Retirement

Society Bids Goodbye to Longtime Museum Director Hedy Dunn

By Dennis Erickson
President

Several personalities important to the Historical Society and to the history of our Los Alamos community are in need of mention.

The first is Hedy Dunn. Hedy, at her request, will retire as the director of the Los Alamos Historical Museum on June 30, 2011, following some 32 years of exemplary accomplishment and outstanding leadership. On Sunday, May 22, 2011, the Historical Society hosted a well-attended community celebration in Fuller Lodge to honor and express appreciation to our esteemed colleague.

The program included a Los Alamos County proclamation, presented by council chair Sharon Stover, declaring May 22 “Hedy Dunn Day in Los Alamos”; numerous tributes and testimonials; and Hedy’s appointment by the Society’s Board of Directors as Museum Director Emeritus. Her story (Continued on page 3)

Family members of Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer and Gen. Leslie R. Groves celebrate the dedication on May 19 of historic sculptures representing the two men. The sculptures are permanently placed on the south lawn of Fuller Lodge.
Upcoming Lectures and Events

In celebration of the Centennial of the state of New Mexico, the Los Alamos Historical Society presents a special centennial lecture series based on 100 years of Los Alamos history. (All lectures are tentative and subject to change.)

Los Alamos National Bank-sponsored Lecture Series: All lectures are at 7:30 p.m. in the Pajarito Room of Fuller Lodge.

September 13: Toni Gibson and Sharon Snyder, "Los Alamos and the Pajarito Plateau." Authors of a new book by the same title will kick off the lecture series with a discussion and book signing.

October 10: Joe Gutierrez, “Homesteads on the Pajarito Plateau.” From the late 1800s through the 1940s, farmers and ranchers eked out a living and a life on mesas above the Rio Grande. Gutierrez, president of the Pajarito Homesteaders Association, will explore some of that history.

November 8: Sharon Snyder, “Peggy Pond Church.” In conjunction with the release of the long-awaited biography of the first lady of New Mexico poetry, Snyder will share stories of Peggy Pond Church, the daughter of the Ranch School founder, wife of a master, mother of two students, and author who came to represent so much of northern New Mexico.

January 10, 2012: Mary Mortensen Diecker, “It’s Fun, It’s History, It’s New Mexico!” Celebrate New Mexico’s 100th birthday with great stories, fun trivia, and interesting facts about the Land of Enchantment.

Exhibits:
June 1-July 31: “Maps of Los Alamos”
August 1-August 31: “Summer Adventures in History and Science” displays from Los Alamos students
September 1-October 31: “Maps of New Mexico”
November 1-December 31: “Peggy Pond Church”
January 1-February 13, 2012: “100 Years of Los Alamos History” (in conjunction with Mesa Public Library)
Brown Bag with the Collection for Heritage Partners and Life Members 12:30 p.m. in Fuller Lodge:

Tuesday, August 2: Historic Quilts
Tuesday, November 1: Peggy Pond Church Collection

Other:
Atomic Theatre Festival, July (see Page 10)
See You In September Arts & Culture Festival
WinterFest, December 3

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can be found below. Hedy and husband Skip begin a new chapter with a trip to England. We wish only the best for Hedy and her family knowing that we have been truly blessed to share the gifts of this beloved leader.

The second person of mention is Heather McClanahan. Following a selection process, Heather was appointed by our Board of Directors as the new executive director of the Los Alamos Historical Society. Her appointment was announced at the Society’s Annual Meeting on May 10, 2011. This new title and job description recognize the expansion and diversification of the Society’s programs and responsibilities. Heather began working for the Historical Society in 2005, designing a new website as part of a Manhattan Project preservation grant. Over time, her responsibilities increased, including her most recent assignment as the assistant museum director. A native New Mexican, born in Las Cruces and raised in Gallup, Heather has an M.A. in 20th Century U.S. History from the University of South Florida. Her early career was spent as a reporter and website developer for The Tampa Tribune. She and her husband Bob moved to White Rock in 1999, where they live with their three children and two dogs. Heather, co-author with Craig Martin of the book Of Logs and Stone: The Buildings of the Los Alamos Ranch School and Bathtub Row, has a passion for sharing the historic stories of this community. Please welcome Heather as we move forward under her leadership.

