



Maturango News



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

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March 2010

Museum Spring Dinner/Auction Fundraiser on April 10th

Mark your calendar to attend the Museum's major annual fundraising event on Saturday, April 10th at the Kerr McGee Center. Tickets are \$30 per person and are available in the Museum store. The event starts at 5 p.m. with a silent auction and no-host bar. Dinner and entertainment will follow at 6 p.m., and the live auction will begin at 7:30 p.m.

Please support your Museum by making a donation of an auction item and by attending the dinner/auction to bid on the items. You may find an item or two that you can't do without.

Funds raised will be used to help pay for Museum operating expenses.

Concert Series

by Fran Rogers

"We Friends" will present the fifth concert in the 2009-2010 Maturango Museum concert series in the Sylvia Winslow Exhibit Gallery on Friday, March 12, 2010 at 7:30 pm. Seats are limited to 60, so avoid disappointment and buy 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), Sylvia Hillesland (oboe) and Gary Fry (clarinet).

"We Friends" will perform trios and quartets music by the composers Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Vivaldi, Loeillet, Telemann and Haydn.

"It's About Time" and Garden Additions

by Elaine Wiley

An equinox occurs twice a year when the length of the day and night are approximately equal. March 20, 2010 will be the next equinox and the Maturango Museum is celebrating the equinox with a dedication of recent garden additions. Our celebration will be held in the museum's garden at 10 am. Refreshments will be served. We will be dedicating the pondless fountain in memory of Sue Byrd, the Dick and Bernice Boyd bench, the Rosemary Wisdom Dixon bench, Elva Younkin's "Seat of Knowledge", and our most recent addition - the human sundial in memory of Bill Faith. We are very pleased with all the additions and we invite you to come out on March 20th to celebrate with us! Have your shadow tell you the time. Sit for a spell on a bench and admire the garden plants. Perhaps you'll see a bird or a little critter.

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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Message from the Executive Director

by Harris Brokke

The Museum will hold its annual dinner/auction fundraiser on Saturday, April 10th at the Kerr McGee Center. This is the primary fundraising event for the Museum each year. I encourage your participation both as a donor of an item for the auction and as a bidder/buyer of items during the auction. Please contact me if you are willing to make a donation, and I will make arrangements to have the item picked up. Tickets are available at the Museum store and may be purchased for \$30 per person.

Our Museum has recently joined the Eastern Sierra Cultural Heritage Alliance (ESCHA), which is comprised of all of the Museums and other tourism venues from Ridgecrest to Lee Vining. ESCHA's mission is to promote tourism along the Eastern Sierra region, which also includes Death Valley. During the period from March through September, ESCHA members are offering exhibits and lectures at more than 20 venues throughout the region to honor women of Eastern California. The Maturango Museum will have an exhibit during March and April and a lecture on March 17th as a part of this celebration. By working together, all ESCHA members benefit because all of us promote each other. It's a win-win for everyone. For more information please contact me or stop at the Museum store for the calendar of events.

Also our Museum has recently joined the Ridgecrest Area Hospitality Association (RAHO), which is comprised of hotels, museums, the Ridgecrest Area Convention and Visitors Bureau. The mission of RAHO is to promote tourism throughout the greater Ridgecrest area. You'll hear much more about this organization in subsequent newsletters.

I am sorry to announce that Albertsons has discontinued the Community Partner's Program in the state of California as of January 31, 2010. Thanks to all who signed up to have the Museum named as a recipient of this program. The Museum gained benefit from your efforts for the past several months.

We at the Museum continue to need additional volunteers to work in the Museum store and to serve as Docents. For more information about becoming a store volunteer, please check with Jane. For information on the programs offered by the Docents, please stop in or call and ask for Nora Nuckles.

Please consider the Museum when you are doing estate planning, when you are making donations in honor of or in memory of someone or for making tax-deductible contributions. Thanks to all of you who have recently made donations and contributions to the Museum. Your generosity is very much appreciated.

Finally, I welcome any and all comments that you may have about the Museum. Your comments are a critical element of our continuous improvement efforts at the Museum. May you all have a wonderful new year!

Spring Wildflower Exhibit

by Charlotte Goodson

The Annual Spring Wildflower Exhibit will take place the second weekend of April running Friday through Sunday, April 9 - 11, 2010. It's time to mark your calendars for what promises to be an especially wonderful display of wildflowers in this El Nino year! On Sunday afternoon there will be a program featuring outstanding pictures of our own area's flora by local photographers. More details will follow in the April newsletter.

