



Exhibit educates on a small scale



Leslie Shaw Hi-Desert Star

A large portion of the exhibit features the California desert tortoise. In this photo, two male tortoises are battling for territory.

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Story and photos by Leslie Shaw Hi-Desert Star |

YUCCA VALLEY — The Hi-Desert Nature Museum current exhibit, “Cold-Blooded in the Mojave,” focuses on the reptilian animals of the desert.

The museum’s resident biologist, Stefanie Ritter, took a lot of the photos herself with the exception of a large donation of photographs from the Palm Springs Art Museum.

“They used to be the Palm Springs Desert Museum and they used to have a natural history exhibit. When they closed that, they donated a lot of these fantastic photos to us,” explained Ritter.

The donated photography is signed “Baerwold,” and the museum has been unable to discover any more information about the photographer. “We are not even sure how old they are,” said Ritter. “But they are so good that we are happy to show them.”

The exhibit is an opportunity for children to learn about our cold-blooded desert neighbors and enjoy the coloring projects and the lizard toys provided by the museum.

The exhibit displays snake, lizard and of course tortoise information. Visitors will learn about how many vertebrae a snake has, see a five-foot-long gopher snake skin, learn about the fighting, eating and mating habits of the desert tortoise, find out about the effects of pollution on desert wildlife and see how many types of lizard they can recognize.

The Price family was enjoying the coloring projects at the exhibit Wednesday. “It’s nice that they always have these coloring projects to go with every exhibit,” Lisa Price of Yucca Valley said.

The museum is located on Dumosa Avenue just north of Twentynine Palms Highway in the Yucca Valley Community Center complex. It is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Admission is free.