Of final comment is the recent passing of several people with noteworthy connection to our community and the Historical Society. Ted Church, Karen Pond Krone, Françoise Ulam, and Beth Plassmann each in their own way played a role in the history of Los Alamos and its preservation. Their stories are briefly summarized starting on page 6 as a reminder of who we were and what we have become.

On behalf of the Historical Society’s staff, Board of Directors, and officers, we are grateful to have the unique privilege of serving you, the Society’s generous and committed membership, in the preservation and interpretation of the history of the people of Los Alamos and their stories. Thanks!!

Hedy Dunn: A Biographical Sketch

**Story by Hedy Dunn, Museum Director**

My mother, who shared a “country-doctor” medical practice with my father in Seguin, Texas, told me that she was delivering a baby when she felt her own labor pains coming on. She called my father to take over her patient for her as she went on to San Antonio where I was born later that day. I joined my sister, Irene, four years my senior, in a household that included our parents, a Texas-German nanny, my widowed grandmother, and a young Hispanic housekeeper.

At age five, my family relocated to New Orleans so our parents could enter internships in anesthesia at Charity Hospital. Irene and I were devastated to leave our “nanny” who was like a second mother to us. We spent six years in New Orleans. I went to elementary school using city bus transportation since the school bus only served the school we were assigned to that was terribly over-crowded and poorly run. I felt very self-sufficient and adult using the public bus lines.

By the time I was ready to go to junior high school, my family moved once again – this time to Houston. Both our parents wanted to (Continued on page 4)
(Continued from the previous page)

be a part of Houston’s already-noteworthy medical scene. Because my father wanted to teach residents, he went to the Houston V.A. Hospital serving there as Chief of Anesthesia. My mother had gone into oncology in New Orleans’ well-regarded Ochsner Clinic. Naturally, she landed for a time on the staff at Houston’s MD Anderson Hospital before starting her own private oncology practice.

After high school, I went back to New Orleans to Sophie Newcomb College (we called it the “better” part of Tulane University) to major in studio art. After four years, I went to graduate school at Wesleyan University in the M.A.T. (Masters of Art in Teaching – in Art) program where I met my husband, “Skip” who was in the same program but in music education. We lived in houses next door to each other, but Skip came to “my” house for our co-op meal program (was it REALLY for the meals?...), so we were together every day. We shared similar tastes in music, the arts, and we both came from loving, strong, supportive families and soon became soul-mates. After we were married and started our family, we lived in Foxboro, Massachusetts, but spent many a weekend in Wellesley Hills with Skip’s parents, siblings, and extended families who were always in and out of their big and lively old New England house. Our son, Mark, and four years later, our daughter, Lara, were born in the Newton-Wellesley Hospital and came from the hospital first to that home.

After five years in Foxboro where both of us were teaching (Skip as music teacher and I as an art teacher) in nearby Walpole, we decided it might be a good time for Skip to explore educational administration. He was accepted into Stanford’s Ph.D. program and we quickly sold our house (for the amazingly good price of $25,000) and took off for the West. We loved our time at Escondido Village and met many great friends and colleagues in that married student-housing complex. Life there was like a continual extended family with everything from spontaneous volleyball games and pot-lucks to babysitting co-ops, etc. Without a care in the world, we “ate” the proceeds of the sale...
of our house and enjoyed the many pleasures California had to offer.

In 1974, Skip had a post-grad job interview in Albuquerque. On a whim, he phoned me in California and said he would also check out Los Alamos as long as he was in this area. That led to an offer for an assistant principal job at LA High School that he accepted. Lara and Mark were 4 and 8 when we moved to our White Rock home in 1974.

Four years later, once both children were a bit older, I began looking at what I could do that would be fulfilling. My job interview at the laboratory was not very encouraging. The young man in the personnel department told me in no uncertain terms that I was “completely unqualified for any job at the lab!” Not to be deterred, I applied for the position of director of the Fuller Lodge Art Center. Once again I was not selected. But later that year, I noted that the Historical Society had advertised for a part-time museum assistant. Although my background wasn’t necessarily one that might have been ideal, I interviewed and was accepted. I remember being paid a starting salary of $2.90 per hour and, at the same time, paying my baby-sitter $3.00 per hour. Clearly this career has never been about wise financial planning on my part!

