

Vol. 18 No. 1
Summer -2013

Laboratory Retiree Group Newsletter
(LRG)

"Reaching Out From a Common Experience"

Greetings from a unique group of people - the retirees of the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). The Laboratory Retiree Group (LRG) is a non-profit corporation which seeks to maintain communications with and to serve the needs and interests of retirees from LANL. If you wish to join our organization, an application is available in this newsletter. For more information, please contact our President Charles R. Mansfield at coyote2@swcp.com or by mail at P. O. Box 546, Los Alamos, NM 87544.

LRG Officers and Board Members

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Health Care Premium Working Committee: Glenn Lockhart

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Main Gate: John Stewart, (505) 662-7158

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The Laboratory Retiree Group web site is www.losalamoslrg.org.

Health Issues

by Glenn Lockhart

The Budget Control Act of 2011 imposed “meat ax” budget cuts for selected federal programs effective January 1, 2013, if the Congress could not pass a federal budget for Fiscal Year 2013. The name given these cuts was “sequestration.”

After a two-month delay in sequestration implementation, a two (2) percent sequestration reduction was imposed on Medicare in March 2013. This reduction was to be imposed on the amount that Medicare **would have paid** and not on the amount that Medicare allowed for a given procedure or service. Blue Cross/Blue Shield of New Mexico misinterpreted the effect of sequestration on claim processing.

The following table illustrates an actual National Medicare Supplement outpatient (Medicare Part B) claim (EOB=Explanation of Benefits):

	Correct	EOB	Difference
Medicare allowable	59.21	58.26	-0.95
Medicare Benefit (80%)	47.37	46.60	-0.77
Sequestration (2% of benefit)	-0.95	-0.18	0.77
Medicare Payment	46.42	46.42	0.00
BCBS Benefit (20% of Med allow)	11.84	11.66	-0.18
BCBS Sequestration	0.95	0.00	-0.95
BCBS Payment	12.79	11.66	-1.13
May owe Provider	0.00	0.18	0.18

For National Medicare Supplement, you should owe nothing to the provider. The effects for National EPO and National PPO claims vary from this example because of different coverage when coordinated with Medicare.

Blue Cross/Blue Shield of New Mexico has promised to have the necessary computer programming complete by August 15, 2013, and all claims reprocessed by the end of August 2013.

If you have questions about your LANL health insurance, call me at 1-505-672-3784; e-mail me at mandmlockhart@cs.com; or write me at 91 Mimbres Drive, Los Alamos, NM 87544.

Alaska - The Iditarod Race

Have you ever thought about vacationing in Alaska in the middle of winter? If you're like most people, probably not. I'm here, though, to tell you it can be a vacation like none other. To survive in temperatures down to -40° F does take a little extra preparation and planning, but is well worth the effort. If you haven't moved on to the next article yet, you might soon find yourself booking your flight to Anchorage and the Arctic Circle for February, 2014.

My first trip to Alaska was August, 2008, what I considered a civilized month to visit our most northern state. I was helping my daughter move to Anchorage for her first semester at the University of Alaska. Having never been particularly interested in traveling to what is considered the Last True Frontier, I was looking forward to the trip but with a rather ho-hum attitude. We flew to Anchorage and I must admit that my attitude toward Alaska changed the moment we landed. Seeing a moose in the airport parking lot isn't something you see every day. We spent the next week getting my daughter settled into her dorm, doing the requisite Target shopping for those much-needed home-away-from-home items, and spending a few days sightseeing in and around Anchorage. I went home with a much greater appreciation for this wonderful state; the ruggedness, the beauty, the fortitude and the help-your-neighbor attitude are unsurpassed.

By the fall, I was itching to get back, even willing to brave the winter temperatures. The only insight I had into Alaska in the winter, however, was the Iditarod race. This is the annual dog sled race from Anchorage to Nome, an 1100-mile race in frigid temperatures through the most rugged terrain imaginable. It's a true test of survival and grit for both the dogs and the mushers. Thinking I didn't want to visit Alaska in the winter and simply sit indoors, I went online to see if the Iditarod accepted volunteers. They did! After several e-mails, I found myself signed up for two volunteer positions: four days on the Help Desk and 3 days in Communications. With those jobs lined up, then came the research into how does one even prepare for an adventure to Alaska in February.