Docent Doings

by Nora Nuckles, Education Coordinator

Will Spring be sprung? Will students learn about the birds and the bees? Yes, indeed. Despite the hail and rain that pounded me as I wrote this article, I know that docents are perfecting Wildflower, Weather, and Reptile scripts to renew our presentations. The garden committee has set March 20 (the Vernal Equinox) for the dedication for the sundial and the benches in the garden. March 15 marks the beginning of the Sand Canyon Environmental Program (SEEP) presented to the 4th graders in the valley.

For SEEP, docents present programs on desert animals with an emphasis on ecosystems, water, and interdependency. We show a special PowerPoint presentation on Sand Canyon while Audubon members give a special presentation on Birds. We are proud that Dan Burnett and Susan Moore (our docents) frequently give the Bird presentations for Audubon.

Several small birds brought in by museum members have been freeze-dried. The birds will be used in the SEEP program as well as in other presentations. We hope to be reimbursed for the bird preparation under a newly funded SEEP grant awarded to the Desert Mountain Resource, Conservation & Development Council. The new birds are: house finch, Wilson's warbler, yellow warbler, MacGillivray's warbler, ruby-crowned kinglet, a male Costas hummingbird, and a female rufous hummingbird. In addition a side-blotched lizard and a banded sand snake were freeze-dried. Dan Burnett, Elaine Wiley, and Camille Anderson are working with Thom Boggs to make sturdy cases for the birds. Some of the birds will make star appearances at the Bird Station in Sand Canyon.

Docents purchased bear and white-tail deer skull reproductions. These will be used in our Bones, Desert Alive, and special SEEP Desert Alive presentations.

Sounds like all work and no play? A planning meeting for the Children's Hour on flex Fridays is a riot! Puppets, songs, poems, specimens suddenly appear! Laughter soon follows. Then watch the fun at the next story time on flex Friday! Children's Hours are scheduled for the following dates: April 2 and 16, April 30, May 14 and 28. These are the scheduled dates. Watch for information in the newspaper or call to confirm or visit the museum anyway. There is always something new to see—especially in the Discovery Area!

We strive to update our presentations and add more hands-on specimens and materials so we have a “perfect” fit for the audience and age levels. We seek new docents so that we can complete all our program requests for a month. Come join us at our meetings on the first Tuesday of each month at 8:45 AM. Call Nora at the museum if you would like to join the Docent League.

Exclusive Tours & Maturango Museum present Italy, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, and the Passion Play, OBERAMMERGAU

September 8 – September 22, 2010

15 Days

The centerpiece of this trip will be to attend the Passion Play at Oberammergau - in September of 2010. This fascinating cultural event occurs only once every ten years and involves the participation of the entire population of a small town in Southern Germany. Besides the play, areas in Austria, Italy, and the Czech Republic will be included. In these regions, we will visit Prague, Cesky Krumlov, Salzberg, including the Hallstatt Lake District, "Mad" King Ludwig's most famous castle at Neuschwanstein, Hitler's "Eagles Nest," at Berchtesgaden, Venice, Lake Como, and Milan.

A detailed brochure is available: <http://www.conceptio.cc/leo/>

If you have any questions about this trip, please feel free to contact me, Leo Girardot at 760-375-8737 or Email: magics@ridgenet.net.

This tour is being organized and will be led by Leo Girardot, retired professor, who has been planning and leading tours with the Maturango Museum for over 25 years.



Southwestern Desert Bats

Patricia Brown-Berry, Ph.D. 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 14 until noon on May 16. She has taught this class (or variations) at the DSC for the past 27 years. Dr. Brown-Berry has conducted research on bats for the past 42 years, is a Research Associate at UCLA, and former Director of the Maturango Museum (1982-92). She currently consults with state and federal agencies on bat surveys and conservation issues, in particular with regard to abandoned mine closures.

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. 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.

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 California State University Preserve system. The Desert Studies Center lies within the Mojave National Preserve. Throughout the year, the DSC hosts a variety of desert-oriented courses in several disciplines as well as scientific research. Students will stay in dormitory rooms with desks and bunk beds (students bring their own bedding and towel). If available, couples will be accommodated in bungalows with double beds. 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. You will enjoy your stay at this fascinating facility.

Cost: \$225/person includes instruction, two nights' lodging at the Center, a snack Friday evening and five meals beginning with breakfast on Saturday. 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.