After just over a year on the job, my predecessor left at the Christmas-New Year’s holidays (1978/79), got married and never returned. I was left with a hefty set of keys and a future to build for myself and our fledgling organization.

Luckily, the board and committee chairs were supportive and willing to encourage my professional growth. One of the best experiences I had was attending the Winedale Museum Seminar in Round Top, Texas in 1978, a three-week intensive course that covered most of the aspects of running a museum. It was exhausting but the best education I could have had. Other professional opportunities came in the form of service on the boards of the Historical Society of New Mexico and the New Mexico Association of Museums.

After some 33 years and much maturing, I couldn’t be prouder of what we have become. Our late friend Ken Ewing used to love telling about the days when we had about $12 in our treasury. I also remember when we got our first electronic “word-processor” typewriters and then moved up to our first Macintosh Classic, with 1MB of RAM—that seemed like great progress. Our offices and archives were stuffed into the third floor of Fuller Lodge: a bit of a fire-trap with poor ventilation in summer and freezing single-pane windows that blew open in winter. The museum exhibits when I came, for lack of financial and other resources, were a strange mixture of pegboard, rough-sawn Masonite panels, and no particular chronological order to the displays. I credit a lot of good luck, perseverance, and youthful enthusiasm (surely along with some delusions) that made me think I could do better than that! I was fortunate to be joined by a score of hard-working docents who built new exhibits, made book cases, gave tours, edited and marketed publications, developed our outreach program, and even operated the museum shop -- all as volunteers.

Nonetheless, even during our “lean” years, we had the good fortune to be able to host a plethora of notable guests such as
Manhattan Project personnel (Emilio Segre, Edward Teller, Norris Bradbury, and many more), Ranch School people (John Reed, Bences Gonzales, and Roy Chapin), authors such as Tony Hillerman and Hampton Sides, and the creators of the opera “Dr. Atomic”: Peter Sellars and John Adams. Among others I was fortunate to get to know were scholar and state historian Myra Ellen Jenkins, photographer Laura Gilpin, and notable people of Los Alamos such as Evelyn Frey and poet Peggy Pond Church. What other profession might give one this kind of incredible opportunity?

In all, I am grateful for the loving support I’ve had from my husband (occasional host, volunteer, chauffeur, and “Dr. Mac” among other guises), my children and family, and the superbly gifted and enthusiastic board, staff, and volunteers. I’m grateful for your decision to take a chance on me and believe that I might have been qualified to lead this organization through all these decades. It has been an amazing journey and a fulfilling, life-changing career. I will miss being a part of it, but I send it off confidently and will watch with a mother’s pride and love as it attains even greater heights in the future. I wish you every success.

**People Important to Los Alamos History Pass Away**

**By Sharon Snyder**

**Publications Chair**

Two recent deaths have taken from us a vital connection with our past. Ted Church was a special resource for Los Alamos Ranch School history, always willing to answer our many questions and take us back to the time when he wore the uniform of a ranch school boy. Karen Pond Krone traveled often to Los Alamos to attend events and represent her family’s continued interest in that same bygone era. Ted and Karen were cousins and grandchildren of Los Alamos Ranch School founder Ashley Pond Jr.

Theodore Spencer Church, eldest son of Fermor and Peggy Pond Church, died April 15. His father, Fermor Spencer Church, was a master at the Los Alamos Ranch School for 22 years, and his mother was famous for her classic memoir, *The House at Otowi Bridge*, as well as her volumes of poetry. Ted was born in Santa Fe and lived at the ranch school until leaving for college.

