**His Prayer Journey**

from the pulp, Ortiz sculpts her piece into the desired shape. Once the piece is dry she sews, paints, and adds adornments. The artist doesn't attempt to reproduce or duplicate actual Native American pieces; instead she creates her own vision and includes a touch of fantasy while incorporating many historic symbols into her art: feathers, shells, bones, beads, stone and wood, bear claws, elks' teeth, horse hair, porcupine quills, fetishes, and arrowheads.

The Museum would like to thank the generous sponsors for this exhibit, Judy Fair-Spaulding; Daniel Kus, D.D.S.; Aletha S Benson, RPT, Physical Therapy; and Arrowhead Mobil Home Park. . The Ortiz exhibit will continue through March 11, 2009.

This newsletter is published monthly by  
**Maturango Museum**  
 100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555  
 The Museum is open every day (except  
 major holidays) from 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

## Businesses and Organizations Supporters • Contributors • Sponsors

*Please support the businesses and organizations that support the Maturango Museum*

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Harris Brokke, Executive Director  
 Sandy Rogers, Curator, Archaeology  
 Elizabeth Babcock, Curator, History  
 Camille Anderson, Curator, Natural History  
 Mary Adler, Bookkeeper  
 Fran Van Valkenburgh, Membership, Petroglyphs  
 Rosemary Lackaye, Gallery Coordinator  
 Mary Phillips, Bookkeeping Assistant  
 Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator  
 Steve Benson, Museum Assistant  
 Paula Caudill, Museum Assistant  
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 Carroll Evans, Chair, Concert Committee  
 Sandy Rogers, Chair, Lecture Committee  
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High Desert Haven	Servicemaster of IWV
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Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert	Southern Sierra Medical Clinic
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IWV Water District	State Farm Insurance – Gary Charlon
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The Library Press, Dr. Lorraine Blair	Union Bank of California
Lockheed Martin	Vagabond Inn
McDonald's	WACOM
Mediacom	
Mojave Desert Bank	

## Fund-raiser (continued from Page 1)

for non-member table guests, name in the program, significant advertising in the local media, and major advertising at the event.

- For a \$250 donation, the sponsor will receive two dinner tickets, reserved seating, name in the program, and ten raffle tickets.

Dinner tickets will be available starting January 15, 2009, at a cost of \$30 per person. To make your reservations by phone, call the Maturango Museum at (760) 375-6900. To make your reservations by mail, send your check to the Maturango Museum, 100 E. Las Flores Ave., Ridgecrest, CA 93555, or come in to the Maturango Museum store between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 5:00p.m. The Museum is open seven days per week. Tickets can also be purchased at the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce office, which is located at 128-B East California Ave., Ridgecrest, CA.

You may participate in the auction without having dinner. If so, there will be no charge for entry.

# Dr. Kristin H. Berry Will Present January Lecture

Dr. Kristin H. Berry, will present a lecture on Wednesday night, January 14, 2009, at the Maturango Museum at 7:30 p.m. Her presentation, titled "Then and Now: A Photographic Account of Change in Indian Wells Valley and Vicinity," documents local and landscape-level changes from the 1890s to the present using rephotography. In rephotography, a photograph is made from exactly the same spot as an old photograph, so that changes in landforms and vegetation can be observed. Dr. Berry and collaborators collected old photographs of the Mojave Desert from the files of the U.S. Geological Survey, the Huntington Library, the Historical Society of the Upper Mojave Desert, and various local donors. These photos were taken by geologists who explored the West for important mineral resources and to map springs and rivers. Dr. Berry will draw from her collection of more than 600 rephotographs of the Mojave Desert taken by herself and landscape re-photographer Dominic Oldershaw to discuss change—and the lack of it—in the Mojave and how old photos are valuable in assessing longevity of plants and recovery of vegetation after major disturbances.

Kristin Berry grew up, went to school, and worked in China Lake and Ridgecrest from 1947 to 1979. She received bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees in biology and related subjects at Stanford University, University of California at Los Angeles, and University of California at Berkeley. Her doctoral thesis on the ecology and social behavior of the chuckwalla lizard was conducted on the base, in the Argus Range. She has worked for the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management and Geological Survey since 1974 and may be best known for her research on the desert tortoise.

