

Reaching Out From a
Common Experience

"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 Dale Thompson at dalethompson@losalamos.com or by mail at P. O. Box 546, Los Alamos, NM 87544.

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Health Issues: Glenn Lockhart, (505) 672-3784, and Ken Wilson, Co-Chairs

Health Care Premium Working Committee: Glenn Lockhart, (505) 672-3784

Membership: Sheila Girard, (505) 672-3497

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

Web Master: Paul Lewis, plewis0@comcast.net

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

Health Issues by Glenn Lockhart

LANL Open Enrollment – LANL Open enrollment is October 31 – November 15. LANL informed me that no changes (including premiums) occur for retirees who are covered by Medicare Parts A and B. Packets will be sent out before October 31. All non-Medicare retirees are covered by the same plans as are offered to employees. LANL declined to share changes to the employee plans because the packets had not been sent out. Summary of Benefits will be posted on LANL.GOV, BCBSNM.com, and Empyreanbenefitsolutions.com websites after they are mailed.

Ken Wilson and I will be conducting the twenty-first (21st) performance of the Ken and Glenn Show:

November 8 at the Betty Ehart Senior Center, 1:30 PM

November 10 at the Temporary White Rock Senior Center (behind Metzgars), 1:30 PM (phone 672-2034)

Explanation of Benefits Error – I reported in the Summer 2016 issue of the *Main Gate* that the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Explanation of Benefits sometimes has an error on the “Amount You May Owe Provider” line. I had one error for \$.33 and one for \$.32. I have the National Medicare Supplement plan and the amount should have been zero. I called BC/BS and they issued a corrected Explanation of Benefits.

Since then, I have received eleven (11) other EOBs with incorrect “Amount You May Owe Provider.” Ken Wilson has received one (1) EOB with an incorrect amount. I called BC/BS and discovered that Medicare was paying the provider less than they should have under sequestration. I participated in a conference call to Medicare and was told that the provider had not appealed the payment; no action would be taken by Medicare until the provider appeals.

I do not know the impact on retirees in the National EPO or National PPO (none have been reported). Retirees not covered by Medicare are not affected. IF YOU RECEIVE A BILL FROM THE PROVIDER, DO NOT PAY IT until you have discussed it with BCBSNM. Call BC/BS and the provider to report the error. I am also interested in hearing from you.

Questions? If you have a question about health care or other benefits, call me at (505) 672-3784, e-mail at mandmlockhart@cs.com, or snail mail at 91 Mimbres Drive, White Rock, NM 87547 (Note change in city and Zip Code).

A spectacular visit to a World Heritage site in New Zealand

By Leigh House (Pictures for this article are on Page 5)

Several years ago one of our sons went to New Zealand for a semester abroad from college. Somewhat to his dismay, my wife and I decided this would be a great opportunity for us to go explore New Zealand, as well as visit him.

We spent two weeks flying and driving to see several areas of the North and South Islands. A highlight of our visit was a day hike on the Tongariro Alpine Crossing, in Tongariro National Park, which is a World Heritage site. The Tongariro Crossing is one of New Zealand’s most popular day hikes. We hiked it in April (Fall in the Southern Hemisphere) and met just a handful of fellow hikers. The full hike is about 19 km (12 miles) one way, and to make the full hike we would need transport to get back. Instead, we chose to walk about half of the Crossing as an out and back hike. We started in fog, which gradually thinned as the sun warmed the ground. The Crossing follows a gentle uphill

(Continued on page 8)

Operation Castle Memories by Ed Stein

Continued from the Summer 2016 Main Gate

One other thing that occurred at Bikini is still vivid. From shipboard, I did see as my first live test, a high-yield LASL device detonated. I was leaning on the ship's rail, I'm sure many miles from the device, when it was fired. The fireball seemed to get bigger and bigger and bigger and bigger and I was afraid it would never stop. I felt like running away but I could have gone only to the other side of the ship. The fireball so obsessed me that I don't recall whether I felt any heat or shock wave from the blast. It was an impressive sight and one that I will always remember.

In the next few weeks, I think both at Bikini and Eniwetok Atolls, I served in a technical watch capacity on barges in the lagoons. The barges were anchored, and each had a test device on it. The idea was to have a few technical personnel quickly available at all times in the event that something entirely unforeseen should happen to the device. We stayed on the barges about a week at a time, making do with simple meals and drinking canned milk. I never got used to the milk. One night a small Navy ship pulled up within hailing distance and the captain, by megaphone, invited a couple of us over for an evening of bridge. Bill Carter and I accepted. The ship sent a small boat for us, returning us to the barge at bedtime. Usually, we entertained ourselves by swimming, sunbathing, and watching the lagoon sea life around the barge.

