



# Maturango News



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

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## Switzerland by Rail

For the March lecture, Janet Westbrook will speak on her recent trip to Switzerland and her fifteen days of railroad travels there. Switzerland is a small country, about the size of New Hampshire and Vermont together, about one tenth the area of California. The geography features glacier-covered high mountains with deep valleys between, and there are railroads in every valley, up many of the mountains, and under some of them. Given a 15-day Swiss Rail Pass, good for transport on any Swiss public train, boat, post bus, trolley, tram, etc., it is possible to criss-cross the country and ride on the major tourist train routes, including the amazing Glacier Express from Zermatt to St. Mortiz, the Bernina Express from Chur to Tirano, Italy, the Golden Pass Line from Lucerne to Montreux, and the Wilhelm Tell Express from Lucerne to Locarno, Italy. These include the 15-mile long Simplon tunnel, the 9-mile long Gotthard tunnel, and the Furka tunnel, all going under the Alps. In addition, for another small fee one may ride the various Rack (cog) railways, built especially for tourists, up mountains, including the great Jungfrau train through the north face of the Eiger to Jungfrauoch where the train station is at 11,333 feet, inside the mountain. Janet took side trips to the lovely ski village of Aurosa and the distinct Appenzelle region, and rode charter steam trains and old steam trams through the downtowns of several big cities. In all, she rode on 74 trains, trams, buses, and boats. The weather cooperated, with spectacularly clear fall weather to visit the Matterhorn and the Eiger and Jungfrauoch, and snow near St. Mortitz.

Janet Westbrook has lived in Ridgecrest since 1966 and describes herself as a semi-retired professor of Biology at Cerro Coso College. She has traveled all her life and has now visited over 105 countries, and she volunteers with a number of organizations, including the Maturango Museum, the China Lake Mountain Rescue Group, Audubon Society, Sierra Club, and Kennedy Meadows First Aid Group.

This fascinating lecture will be on Wednesday, March 18, and will start at 7:30 p.m.

## Photographer Ralph Paonessa Exhibit

*By Rosemary Lackaye, Gallery Coordinator*

A reception for the artist will be held on March 13 at 7:00 p.m. in the Sylvia Winslow Exhibit Gallery. The artist's talk will begin at 7:30. Paonessa is a professional photographer, lecturer, and workshop leader based in Ridgecrest, California. Hundreds of his images have been published in magazines, newspapers,



calendars, and books, including numerous covers. In 1997, he founded Ralph Paonessa Photography Workshops, through which he guided photo trips throughout the world for photographers ranging from novice to pros.

See EXHIBIT, Page 3

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.

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## April Concert

*By Fran Rogers*



"We Friends" will present the fifth concert in the 2008-2009 Maturango Museum concert series in the Sylvia Winslow Exhibit Gallery on Friday, April 3, 2009, at 7:30 p.m. 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.

"We Friends" concerts have been a welcome mainstay in the Maturango Museum series for a number of years. The instrumental make-up of the group changes year-to-year, with the constant members being Catherine Douglas, piano, and Ruthann Sutton, 'cello. This year's friends also include Jenny McLaughlin (violin), Lynnette Wilson (flute), and Sylvia Hillesland (oboe).

"We Friends" will perform trios and quartets music by the composers Vivaldi, Loeillet, and J.S. Bach.

# Message from the Executive Director

*By Harris M. Brokke*

The Maturango Museum held its annual membership meeting on February 20 at the Carriage Inn. At this meeting, the members received information on the Museum activities for 2008.

The Museum had a tough year financially, as did almost every business in the state, country, and the entire world. These tough times need to [and will] bring out the best in all of us; we will get through this and, I believe, the Maturango Museum will come out of this depression even stronger than we were before. Working together, this will happen! My goal is to make this happen by substantially increasing individual/family memberships and business memberships. At the same time, the Museum will continue to provide excellence in our programs and services. We have a great museum with outstanding exhibits and programs to entertain people of all ages. Working together, we will continue to be successful!