Donations to the Building Fund	New Museum Members	
<b>Thom and Toni Boggs</b>	<b>Linda Anderson</b>	<b>Mary Grayeske</b>
<b>Russ Kaldenberg and Judyth Reed</b>	<b>Dottie Cowan</b>	<b>Gina M. Olson</b>
<b>W.P. Norris – in memory of Bill</b>	<b>Walter Jr. and Debby Demyanek</b>	<b>Richard Ross</b>
<b>McEwan and Jean Bennett</b>	<b>Kimmie and Adam Gvaehl</b>	<b>Kevin Seymour</b>

## Message from the Executive Director

*By Harris M. Brokke*

I hope that all of you had a blessed and safe holiday season with family and friends and that you have a happy and prosperous new year.

2009 should be an exciting year for the Museum as we expect to have finalized plans and cost estimates for the new Museum by the end of January. We will be doing extensive fund-raising for the building fund and, when we have raised sufficient funds, will break ground. Also, I plan to continue an aggressive campaign to bring in new business members as well as individual and family members to support our Museum operations.

It is with mixed feelings that I report to you that Karen Mendoza has submitted her resignation. While this is truly sad news for all of us in the Museum family, Karen now will have the opportunity to do something that she has wanted to do for some time. Karen will be leaving us to take a position as a case manager for the College Community Services group. This group is under contract with Kern County to provide mental health services for our community. As part of this job, Karen will be directly working with and helping children. All of us who have watched Karen interact with children know that this is one of her special gifts. It is not only something that she is very good at, but something that she obviously enjoys.

The good news is that Karen wants to continue to be involved with the Museum, as illustrated by the following. Her last day as an employee was December 12. On the following Sunday, she was scheduled to be a Museum petroglyph tour escort.

So I ask that you join me in thanking Karen for her many contributions and service to the Museum, and in giving her our best wishes for success in this new opportunity.

# January Concert: “Classics Galore”

*By Fran Rogers*

The High Desert Music Teachers Association (HDMTA) will present their annual concert in the Sylvia Winslow Exhibit Gallery as part of the Maturango Museum’s concert series. By popular demand, there will be two performances - on Friday, January 30, and Saturday, January 31, 2009. Both concerts will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Seats each night 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.

The concert, entitled “Classics Galore,” will contain music by Franz Joseph Haydn, Johann Sebastian Bach, Samuel Barber, Leroy Anderson, Ludwig van Beethoven, Camille Saint-Saens, Herman Löhr, Gerald Finzi, Claude Debussy, Jean-Philippe Rameau, and Franz Liszt.

The performing musicians, all HDMTA members, are Carol Burge (piano), Glenda Blackshaw (piano), Catherine Douglas (piano), Gary Fry (clarinet), Shirley Helmick (violin), Lauren Loewen (soprano), Melanie McDonald (piano), Carol Sue McKenzie (violin), Philip Randolph (piano), Fran Rogers (‘cello), Ruthann Sutton (‘cello), and Debra Veit (flute).

HDMTA is an organization of private music teachers in the Indian Wells Valley that each year sponsors concerts and recitals, both solo and ensemble, throughout the year for their students. This annual concert at the Museum is for the teachers to perform for the community.

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## **Exclusive Tours and Maturango Museum Present Viet Nam & Cambodia with Angkor Wat**

April 20 - May 8, 2009 –19 Days

To the visitor from the west, Southeast Asia is an assault on the senses, an immersion into a way of life utterly unlike that to which we are accustomed. Some unique elements of both Viet Nam and Cambodia are included in this trip. In Viet Nam, we will take a train thru lush terraced rice fields to the highlands of the far northern frontier. Near the border with China, we will visit hill tribe villages (Hmong & Yao) around the small market town of Sapa. We will also sail the South China Sea on a junk, and include an exploration of the beautiful Halong Bay. In Cambodia we will wait for the magic hour at the temples of Angkor Wat, one of the world's man-made wonders. All this and much more await your arrival. Your unique experiences and impressions will last a lifetime. A detailed itinerary is available by contacting Leo Girardot by email anytime: [magics@ridgenet.net](mailto:magics@ridgenet.net); by phone: 760-375-8737; by mail: 644 Sherri Ct. Ridgecrest, California 93555.

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## **A Message from Karen Mendoza**

I have a passion to work with families one-on-one. I have been offered an opportunity with College Community Services as a case manager, which has caused me to make a difficult decision. I hope to work and serve my community well. My last day at the Maturango Museum as Administrator was December 12, 2008.