What an adventure it turned out to be! I had to buy boots that were rated to -30° F, along with a jacket with the same rating. A fur-lined hood was a must. Folks in Alaska aren't too into PETA, calling it instead People Eating Tasty Animals. Actually, the only material that will truly keep an Alaskan warm is animal fur. You will see a lot of animal skin coats. Don't fret about it. Alaskans know how they must survive.

It was an honor to work on the race alongside 40 vets from around the world, mushers who were rugged, salt-of-the earth men and women who love their dogs more than themselves, and the numerous pilots who volunteer their time and planes to drop dog food, supplies and workers at the checkpoints and transport dogs who may become sick or injured during the race. I manned the phones on the help desk, answering questions about the race from around the world. Using satellite phones, I kept communication lines open to the checkpoint workers, ensuring they arrived safely and had the supplies they needed. If supplies hadn't arrived, I had to work with pilots to get what was needed transported as soon as possible. An eye-opener for me was, due to weather conditions, a group of workers at a remote checkpoint had to spend their first night with no stove, a tent but no poles, and no food. Their response the next morning of "...yeah, it was a bit chilly last night" showed me the ruggedness of folks who make their lives in such extreme conditions. The Iditarod is an amazing race taken very seriously by everyone because mistakes can be fatal in that environment. I went away from the experience having seen the amazing beauty of Alaska in the winter and participating in a unique event that humbled me in the presence of the beautiful dogs and the mushers who love and care for them.

If you would like to volunteer for the 2014 Iditarod, now is the time to start planning. Go to www.iditarod.com, click on "Volunteers" near the top, and start your adventure!

Cindy Eaton (cindy.eaton@att.net)



Los Alamos Changes (photos by Bob Meier)



Several wings of the high school were torn down and replaced with a new building. The building was finished last year.



The Redeemer Lutheran Church was finished last year. It is located between the Baptist Church and the Pueblo Complex on Diamond Drive. Redeemer is a member congregation of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod.

White Rock Changes (photos by Bob Meier)



The new White Rock Visitor Center Complex building was completed and dedicated on September 28, 2012, with many local and a few state dignitaries present. The visitor center also provides RV spaces with electricity that are available for public use. Summer visitors to Bandelier National Monument must board shuttle buses here.



The interior of the White Rock Visitor Center Complex building.



In Memoriam

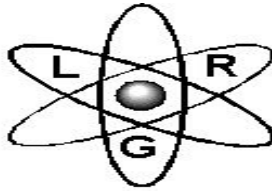
As of 07-08-13



Edward R. Grilly
Thomas Ilg
Charles Don Reese
Ellen LaPlant
Otis A. Farmer
Daniel R. Gomez
John F. Taylor
Charles D. Blackwell
Virginia F. Turner
Dale M. Holm
James D. Van Degrift
Erma T. Sharpnack
Edward J. Baran
Albert G. Bowler
Virginia E. Emelity
Robert C. Pond
Robert E. Schafer
Cleo C. Byers
Shirley A. Mathews
Frank A. Ortega
Armand T. Brousseau
Tony "Cookie" Quintana
Aldred Edward Schofield
Claudia York
Rene J. Prestwood
Thomas Rivera
Marion H. Davis
John W. Drake
Michael S. Kelly
Peter R. Forman
Oscar Roy Norris, Jr.
Wayne W. Lemons
Nancy L. Loughlin
Amil H. Koetter
Gordon N. Keating
Bernabe Segura