Plans are moving forward on the building expansion. During February, the building committee met several times and made their final recommendations on the building plans, including electrical, mechanical, and plumbing, as well as the finishings for each room. Recommendations from the staff, docents, artists, and other volunteers were also solicited and incorporated into these final

plans as appropriate. The Museum expects to receive the final plans incorporating our recommendations within the next several weeks. At that time, we will also receive the estimates for construction, including all material costs. I will keep you posted!

On March 20, the Maturango Museum will be holding a dinner/auction at the Kerr McGee Center to raise money for operating expenses. There is another article on this topic in the newsletter, so I won't elaborate any further in this message.

The schedule of upcoming events is again included in the newsletter and is also available on our website at [www.maturango.org](http://www.maturango.org), is advertised on our local radio stations, shown in the Chamber of Commerce schedule of community events, and included in the local newspapers.

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.

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## Exhibit (continued from page 1)

Paonessa's archival digital prints are produced on a professional digital inkjet printer to the highest standards. The images originate as both high-resolution digital captures and as film. For film photos, up to a 4x5 view camera is used and the pictures are then professionally scanned into digital format. The pigmented inks and paper have an archival rating of 100-200 years.

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.

Please join us for an interesting evening of meeting the artist and enjoying his art in the company of fellow art lovers. A portion of all sales will go to the Museum, and all artwork sold to Museum members during the reception will receive a 10% discount. The show runs through May 13.

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

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## 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](mailto:matmus5@maturango.org).

Entry deadline is May 31, 2009.

# Wildflower Show at the Maturango Museum

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

*By Kathryn LaShure*

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 and in the Coso and El Paso Mountains, as well as the Indian Wells Valley itself.

On Saturday, April 11, at 2:00 p.m., Ileene 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. Ileene's presentation will show the diversity of species in our ubiquitous desert plant community. She promises lots of colorful images that will have us all planning excursions to look for these beauties.

If you are interested in helping with this year's Wildflower Show, please contact Charlotte Goodson at 375-6449. Tasks include actual collecting of specimens, driving collecting teams to sites (high-clearance vehicles helpful), set-up at the Museum, identifying specimens, and clean-up at the end of the Show.

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## Field Trip to Reagan Library and Museum

*By: Harris Brokke, Executive Director*

On Saturday, March 7, the Maturango Museum will host a field trip to the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California. We will meet at the Museum at 6:30 a.m. for check-in, and all participants will be required to sign a liability waiver. The deadline for reservations is February 26. The cost is \$60 for members and \$75 for nonmembers. The member price applies to members only, not nonmember guests. Space is limited so make your reservations early.

You will need good walking shoes, jacket or sweater, and a box lunch if you don't want to eat at the Reagan Country Café. If you do want to eat at the Reagan Country Café, make your reservations as soon as you arrive to avoid long lines later.

Photography is allowed in the Library but not aboard Air Force One. (Exception: No flash photography.)

A trip to the Reagan Library and Museum offers a "memorable experience for people of all ages." The museum's promotional material states that it "seeks to engage, entertain and educate the visitor...." Artifacts relating to President Reagan's childhood, his career as an actor, his tenure as Governor of California and subsequently as the 40th President of the United States are assembled in this attractive hillside

complex that houses a museum, the presidential library, and the Air Force One Pavilion, the complex's latest addition.

Our visit will begin with a two-hour docent-led tour around the complex. After lunch, there will be time to browse on your own throughout the museum and Air Force One. Before departing for home, we'll stop at the Simi Valley Town Center, a nearby mall that offers both shopping and dining opportunities. We will return to Ridgecrest at approximately 8:00 p.m.

If the Museum cancels the trip, you will be given a full refund, or you may transfer the money to a different trip. If you cancel the trip, we do not give cash refunds. However, if the trip is full and we can sell your space, your money will be refunded. If you must cancel, please notify the Museum as early as possible so that people on the waiting list can be notified.

Bus trips require that we sell enough seats to cover our expenses. Each trip has a deadline for reservations; please note the date and sign up early! During the past year, several people told us that they were waiting to see if the trip would "go" before they signed up, and then they were disappointed when we cancelled the trip! Please, if you want to go, sign up! Remember, if we have to cancel a trip, we will refund your money.