I would like to thank everyone for all their warmth, patience, and guidance. I moved to Ridgecrest the summer of 2000, and I truly started to LIVE in the Indian Wells Valley when I started this position at Maturango Museum in January. I have been taught so much about the natural beauty that we see every day, and I still have so much to learn about the history of the Indian Wells Valley. This is a wonderful and strong community in which my children are growing up to be young adults, and I am proud to be a part of this great group of people. Your Museum is a FABULOUS place, and I intend to spread the word to everyone I meet. For those of you who have met me personally, I do like to talk!!

My family and I have volunteered for the Museum, and now that I am not an employee we hope that we will see all of you here volunteering with us again. The Maturango Museum staff and volunteers work so hard to keep your Museum doors open. I have to give them so much respect for all they do, and I look forward to seeing all my friends soon at the Museum and all the many activities the Museum will hold in the future. See you here.

# Docent Doings

*By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinators*

“Is it real?” is undoubtedly the most frequently asked question of a docent. Well, the child doesn’t mean is the docent real, but is the specimen real. It is interesting to watch young children grapple with the concept—real, formerly living, and now, not living, but real. Young children will still be saying, “Is it real?” Our docent specimens continue to be the stars of the show in the classroom or at community events. Badger has been very popular in November and December although it is frequently mistaken for a wolverine. Badger has great claws and a seam up its belly. This specimen is perfect for showing how a specimen’s pelt is stretched around a pre-made form, not just “stuffed” like a stuffed animal one might buy at a toy store.

At Santa’s Art Shop, young and old alike were drawn to roadrunner with its beautiful red, white, and blue markings. Many people were surprised to learn that the roadrunner is carnivorous. The tarantula hawk in the Insect display was eye-catching to all. The docents have a difficult time when it comes to choosing which specimens to take out for community events. Fortunately, with help from our Museum staff and board, we have been to four community events this fall so we could share many different specimens.

In November and December docents served about 500 students in addition to presenting at the Community Dinner and Santa’s Art Shop. We enjoy teaching about the wonders of our desert.

The docents were fortunate to meet two stars in December. Pat Brown-Berry, former director of the Maturango Museum and noted bat biologist, presented a program on bats of the southwestern deserts to the docents on December 3. The featured special guest was Bonnie, Pat’s pet bat. Many of us observed that Bonnie was as soft as a kitten and even purred like a kitten. No wonder Bonnie is called an ambassador bat; she teaches humans the truths about bats and negates the fears. Docents enjoyed Pat’s video, “Dancing Bats.” Did you know that male bats go a-courtin’ with flapping wings and dancing about? The docents thank Pat for her wonderful presentation.

The docents decided to purchase a set of walkie-talkies for Museum tours. Now those with the groups inside the Museum can communicate with the docent giving the outside tour! Susan Moore has nearly finished our new reptile scripts, and Camille Anderson, our script chairperson, is working with others to develop other new scripts. The beat goes on!

All of us are pleased to have Dan Burnett and Paula Herr return to the docent world! We are fortunate to have Terry Ratcliff, Marge Fulton, and Nancy McCrary join the Docent League of the Maturango Museum. Don’t miss your opportunity! Join us at our next meeting on Tuesday, January 6, at 9:00 a.m., or 8:45 a.m. if you want coffee and treats.

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## Thank You from the Natural History Curator

*By Camille Anderson, Natural History Curator*

Now that the new year is beginning, I would like to take the time to look back over the previous year and thank the many individuals who contributed to the natural history collections in the Museum, including the docent collection and the library. Most of you know that the exhibit room in the Museum contains only a small portion of our larger Museum collections. Our ecology and paleontology exhibits are more or less permanent, but the discovery area and the bird case contain rotating displays. During the past year, those of you who have visited the Museum might have noticed that the ecology islands now have a protective barrier around them. The wood and Plexiglas structures are so well made that they actually make the displays more attractive, as well

as protect them from vandalism. I would like to thank Thom Boggs and Carroll Evans for all their hard work on these displays. I would also like to thank Karen Mendoza’s father for the idea that spurred this design.

