

# Los Alamos Historical Society

## Newsletter

VOLUME 31, NO. 4

DECEMBER 2012



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We are asking for input on the best ways we can communicate with you. Please fill out the attached survey or fill it out online.

*In the Historical Museum*

## General Returns to the Guest Cottage

Whenever Gen. Leslie Groves visited Project Y during the Manhattan Project, he stayed in the Blue Room in the stone half of the Guest Cottage, the building that houses the Los Alamos Historical Museum. Now, through a generous donation from the Groves family, the General is returning to his rightful place in Los Alamos.

*(Continued on Page 4)*



*Publications*

## "Los Alamos Place Names" Back in Print

**By Sharon Snyder**  
**Publications Director**

From Acid Canyon to Zipline Trail, Los Alamos has some wonderfully unique and historical place names. The Whiffenpoof Pool dates back to 1915 when Peggy Pond Church hunted "whiffenpoofs" as a young girl. The Romero Cabin was built above Twomile Canyon in 1913 by homesteader Victor Romero, whose family has significant ties to almost every era of Los Alamos history. McKeeville no longer exists

outside the memories of Manhattan Project history, but wartime residents lived in that neighborhood housing project built by contractor R. E. McKee Construction Company.

These and many other place names are listed A to Z in a second edition of Craig Martin's *Los Alamos Place Names*, scheduled for release in early December. The popular first edition of *Place Names* sold out a few years ago, and old residents and new have awaited this updated version that *(Continued on Page 7)*

## Lectures for 2013

**Lecture Series sponsored by Los Alamos National Bank.** All lectures are at 7:30 p.m. in Fuller Lodge.

**January 8, 2013:** Jack Shlachter, "Jews in Theory." The Los Alamos Theoretical Division in 1945 had a leadership structure that was disproportionately of Jewish heritage: the division leader, deputy division leader, chief consultant, and six of eight group leaders were "Jewish" by some definition of the term. Shlachter will explore members of this leadership team and speculate on the connection between their presence in Los Alamos and their Jewish roots.

**February 12:** Cary Skidmore, "The Seven LANL Explosives Fatalities: Technical and Human Perspectives." With the development of implosion, the science of high explosives took off at the Laboratory. Three accidents in this area in the 1950s caused instant death for seven workers. In recent years, information on these accidents has become more accessible, and Skidmore will explore what happened.

**March 12:** John Anderson, "Hiroshima and Nagasaki 2010." A docent at the National Museum of Nuclear Science and History in Albuquerque, Anderson spent 52 years in the nuclear business with Sandia National Laboratory and the U.S. Army. Anderson will present an account of his visit to museums and memorial parks in Japan.



**April 9:** Dale Coker, "Bandelier Trails: Before and After." A ranger at Bandelier since 1988, Coker will share a brief

history of the monument's trails, an update on their current status, and what the back country has to offer.

**May 14, 6 p.m.:** Annual Meeting featuring Robert Kuckuck, "On Being a LANL Director." Celebrate a year of science and history with pizza, ice cream, the annual "Experience Auction," and a great lecture by former Laboratory Director Robert Kuckuck.

## Programs for 2012-2013

### *Museum Exhibits*

**Present-December 31:** *Hal Olsen's Tinian and Airplane Nose Cone Art*

**Jan. 1-Feb. 28:** *Landscapes of Los Alamos and the Surrounding Area*

**March 1-April 30:** *We Are Clay* (with the Fuller Lodge Art Center)

### *Brown Bag with the Collection*

**February 5, 2013, 12:30 p.m.** We're Moving! Culling Items from the Collection

**May 7, 2013, 12:30 p.m.** 3rd Annual What's In Your Historic Collection?

**August 6, 2013, 12:30 p.m.** (in the Historical Museum) Topic TBA

**November 5,** Topic TBA

### *Atomic Film Festival*

**January 29, 2013, 7 p.m.** *Fail Safe* (1964) Starring Henry Fonda and Walter Matthau

**March 26, 7 p.m.,** *On the Beach* (1959) Starring Gregory Peck and Ava Gardner

**WINTERFEST, DEC. 8, 2012  
FAIRLY TALES AND FANTASIES**

Join in the community-wide celebration of WinterFest at the Fuller Lodge Open House, sponsored by the Los Alamos Arts Council and the Los Alamos Historical Society. A full day of fun, entertainment, and food is planned. It's also a great time to get gifts for everyone on your list while supporting local, non-profit organizations.