Hod Baxman
Pat Krickorian (AEC)
Roddy B. Walton
Newby G. Ellington
Stephen A. McCleary
Eugene H. Eyster
Elnora Anaya
Marie V. Geoffrion
Nathan Safferstein
Ila Rae Holcomb
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John "Jack" Kephart
Glenn S. Brunson, Jr.
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Ursula M. Hayter
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Larry Sitney
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Bruce M. Gallaher
Gill Gaskill
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Fredrick J. Edeskuty
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Louis C. Speer
Kenneth E. Chellis
Mary Ann Olson
Matthew J. Roybal
Raphael Alonzo Montana
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Ernest A. Lujan
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Gordon D. Crocker
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Douglas G. Vance
Daniel M. Montoya



Reaching Out From a
Common Experience

Membership Application

LRG has three classes of membership. Participation in all LRG social or educational events is open to all members regardless of membership classification.

ACTIVE Member: A Los Alamos National Laboratory employee who has retired **from the prime contractor of LANL (presently UCRS, PERS, and LANS).** Active members pay dues of \$12.00/ calendar year. VOTING PRIVILEGES at Annual Meetings and eligibility to serve as LRG Officers and/or Directors are reserved for Active Members. Active Members receive copies of the LABORATORY RETIREE DIRECTORY and LRG's publication, *The Main Gate*.

AFFILIATE Member: The spouse of an Active Member, of a deceased retiree, or of a deceased person who would have been eligible for ACTIVE membership. **AFFILIATES pay no dues. An Affiliate member may become a Member on the death of the spouse by paying dues.**

FRIENDS: Persons who are not LANL retirees or affiliates but support LRG. FRIENDS pay dues of \$15.00/yr to cover cost of postage for the DIRECTORY and all issues of *The Main Gate*.

THE LABORATORY RETIREE GROUP, INC. (LRG)

- New Membership
 Renewal
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 Friend
 Change of address
 Check here if requested information remains unchanged.

Lab. Retiree: _____, _____ Year Retired: _____
(Please print or type last name first)

Retiree System: _____

Spouse: _____, _____ LANL Retiree? N __ Y __ Year Ret.: _____
(Please print or type last name first)

Friend: _____, _____
(Please print or type last name first)

Address: _____ City: _____ State: __ Zip: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____ Fax or E-Mail _____

Please make your check, which will serve as your receipt, payable to LRG, Inc. and mail to:
LRG, Inc.
PO Box 546
Los Alamos, NM 87544

Cash or Check #: _____ Date: _____ Amount: \$ _____

I WISH TO BE LISTED IN THE LABORATORY RETIREE DIRECTORY: Yes __ No __

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LAM to ABQ—20 Minutes

By Kenneth Lee

For a retired person, Los Alamos is an exceptional community to live in. An example is flying in and out of Albuquerque International Sunport (ABQ). Until now, my only option is a two-hour drive to the airport, pay the daily parking, and a two-hour drive back to Los Alamos when I return. There are other variations, including one's spouse or friend driving to the airport and being picked up from the airport upon return. Since this April, the New Mexico Airlines has provided another cost-efficient way of connecting Los Alamos County Airport (LAM) and ABQ.

This past week, I attended a conference at Dallas. The conference started on Thursday and ended on late Saturday. I bought a one-way ticket from LAM to ABQ. On the way back Sunday, my wife picked me up from ABQ; we had a great dinner in Albuquerque and drove home.

Flying from LAM is easy and it only cost \$49.00 one way with tax already included. I booked and paid for my flight through the website, flylosalamos.com. During the week days, there are three flights out of LAM and three flights returning from ABQ. For Saturday and Sunday, there is only one flight leaving LAM 6:20 a.m. with one returning flight from ABQ at 7:30 p.m. The flight is 20 minutes duration from airport to airport. Check the website for schedule adjustment. The request is to arrive 30 minutes before departure. I have no experience of checking in at ABQ. At LAM, no one works at the desk, and check in is through a telephone at the desk. When the plane arrived, the pilot used the phone at the desk to verify passenger lists, checked our ID, and weighed our baggage. Then we proceeded to the plane with our baggage. There is no security check at LAM. The usual security check occurs at ABQ for flights out of ABQ.