A new bird exhibit is in the bird case. The idea for this particular display was generated by the donation of the beautiful Blue Heron by Terri Middlemiss. Other people who have generously donated natural history material to the Museum in the past year include Elaine Wiley, Thom Boggs, Al and Joan Woodman, Myrna Stevens, Samuel B. Treat, Jr., Richard Hallowell, Brenda Burnett, Lee Sutton, Rachel Woodard, Cam Alden, Ryan Young, and Chris Fawkes. Some of these

See NATURAL HISTORY EXHIBITS, Page 6

# Natural History Exhibits (continued from Page 5)

animals and other material will be added to the Museum collection and others will be added to the docent collection that travels to local schools and organizations for educational programs.

The new mineral exhibit also generated donations to the mineral collection of the Museum. I would like to thank Betty Meng and Marvin and Ardis McGowan for their contributions to the collection.

Many of you know that we have spent a lot of time organizing the Museum library in the last two years. It has become apparent that there are some gaps in the natural history collection. Luckily for us, there have been a few people who have donated some wonderful books that help fill these gaps. Robert Meade, Rosalie McChesney, Peter Brown and the family of John Ohl have all contributed books to the library in the past year.

The docent programs are a very popular outreach part of the Museum. Currently the docents are in the process of transferring their

programs from slides to PowerPoint. In this process, we have been able to update the photographs of the programs. I would like to thank the many individuals who contributed photos to these endeavors. They include Elaine Wiley, Susan Moore-Woodman, Ian Anderson, Judy Breitenstein, Kathy LaShure, Alison Sheehy, Liz Babcock, and Gary Babcock. I would also like to thank Gary and Liz for their help in updating the faded photos in the exhibit room. Other people who have contributed materials used by the docents include Richard Zinke, Anna Lynn, Joanna Rindt, Pat Brown-Berry, and Carolyn Ganner.

I would also like to thank Judy and Gene Breitenstein for their help with the herbarium collection, and all the docents, Ken Pringle, and Carroll Evans for their help throughout the year. The contributions of these individuals definitely improve our Museum and help make it a wonderful destination for people wanting to learn more about the area in which we live!

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## Artifacts and Features

*By Sandy Rogers, Archaeology Curator*

This article is one of an occasional series discussing matters archaeological, especially with reference to the Maturango Museum. Today I want to talk about a fascinating paper that was presented at the 31st Great Basin Anthropological Conference in Portland, Oregon, in October 2008. Among the papers was one entitled An Experimental Technique for Measuring Age of Petroglyph Production: Results on Coso Petroglyphs, by Farrel W. Lytle and co-authors (of which I was one). Farrel was unable to attend because of a medical problem, so I read the paper for him. In this article, I briefly summarize the paper as presented, as I think it will be of interest to Museum members.

It is well known that the processes which form desert varnish, which are probably of biotic origin, concentrate manganese and iron, probably by processing dust from the atmosphere. When the petroglyph image is created, the desert varnish is scraped or pecked away to expose the lighter base rock. Desert varnish then starts to reform on the exposed surface, in the process often called repatination. The principle of Lytle's technique is to use XRF to measure how much the surface has repatinated by measuring the strength of the XRF manganese signal, and translate that into an age estimate by a calibration curve. The measurements are based on manganese concentration, since its XRF signal is less affected by basal rock composition than the signal from iron is.

Measurement by XRF has the great advantage over other techniques that it is simple to perform and completely non-destructive. The XRF instrument is about the size of a hand-held hair-dryer, and is battery operated. It contains a digital data-collection system, which will also perform sorting and processing of data; data are downloaded to a computer via a USB connection. Taking a measurement involves holding the muzzle end of the instrument against the rock surface, and holding the trigger until the instrument "beeps", about one to three minutes.

See ARTIFACTS AND FEATURES, Page 7

# Artifacts and Features (continued from Page 6)

The devil is always in the details, of course. First, an image of approximately uniform density is needed, one without deep pits harboring old varnish. Second, a calibration curve is necessary, which was derived from desert varnish on Shinarump sandstone in Utah. Over the ages, blocks of the sandstone have broken from the basal formation and slid down slope, exposing a fresh surface to varnish formation. The same surface was exposed to bombardment by neutrons from cosmic ray showers, which causes the formation of isotopes of beryllium and aluminum ( $^{10}\text{Be}$  and  $^{26}\text{Al}$ , so-called “cosmogenic” isotopes) within the rock. The concentration of these isotopes can be measured by accelerator mass spectrometry, and, since the rate of isotopic build-up has been determined by geologists, the age since the rock surface was exposed can be determined. Third, it is necessary to make a correction for the slope of the rock surface; since desert varnish is formed from dust settling out of the atmosphere, it is reasonable to expect a horizontal surface to accumulate more dust than a vertical surface.