WinterFest events will be happening all over town. Visit the Los Alamos Chamber of Commerce website at [fyila.com](http://fyila.com) for more details.



**The "SingSations" from Chamisa Elementary School are always a popular part of the WinterFest and Fuller Lodge Open House program.**

WinterFest Schedule (subject to change)

- 10 a.m. Chamisa SingSations
  - 11 a.m. Lads of Enchantment
  - 11:30 a.m. Juanita Madland and Friends Holiday Sing-a-Long
  - 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Visit with Los Alamos Living Treasures
  - 1 p.m. NM Dance Theater "Nutcracker Sweets"
  - 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. Los Alamos AC serves cookies and punch
  - 2 p.m. Los Alamos High School Choir
- Students from the Los Alamos High School Band will also be performing throughout the

**Fuller Lodge is decked out for the open house on Dec. 8, 2012.**



**The Los Alamos Historical Society will have gift items, books, and other holiday items for sale throughout the day at WinterFest. Also on hand will be Boy Scout Troop 71 with wreath sales, the Los Alamos High School Band Boosters with poinsettia sales, the Empty Bowls Project, Friends of the Los Alamos Animal Shelter.**

## General Groves Returns to Los Alamos

*(Continued from Page 1)*

In April, in conjunction with the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the Laboratory in Los Alamos, the Los Alamos Historical Museum will proudly host the unveiling of a portrait of General Groves by renowned portrait artist Albert K. Murray. The portrait, painted soon after the end of World War II, has always belong to the Groves family. The late Gen. Richard Groves, son of Gen. Leslie Groves, and Richard's children, decided to donate it to the Historical Museum after the sculptures of General Groves and Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer were dedicated in May 2011.

Artist Albert Murray has been called "the greatest of all American portrait painters after John Singer Sargent." As a naval officer in World War II, he often sketched in the heat of battle and was awarded the Bronze Star for bravery. After the war, Murray painted official portraits of navy war heroes. Murray also painted prominent civilians, among them Thomas J. Watson of IBM, philanthropist Laurance S. Rockefeller and Arthur Hays Sulzberger, former publisher of the *New York Times*. His work is represented in the collections of the National Gallery of Art, the National Portrait Gallery, and the National Museum of American Art.

Gen. Leslie Groves (1896-1970) led the top-secret atomic bomb development program, known as the Manhattan Project, to end World War II. He has been described as patriotic and traditional, in addition to brusque, determined, and decisive—a take-charge guy who knew how to inspire, find competent people for delegated tasks, and cajole and bully his way into getting a job done. Groves excelled at translating theoretical problems into practical management. He created and administered an enormous organization that solved complex engineering problems, built plants from scratch, and ran production, as well as



**Grandchildren of Gen. Leslie Groves gathered for the dedication of a sculpture of their grandfather outside Fuller Lodge in May 2011. The family has donated a portrait of the general to the Historical Museum.**

creating an air force with the 509th Composite Group, an intelligence agency, and a public relations department.

Born in Albany, NY, the third son of an army chaplain, Groves spent his childhood traveling the world. He graduated fourth in his class from West Point in 1918 and joined the Army Corps of Engineers. In 1940, he took over construction of the Pentagon, completing it on time and under budget. He hoped that his success would allow him to have a combat role in World War II. Instead, he was asked to lead a top-secret project that, if done right, "will win the war."

The unveiling is tentatively scheduled for April 5. Historical Society members will receive a mailing with more information.