# Maturango Museum to Hold Fundraiser

*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 Trio Scholastico & Kardia. 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 the Museum 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 sponsorship or a \$1,000 family/small business sponsorship, the sponsor will have a reserved table for eight complete with eight dinner tickets and complimentary wine. Also these sponsors will receive 20 raffle tickets, one-year Museum membership for non-member table guests, name in the program, significant advertising in the local media, and major advertising at the event.
- For a \$250 sponsorship, the sponsor will receive two dinner tickets, reserved seating, name in the program, and ten raffle tickets.

Dinner tickets are available 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 Avenue, Ridgecrest, California 93555, or come in to the Maturango Museum Store between the hours of 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The Museum is open seven days per week. Tickets can also be purchased at the Ridgecrest Chamber of Commerce, which is located at 128-B East California Avenue, Ridgecrest, California.

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

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## Docent Doings

*By Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator*

If you host a party, they will come! And come they did! Inspiring! Rewarding! Give to the community and it gives back! Current docents enjoyed the opportunity to host former docents and those people who started the Docent League. No wonder we feel like we have big shoes to fill. We do! The first docents brought great knowledge, skills, and enthusiasm. They learned from the best of the best! They set the standard for excellence!

Our community continues to benefit from the docents and their programs. We shared the knowledge and love of all things desert with over 8,000 people in 2008! Ninety percent of our programs were Outreach. Wow! Have laptop, projector, specimens and pack them in a car and you're good to go! Quite a task, quite a bit of carrying, and quite a bit of fun!

Last month 11 docents enjoyed a trip to the Exotic Feline Breeding Compound in Rosamond. The Compound is dedicated to the preservation of many beautiful, exotic wild cats. We enjoyed the trip together and had perfect weather!

March marks the beginning of SEEP presentations to all the fourth graders in our area. Docents spend at least a half a day in each school. They present Sand Canyon Alive on PowerPoint and then present two tables with specimens to teach about insects and about food webs. This instruction not only prepares students for the field trip to Sand Canyon, but addresses many of the fourth grade science standards. Jane McEwan, a former SEEP coordinator, designed much of the current program.

What will Dan Burnett do for an encore? Dan's Weather presentation to kindergarten students was a special highlight from last month! He juggled fire and ice! Yes, he brought ice, water, and put on the kettle. He even made water vapor and rain! The 100 kindergarten students, 20 at a time, thoroughly enjoyed Dan's presentation! Cloud windows may be the next trick up Dan's sleeves!

If you feel like you are missing all the fun, YOU ARE! Join the Docent League! We invite you to our meeting at 9:00 a.m. on the first Tuesday of each month!

## Calendar of Events

### March 2009

- Tuesday, March 3 – docent meeting,  
9:00 a.m.
- Saturday, March 7 – trip to the Reagan  
Library and Museum
- Friday, March 13 – gallery reception,  
7:00 p.m.
- Monday, March 16 – board meeting,  
7:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, March 17 – gallery meeting,  
9:30 a.m.
- Wednesday, March 18 – lecture, 7:30 p.m.
- Friday, March 20 – dinner/auction at Kerr  
McGee Center 5:00 p.m.

## Last Page Missing

*By Elizabeth Babcock*

Were you one of the early purchasers of the soft-cover version of my book, *Magnificent Mavericks*? If so, please look at the last page of the index and verify whether you can look up "Wilson, Haskell G." If not, you have a copy that's missing its last page. (If you purchased the hardcover version, don't worry, nothing is missing from your version.)

I have printed out and trimmed copies of that missing last page, so if you do have a defective copy of my book, please either visit the Museum Store and ask for the missing page or call (760) 375-6900 to have the page mailed to you.

The problem evidently occurred at the printer's, but other than that, I am very happy with the quality of the paperback version.

If you don't have a copy of my book and would like to purchase one, the Museum Store has copies available that now include the last page.

**Museum Store Restocked and ready to sell! Wildflower books and lots of other new titles for your spring treks! Shop here for everyone on your list - gifts that are unique and memorable.**

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