Liquor was cheap on the islands. I don't remember whether or not it was rationed. When it was time to go home a few of us had several bottles of booze that we wanted to take along. We decided to ship it back with the Lab stuff, taking our chances that Customs, who had Q-cleared inspectors by then, would skip it. We chose as our shipping container a cylindrical steel "can" which had been used to ship components to the islands. The components had been expended, and I don't know whether the container would have been shipped back to the Lab or salvaged if we had not found a use for it. Anyway, memory says the container was 3-4 feet in diameter and about the same in height. It was made of half-inch-thick boiler plate with a lid attached to a flange on the body with 50 or so half-inch diameter bolts and nuts. It was, in the vernacular, "hell for stout".

We participants in this nefarious scheme gathered together, packed and labeled all bottles, and were about to bolt the lid on, when our glorious leader said that we should put a radioactive source in it and label the container "radioactive". So we got a laboratory calibration source, stuck it in the center top area of the packing, and put the lid on. We put "Caution-Radioactive Material" labels on the Outside and Harry Waugh and I tightened the lid flange bolts and nuts severely. I believe a meter showed a little gamma reading on the lid surface, so we thought between the radiation and the lid bolts, Customs might not bother with it. As it turned out, we lucked out. The container ended up at S-Site (GMX-3). Our compatriots there had it sent to the Ice House area at TA-41, where we culprits got together and made proper distribution of its contents.

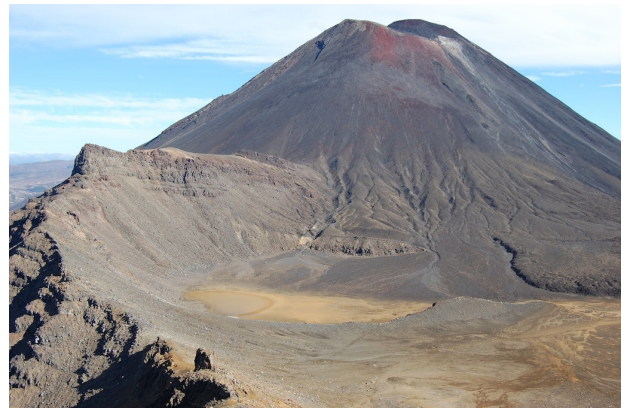
My MATS flight back to Hawaii was uneventful. We landed at Johnson Island, had a meal, and saw feminine-type people for the first time in several weeks. The Lab had a policy at that time that one could stay in Hawaii until a first-class flight to the states was available, so I got in a couple of days of R & R before going home. All things considered, it was a very interesting time in my life and I'm glad I got to experience it. Perhaps there are other recipients of the LRG Newsletter who will recall their own PPG or NTS times in the early days, or maybe even straighten out my own rather hazy recollections in this article.

Art Work along State Road 4 In White Rock



Pictures to go with the article on page 2.

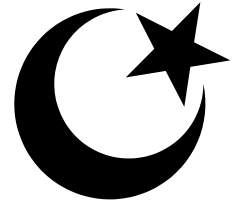
A spectacular visit to a World Heritage site in New Zealand





LANL In Memoriam

06-17-2016—10-23-2016
By Jack Clifford



Julia D. Olsen
Clara L. Collins
Summers H. Cox
Leroy J. Vigil
Bernard H. Hansen
Flora S. Perez
Francis H. Harlow
Betty J. Simes
Marsha L. Wenzel
Charles R. Barnett
MaryAnn Woods
Mabel Peek
Lubella "Lubbie" Martinez
Margery J. McCormick

Shirley L. Davies
Harold B. Davis
Felica Holmes
Gary W. Bequette
Naedin Gallegos
James A. Naranjo
Clement J. Burke
Edward . Sipler, Jr.
Millard Ray Edwards
Vigil W. Scott
George F. Melton
Jim O. Martinez
Stepan G. Mashnik
Dan Miles

Patricia P. LaBauve
Thomas A. Sanford
Ann E. Hall
Alejandro Alex Lovato
Michael A. Wolf
Gary Lee Talachy
Kathleen J. Jackson
Peggy J. Borders
Virginia L Valigura
Robert J. Elliott
Signe June Babich
Bernardo F. Cruz, Jr.

Article from the Albuquerque Journal, October 24, 2016

Calif. Court: Pension plans can change — LOS ANGELES

California's generous public employees pensions, shielded for decades by the state's courts, may soon no longer be sacrosanct.

In a potentially huge win for advocates of cutting government pensions, an appeals court in August declared that public retirement plans were not "immutable" and could be reduced. The three-judge panel said the law merely requires government to provide a "reasonable" pension.