## The Wedding Dress Made of a WWII Parachute

Occasionally stories and objects in the Museum Collection converge. We love to share such convergences. This story concerns the wedding dress of Eleanor Frances Roberts, who married Manhattan Project veteran Albert Bartlett in 1946. Dr. Bartlett shared the story of the dress made of out of a parachute in an oral history recorded September 15, 2010. Along with photographs of the wedding, the dress is now part of the Historical Museum Collection.

Dr. Bartlett came to Los Alamos after graduating from Colgate University in 1944 with a degree in physics. He first worked on plutonium chemistry, then transferred to the high-speed photography group.

“Eleanor Frances Roberts and Albert Allen Bartlett were married August 24, 1946, in her home church, the First Baptist Church of Hamilton, NY,” Dr. Bartlett wrote when the wedding dress was donated to the collection. The bride’s father, Prof. R. Chester Roberts, was head of the Department of Chemistry at Colgate. Eleanor had graduated from Denison University in June of 1946, and Al



**Wedding photos of Albert and Eleanor Bartlett were donated by the family to the Los Alamos Historical Museum Archives and are part of the museum collection.**

had graduated from Colgate in June 1944. Upon graduation, Al joined the staff of the Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory. In the spring of 1946, Al was working with the Photographic Group, preparing to take high-speed cameras to the first post-war tests of nuclear weapons at Bikini. To test the cameras, they filmed explosions



of 50-pound magnesium flare bombs of the type used by the air force. The bombs came with their own small parachutes, which were not needed and so were discarded. Al sent one of these parachutes to Eleanor. Her mother, Mabel Roberts, made it into her daughter’s wedding dress.

After Eleanor died March 3, 2008, at age 84, at her home in Boulder, CO, Albert handed over the treasured dress and recalled:

“When we were setting off these flash bombs to test the cameras, the

bombs came with a very nice nylon parachute. And nylon was a sort of a miracle fabric, developed, I think, just before the war. And very quickly, I mean, there was enough of it out that people, especially for women’s hosiery, were very taken by it, but then it was taken off the market because all the production went to military use. One of them was to make parachutes for these things. So here was a beautiful, white nylon parachute, and we had several of these things, and we just threw them away. I took one of them and mailed it home to my fiancé, and her mother made it into a wedding dress, which she wore when we were married on August 24 of 1946.”

**Please Note:** The wedding dress, the (See “Archives” on Page 6)

## Archives Will Be Closed Starting in January for the Big Move

*(Continued from Page 5)*

wedding pictures, and Dr. Bartlett's oral history recording will be moved in the coming year, along with the rest of the archives and collection, to the new facility that is being constructed as part of the Los Alamos Municipal Building. We will continue to update our members with progress as the move draws near, anticipated some time in the spring of 2013.

In the meantime, the Archives will be closed to researchers starting Jan. 1 and reopening about a month after the move. We would also appreciate it if donors could hold

on to donations until after the move so we don't lose anything during the process.

If you have questions, need more information, or have a research request that absolutely can't wait (there's no guarantee we will find what you are looking for), please contact Archivist Rebecca Collinsworth by phone at 505-695-5252 or by e-mail at [archives@losalamoshistory.org](mailto:archives@losalamoshistory.org).

We appreciate your patience during this exciting transition. We also look forward to welcoming you into the new facility when the move is complete and the museum collection is well protected for future generations.

## County Workers Replace and Repair Pipes Outside Museum

A project to unclog the visitor's bathroom in the Historical Museum in October turned into a weeks-long slog that required a backhoe, some back-breaking labor, and maze-solving skills. The old ceramic sewer pipes had become so clogged with tree roots that a plumber's snake no longer proved effective. The pipes had to be completely removed and replaced.

However, before pipes could be replaced, they had to be found! Neither the county nor the utilities department had plans that marked the layout of the historic pipes, so workers had



**Workers from Los Alamos County remove old pipes from in front of the Historical Museum.**

to roam all over the area, including the yard of the neighboring Baker House and over to the Memorial Rose Garden looking for them. Even after new pipes were installed, underground leaks sprouted, seemingly out of nowhere.