Field Trips with Janet Westbrook

by Janet Westbrook

Severe budget cuts at Cerro Coso College have forced the cancellation of Professor Janet Westbrook's popular weekend field trips, but she would like to offer similar venue through the Museum. These trips will be "one long day" and explore our local area. Janet is a Professor of Biology, a "naturalist", versed in many aspects of the Natural Sciences and she has gathered fascinating tidbits of history of these special places as well, having lived in Ridgecrest for now 44 years. A fair amount of driving, not much walking - the idea will be to show you where wonderful places are, explain what makes them so interesting, and enable you to come back on your own to explore more. We'll be doing short forays on some dirt roads, but any "family" vehicle in good condition can do this, just probably not suitable for the Porsche.

Bring your cameras, a picnic lunch, and family members who would be interested in learning an amazing variety of things in a day. Sign up at the Museum; fees are \$30 per person for Museum members, and \$35 for non-members.

The first adventure trip is scheduled for Saturday, April 3, to go to Death Valley National Park with the objective of looking at whatever flowers there may be by then, watch the silly pupfish swim in an inch of water at Salt Creek, and enjoy seeing the Pleistocene lakes with water in them again and snow on the mountains.

The next adventure will be May 8 to the Owens Valley. Anyone can drive to Bishop non-stop in 1.5 hrs, but we'll be taking all day to do it so we can explore some very interesting back roads and fun places along the way, including watching the Owens River flow all the way to the lake, visit Klondike Lake, stand under the huge Caltech Radio telescopes, visit fish hatcheries, learn about mining, water issues, railroads, etc.. - the stuff you always zoom past.

Art Gallery

Current Exhibit and "The Art Gallery Needs You"

By Andrea Pelch, Gallery Coordinator



Quilt Show Spring brings us the magnificent quilts of the High Desert Quilt Guild' exhibit "Quilts for a Desert Spring" ! Since the wildflower show is during the quilt show, the artists will use that as their theme. The quilts will range in size from queen-size bed to placemat-size wall hangings. All are handmade by our local artists.

The reception for the Quilt exhibit is Friday March 19 at 7:00 p.m.

We Need: For our September 11 – October 13 Folk Dance Costumes exhibit we need dress forms, padded hangers, or mannequins. We will use them to display the exquisite assemblages that the local Folk Dance group has collected. Please call 375-6900 to talk with Andrea Pelch, our Art Gallery Coordinator.

We Thank Our Supporters and New Members

Donations

Dr. Neil R. Arbegast
Russ and Linda Bates
Delores Charles
Rod and Judy Ditzler
Shirley Pladson
Mike Sisson - sundial project tiles/materials
Stanley and Jeanie Haye
Ken Wetzel
Rachel Woodard

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Thom and Toni Boggs - in memory of Mary Lee McBride
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Jacklyn Smith and John Adams

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Calendar of Events

March 2010

Tues., Mar. 2 – Docents meeting – 8:45 a.m.
 Fri., Mar. 12 – Concert, “We Friends” – 7:30 p.m.
 Mon. Mar. 15 – Board of Trustees meeting – 7:00 p.m.
 Tues., Mar. 16 – Art Gallery meeting – 9:00 a.m.
 Wed., Mar. 17 – Lecture, 7:30 p.m. – Dr. Lorraine Blair – Rose Burcham, Pioneer Physician and Owner of Yellow Aster mine
 Fri., Mar. 19 – Gallery reception for Quilt show – 7:00 p.m.
 Sat., Mar. 20 – Dedication of recent garden additions – 10 a.m.

April 2010

Fri., Apr. 2, 16 & 30 – Children’s hour – 10:00 a.m.
 Tues., Apr. 6 – Docents meeting – 8:45 a.m.
 Wed. – Sat., Apr. 7 – 10 – Wildflower Show
 Fri., Apr. 10 – Annual dinner/auction – 5 p.m. at the Kerr McGee Center
 Fri., Apr. 16 – Concert, Fiddlin’ Pete – 7:30 p.m.
 Mon. Apr. 19 – Board of Trustees meeting – 7:00 p.m.
 Tues., Apr. 20 – Art Gallery meeting – 9:00 a.m.
 Wed., Apr. 21 – Lecture, 7:30 p.m. – Liz Babcock will discuss a few of the highly productive mavericks featured in her book, “Magnificent Mavericks”.

Spring Petroglyph Trip Schedule

Mar. 6, 7, 13,
14, 20, 21
Apr. 3, 4, 17,
18
May 15, 16, 22,
23, 29, 30
June 5, 6
Reservations
required. Note:
Some dates
may be full, so
call before you
submit an
application.

Maturango Museum
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