In January 1943, as the Manhattan Project moved in to take over the Pajarito Plateau, Ted Church became one of the last four graduates of his grandfather’s ranch school. He attended MIT in the Navy’s V-12 program, served as an ensign aboard the USS *Marvin H. McIntyre*, and returned after the war to finish his degree in Electrical Engineering. He then went to work for the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in the Applied Physics Department at Sandia Base in Albuquerque, a job for which he was recommended by longtime family friend Dorothy McKibbin. He retired from Sandia National Laboratories after 43 years. Despite being joined by numerous descendants of Ashley Pond Jr. during a 2009 visit to the Pond Cabin at TA-18, Ted Church found a moment to be alone with his thoughts inside the cabin built by his grandfather as part of the Pajaroito Club in 1914. (Photo by Sharon Snyder)
Ted was active in the Religious Society of Friends, serving in various capacities in the Intermountain Yearly Meeting and on a national level with the Friends World Committee for Consultation at the Quaker United Nations Office. In the spirit of his family’s love of nature, Ted pursued outdoor sports and in particular was an avid skier. He is survived by daughter Robyn Hatton and five grandchildren as well as his brothers Allen and Hugh and their extended families.

Karen Pond Krone passed away April 29. She was the daughter of Dr. Ashley Pond (III) and his wife Lucille, a doctor and nurse team that played an important role in establishing medicine in the early community of Taos and helped found the Holy Cross Hospital there. Karen grew up in Taos but went away for her high school years to the Barstow School for Girls in Kansas City, MO. After finishing her education at Colorado Women’s College in 1960, Karen settled in Albuquerque and became a social worker. In 1973 she returned to Taos to work for a decade at Taos Ski Valley and share the family ties to skiing, a passion that had resulted in her father becoming one of the first investors in TSV. She again lived in Albuquerque in her later years but never relinquished her Taos citizenship. Karen is survived by twin daughters Kersti Tyson and Briget Tyson Eastep and their families; son Jono Tyson and family; and two sisters and a brother, Joan Pond, Gretchen Lofgren, and Dr. Ashley D. Pond, and their children.

Both Ted and Karen had roots deep in New Mexico history. In the past two years both had joined their relatives to reconnect with that history at two special events honoring the life of patriarch Ashley Pond Jr. In 2009, Pond and Church descendants were finally allowed behind the LANL fence to visit for the first time the cabin built at the Pajarito Club by their grandfather in 1914. In 2010 Ted and Karen and other family members were invited to the opening of the City of Santa Fe’s Firefighter Museum in honor of Ashley Pond Jr.’s founding of the Santa Fe Volunteer Fire Department and his years as chief.

Ted Church and Karen Pond Krone were representatives of a historic family that loved and contributed much to New Mexico. They humbly carried that family’s tradition with pride and dignity.

Francoise Aron Ulam

(Reprinted from The Los Alamos Monitor)

Francoise Ulam, or “F” as she was affectionately known, died April 30 at the age of 93 at El Castillo in Santa Fe. She was born in Paris, France in 1918 and came to the United States in 1939 as an exchange student as war was breaking out in Europe. That began her remarkable odyssey as an eyewitness to history.

She studied at Mills College and Mount Holyoke College, earning a master’s degree in comparative literature. In 1941 she met Stanislaw Ulam, a young Polish mathematician at Harvard, whom she married. In 1943, they were recruited to join the Manhattan Project at its inception in Los Alamos.

(CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE)
In Los Alamos, Francoise became part of the unique international community of scientists and mathematicians who changed history during the Atomic Age. Like many of the Manhattan Project wives, initially she knew very little about the purpose of the “Gadget,” as the bomb was known at the time. She devoted herself to creating a home and raising a baby in the beautiful American Southwest where, as Stan put it, “the air felt like champagne.”

The friendships and associations that the young couple developed in Los Alamos gave Francoise a global worldview that would last the rest of her life. When they later moved from Los Alamos to Santa Fe, their house on Old Santa Fe Trail became a gathering spot for the great scientists of the era. While she was quintessentially French until the end, Francoise took naturally to the relaxed individualism that Santa Fe often inspires, developing a taste for computers, yoga, feldenkrais, and natural foods decades before they became mainstream.

F was as marked by her time as she was ahead of it, keeping engaged with her far-reaching interests and pursuits and emailing friends and family about them until her death. She was politically minded to her core and uncompromising in her ideals — although as a woman who lost family in the Nazi concentration camps, she was not idealistic. She had the quiet perspicacity of a woman married to a man whose personality was as outsized as his intellect. She was a trenchant observer of human events, from the mundane to the historic, and her individualistic charm and warm wisdom will be missed greatly by friends and family.