The calibration curve was constructed by applying the slope correction to the integrated XRF signal for manganese (after subtracting the background signal from the rock), and plotting against the age from the cosmogenic isotope data; Lytle computed the accuracy of the curve to be about  $\pm 25\%$ , which is typical of geological work and adequate for our purposes. However, once the calibration curve and slope correction factors from Shinarump sandstone were known, the issue arose of whether the results were transferable to other rock types, such as basalt. Lytle verified this by applying the technique to the basalt boulders known as “melon gravels” on the Snake River Plain in Idaho. Desert varnish began forming on these boulders after they were deposited by the Bonneville Flood, about 14,300 years ago, so age is known. Based on a set of 17 measurements of these boulders, Lytle’s calibration curve yielded an age of  $15,900 \pm 24\%$ , which is well within the accuracy expected from the calibration curve.

With this verification accomplished, Lytle and his team visited the Coso petroglyphs in June, 2008, to try the technique there. Two days in the field were planned, but no data were collected the first day at Haiwee Spring, due to malfunction of the XRF spectrometer. The second day, a blistering hot one with clouds of no-see-ums to accompany us, we visited Sheep Canyon and made measurements on three classes of images: archery scenes, where the age can reasonably be inferred to be less than about 1600 years; projectile points, whose type could be recognized and hence age guessed; and patterned-body anthropomorphs (PBA) and sheep, whose age was unknown. In each image a region with uniform patination was selected for measurement, and a mask placed on the surface to guide placement of the instrument. The XRF data were collected, the azimuth and slope of the surface were measured, and the image was photographed. Data reduction and analysis were performed back in the lab, away from the no-see-ums.

The results were gratifying. The four archers measured gave ages between 740 and 1200 BP, with a mean of 960 BP, which is consistent with archaeological expectations. The image of the projectile points, which appear to be Elko Eared or Humboldt Basal-Notched, yielded an age of 2600 BP, which again agrees with archaeology. An image of a PBA holding an atlatl gave an age of 3500 BP, while one with a bow and arrow dated to 1050 BP; again, both are archaeologically reasonable. A single atlatl image dated to 4900 BP. Turning to images with less archaeological basis, a solid-body anthropomorph dated to 3900 BP, and a heavily repatinated PBA to 6,900 BP. Two round-body sheep were dated, one to 1300 BP and the other to 2100 BP, while a boat-body sheep with horns seen face-on, the “classic Coso” form, dated to 3900 BP. A full-face sheep head dated to 4300 BP.

Based on these very preliminary data, the technique appears to work. It is transferable between sandstone and basalt, and gives ages of images which are archaeologically reasonable. The sample size is still very small, but the indications are promising. Clearly much work remains to be done, of course. The calibration curve needs to be refined to reduce the error margin, if possible. More data need to be collected to verify the conclusions given here, and the “old varnish in deep pits” problem needs thorough investigation. With all these caveats, we are cautiously optimistic about the XRF technique.

## Calendar of Events

### January 2009

Thursday, January 1 – CLOSED, New Year's Day

Friday, January 2 – CLOSED

Tuesday, January 6 – docent meeting, 8:30 a.m.

Friday, January 9 – gallery reception 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, January 14 – lecture, 7:30 p.m.

Monday, January 19 – board meeting 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, January 20 – gallery committee meeting 9:30 a.m.

Friday, January 30 – concert 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, January 31 – concert 7:30 p.m.

# Plans Underway for Spring 2009 Field Trips

*By Harris M. Brokke, Executive Director*

Plans are currently in progress to schedule Museum-sponsored field trips for spring 2009. Several locations are being considered including:

- Manzanar Relocation Camp, Lone Pine Film Museum, and Eastern California Film Museum
- Getty Museum
- Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum
- Norton Simon Museum
- Getty Villa Museum
- Bowers Museum

We want to schedule our field trips for those museums that are of the most interest to our members and to the public. Therefore, I invite you to send me an email with your preferences to [matmus6@maturango.org](mailto:matmus6@maturango.org). I'd appreciate your comments by no later than January 16, 2009. Thank you in advance for your input.

**Docents 30th Anniversary Celebration—It's almost here—February 8, 2009 2-4 p.m. at the Museum**

Maturango Museum  
100 E. Las Flores Ave.  
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

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