That unanimous ruling, now before the California Supreme Court, could be a vehicle for reducing a shortfall amounting to hundreds of billions of dollars in state and local pension systems. If upheld, the decision could lead to the kinds of cutbacks previous courts blocked.

The decision has attracted national attention because of California's influential role in pension law. Like California, other states are facing massive shortfalls in public pensions.

Q: What do you call a pig with 3 eyes?

A: A piiig.

Q: What's the difference between Ignorance and apathy?

A: I don't know and I don't care.

Coffee and Conversation (and Breakfast)

1st Tuesday of the month, 8:30-10:30 a.m.

Morning Glory Baking Co.

(Across from the High School)

Coffee or tea is free.

Hey people, we need help from you.

Please, Please

Looking for articles for the *Main Gate*.

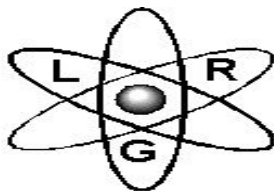
Experiences, humor, travels, work.

With or without pictures.

From a paragraph to a page and a half.

E-mail them to jns@rt66.com

**White Rock Address
Is now "White Rock, NM 87547".**



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Common Experience

LABORATORY RETIREE GROUP (LRG) MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

LRG has two 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 a prime contractor of LANL (UCRS, PERS, LANS or OTHER). Active members pay dues of \$12.00 per calendar year, have voting privileges at Annual Meetings, and are eligible to serve as LRG Officers and/or Directors. Active Members receive copies of the LRG DIRECTORY and LRG's publication, *The Main Gate*. A spouse (or ex-spouse) may become an Active Member upon death (or divorce) of the Active Member with payment of \$12.00 yearly dues.

FRIEND: A person who is not a LANL retiree but supports LRG. Friends pay dues of \$15.00 per year to cover the cost of printing and postage for issues of *The Main Gate*. Friends cannot vote, hold office or receive the directory.

THE LABORATORY RETIREE GROUP, INC. (LRG)

- ☐ New Membership ☐ Renewal ☐ Friend ☐ Change of Address
☐ Check here if requested information remains unchanged (including phone no. and e-mail)
☐ Check here if you DO NOT want to be listed in the DIRECTORY

Lab Retiree: _____, _____, _____ Year Retired _____
(Last Name) (First Name) (MI)

System: UCRS PERS LANS OTHER (circle one)

Spouse: _____, _____, _____ Retiree? Yes No
(Last Name) (First Name) (MI)

System: UCRS PERS LANS OTHER (circle one) Year Retired _____

Friend: _____, _____, _____
(Last Name) (First Name) (MI)

Address: _____ **City:** _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Telephone: () _____ **E-mail?** No Yes: _____

Payment: Please send dues payment by check to the following address:

LRG, PO Box 546, Los Alamos, NM 87544

Check#: _____ Date: _____ Dues _____ Los Alamos Employees' _____
Amount:\$ _____ Scholarship Fund Donation:\$ _____ Total:\$ _____

Laboratory Retiree Group
LRG, Inc.
PO Box 546
Los Alamos, NM 87544

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Address Service Requested

(continued from page 2)

grade for several miles on alpine tundra, then gets steeper as it moves on to recent, raw and rugged volcanic terrain. The graceful, and imposing, volcanic edifice of Mt Ngauruhoe (roughly: ng-a-u-ru-haw-ah) gradually became more visible as the fog cleared. The Crossing passes a trail that climbs the face of Mt Ngauruhoe, which is a challenging scramble up the loose and sharp volcanic rubble to the summit (about 7,500 ft). We passed that trail and then began to climb fairly steeply along a narrow ridge to a windy and cold shoulder of rock near the broad, high elevation portions of Mt Tongariro (about 6,000 ft high). There were some splendid views from there, especially of some lakes in the summit crater of the mountain. Both Mt Tongariro and Mt Ngauruhoe are recently active volcanoes, as is the nearby Mt Ruapehu. Mt Ngauruhoe was used to portray the gloomy Mt Doom in the Lord of the Rings movies. Several signs along the Crossing track warn of the dangers of volcanic activity, and we were fortunate to have been there when we could freely walk and dawdle to marvel at the remarkable scenery. As we returned to the start of the Crossing, the sun was setting and the fog and mists returned. But there were a brief few moments when the sunset created a blaze of color on Mt Ngauruhoe and it shone brightly through the mist, which I looked back just in time to capture. As I watched, the sunlight faded and the mountain settled into the evening darkness. It was one of the most memorable days of our visit to New Zealand!