She is survived by her daughter Claire Weiner and her son-in-law Dr. Steven Weiner, of Santa Fe; her granddaughter Rebecca Ulam Weiner and Rebecca’s husband Drake Bennett of New York City; and her closest friend of 60 years, Betty Lilienthal. She was preceded in death by her husband Stan, who died in 1984.

**Dr. Elizabeth Hebb Plassman, (1928 - 2011)** – Beth Plassmann, vice president of the Los Alamos Historical Society and a member of the Society’s Board of Directors, passed away on May 13, 2011, in Los Alamos. Beth and husband Gene became residents of Los Alamos upon joining the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory in 1955. Academically trained as a physicist (AB, Bryn Mawr College, and MS/PhD, Indiana University), Beth began her Laboratory work in the Weapons Materials Group (W-7). Beth was a pioneer for women scientists at the Laboratory. She served in various capacities as group leader for Weapons Materials; group leader for Materials Management (WX-5); and assistant division leader for Design Engineering (WX). Following a stint as WX Division’s associate division leader for Weapons Systems, Beth retired from the Laboratory in 1991 as the deputy division leader for WX. Beth was an active member of the United Church in Los Alamos and of our community. She was a strong supporter of the Los Alamos Arts Council and numerous other organizations, and has been a valuable contributor and volunteer for the Historical Society. Husband Dr. Eugene Adolph Plassmann died in 2009. The Plassmanns are survived by four children and their families, which include four grandchildren.
Summer Program Promises Fun for All Ages

By Samantha Hixon
Museum Educator

This summer, the Historical Museum, along with the Bradbury Science Museum, Pajarito Environmental Education Center, Bandelier National Monument, and the Fuller Lodge Art Center, is putting on a fun-filled program for adults and kids alike. Every Tuesday, June 7 through July 26, lectures, expositions, and activities will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. switching locations between the Bradbury and Fuller Lodge.

The Historical Museum will be in charge of showcasing every major time period in Los Alamos history. We have some exciting activities planned, including weaving, leather working, tin punching, and much more. Learn about pottery making, life at the Los Alamos Ranch School, and Manhattan Project science.

Projects made by program participants will be showcased at the Fuller Lodge Art Center and at the Historical Museum at the end of the summer.

Come on out, bring your children or grandchildren, and experience Los Alamos in a whole new way!

Los Alamos Summer Adventures in History and Science!

Tuesdays in June & July from 10:00–2:00

Learn about Los Alamos history through demonstrations and activities at the Los Alamos Historical Museum.

Learn about science with family activities provided by PEEC and the Bradbury Science Museum.

All programs are FREE!

The first 200 children to begin the adventure with us on June 7 will receive a free travel journal!

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<td>Mathematics Fun</td>
<td>Bradbury Science Museum</td>
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<td>PEEC’s Nature Play Day</td>
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Los Alamos Historical Society

Help us Get to 500 Fans on Facebook!

If you (or your family or friends) are on Facebook, type “Los Alamos Historical Museum” into the search box and “Like” our page.
New Board Members, Officers Elected

Four new members for the board of directors were elected at the Historical Society’s Annual Meeting on May 10. They are Wendy Hoffman, former community relations director for Los Alamos Medical Center; Kate O’Donnell, an educator who now works in advertising for the Reel Deal Movie Theater; Todd Urbatsch, a computational physicist; and Mike Wheeler, a retired lab engineer and former Los Alamos County Councilor. Incumbents Shay Burns Kendricks and Carole Steward were re-elected. They will serve through June 30, 2013.

Returning board members, whose terms last through June 30, 2012, are Dennis Erickson, J. Arthur Freed, Arthur Montoya Jr., John Ruminer, Sharon Snyder, and Ron Wilkins.

Officers, also elected at the Annual Meeting, are: President, Ron Wilkins; Vice President, John Ruminer; Secretary; Dennis Erickson; Treasurer, Carole Steward. Their terms will last through June 30, 2012.

Special thanks to outgoing board members John Hopkins, Barbara Lange, and Beth Plassmann for their dedicated service on the board and to Max Baker for service during his limited term. Special thanks also to Denny Erickson for three years of service as board president, to Beth Plassmann for two years of service as vice president, to Ron Wilkins for three years of service as treasurer, and to Carole Steward for a year of service as board secretary.

First Atomic Theatre Festival Slated for July

The Los Alamos Historical Society is joining forces with the Los Alamos Little Theatre, Teatro Paraguas, the University of New Mexico-Los Alamos, SOC-LA, and the Atomic Heritage Foundation for the first ever Atomic Theatre Festival.

The festival will include the plays *Galileo's Footsteps* and *Manhattan Glass.* They will be performed July 22-24 and July 29-31 at UNM-LA and Teatro Paraguas in Santa Fe. More details on times and the event itself will be forthcoming. Visit www.atomicfestival.org for more information.

The Historical Society will sponsor panel discussions after each play in Los Alamos to expand the understanding of the historical context of the events depicted. Audience members will also have a chance to ask questions about the history of the events and the plays themselves.

*Galileo's Footsteps*, formerly *Broken Hammer*, by local playwright Robert Benjamin, tells the story of a scientist troubled by the change from testing of atomic bombs to stockpile stewardship. *Manhattan Glass* focuses on the lives of a married couple, both of whom worked on the Manhattan Project. The semi-biographical story by regional playwright Joey Chavez explores perspectives on the morality of the project.

Benjamin points out that the plays are dramatic interpretations of historical events, not documentaries. The characters and emotions brought forth in the dramas often help audience members to think about historical issues and perhaps prompt them to learn more about the history.
Strategic Planning Update

A draft of the strategic plan, which will take the Society to its 50th anniversary in 2018, is available for viewing on our website. Please visit www.losalamoshistory.org/splan.pdf. We are looking for feedback from our membership to make sure we are going in the directions you want us to go.

The plan includes a revised mission statement: The Los Alamos Historical Society preserves, promotes, and communicates the remarkable history and inspiring stories of Los Alamos and its people for our community, for the global audience, and for future generations. It also includes a new vision statement: The Los Alamos Historical Society is respected worldwide as the source and repository for the history of Los Alamos and its people.

The strategic directions for the plan are to ensure a sustainable future, develop an accessible museum collection and archives in accordance with best practices and standards, preserves the integrity of the Los Alamos Historic District, energizes our interpretive opportunities and venues, nourishes our publications program and recognizes it as a fundamental element of our storytelling, partners in the establishment of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park, and collaborates with local, state, and national entities to develop sustainable tourism for the region.

The Board of Directors will finalize the strategic plan at its retreat on June 25th. If you have ideas on any of these topics, please feel free to share them. Send an e-mail to heather@losalamoshistory.org or call the museum offices at 505-662-6272.

New Titles in the Museum Shop!

*How to Make Your Science Project Scientific*
Helps students choose an idea and develop a hypothesis into a viable experiment

*The Manhattan Project* by the Cornerstones of Freedom
This book is a concise version of our own *Beginning of an Era* aimed at 4-6th graders.

*Something Incredibly Wonderful Happens: Frank Oppenheimer and the World He Made Up*
The story of Frank and his amazing science museum, The Exploratorium.

*Naked Eggs and Flying Potatoes: Unforgettable Experiments that Make Science Fun*
The title says it all.

A coloring book of Gustave Baumann for older children and adults. The book has the colored completed pictures on the inside and back covers for coloring suggestions.

*The Adventures of Santa Fe Sam*
by White Rock author and teacher Sandi Wright

BACK IN STOCK:

*Atoms in the Family* by Laura Fermi
*The Delight Makers* by Adolph Bandelier
*Maria, Potter of San Ildefonso* by Alice Lee Marriott
Los Alamos Historical Society
and Museum

Open free of charge every day except
New Year’s Day, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.
Winter: Mon.-Fri. 10-4, Sat. 11-4, Sun. 1-4
Summer: Mon.-Fri. 9:30-4:30, Sat. 11-4, Sun 1-4

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Museum Educator: 505-695-5251
Publications: 505-662-2660
Shop Manager: 505-695-5250

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Website: www.losalamoshistory.org
Online shop: www.shop.losalamoshistory.org
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The Los Alamos Historical Society
and Museum

Los Alamos Historical Society 2011-2012 Membership

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