The Historical Society would like to extend its thanks to county employ-

ees Keith Yeske and Matthew Valencia who spent many mucky hours on the project.

While the museum was able to remain open for this much-needed task, other upcoming work will force a temporary building closure, probably in 2014. Preliminary planning is ongoing and includes revamping the building's infrastructure, from bathrooms and electrical systems to Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. We will keep you apprised of developments.



**A new sidewalk was laid in front of the Museum.**

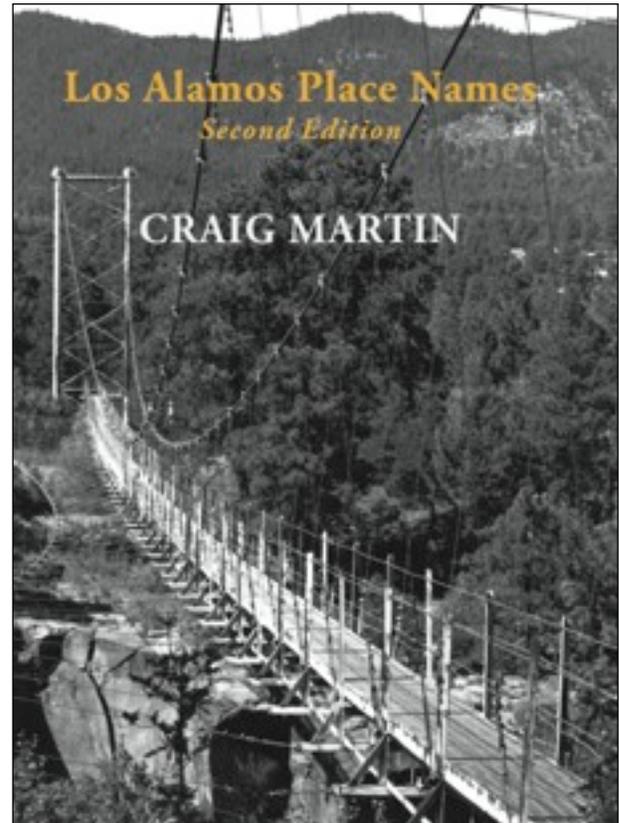
## “Los Alamos Place Names” Back in Print This Month

(Continued from Page 1)

includes recent discoveries for old entries and the addition of even more names as well as photos.

“The stories behind many of the names have been forgotten and, sadly, a few stories are lost, even in such a brief span as 55 years,” Martin comments in his introduction, but he also points out that his list of place names in Los Alamos “has over 400 entries.” They come from Tewa, Spanish, and English and are named for legends, people, events, gemstones, plants, national parks, animals, and more. The names were attached to the places by local stories, as tributes, and by committees. Some were selected from contest entries. However our place names were chosen, their history is fascinating. Readers may not expect a book such as *Los Alamos Place Names* to be a “page turner,” but they’ll be surprised!

The book left the printer on Nov. 30 and should be in the Museum Shop by Dec. 10.



## Atomic Film Festival Continues With Classics

The Atomic Film Festival continues in 2013 with classic films that are sure to provoke thought. The films will be shown every other month (every month during the summer) at 7 p.m. in Fuller Lodge. The festival is free and open to the public thanks to sponsorship support from Dr. Art Montoya, DDS, and Re/MAX Los Alamos.



*Fail Safe*, Tuesday, Jan. 29. Made within a year of *Dr. Strangelove* and at the height of Cold War atomic anxiety, this film posits a similar nightmare scenario. A U.S. bomber is accidentally ordered toward Moscow, ready to drop its load. The U.S. president (Henry Fonda) and various military and congressional leaders must then

scramble to deal with the disaster. The built-in suspense is well maintained by director Sidney Lumet, working from a script by former blacklisted writer Walter Bernstein.



*On the Beach*, Tuesday, March 26. The war is over. Nobody won. Only the inhabitants of Australia and the men of the submarine USS *Sawfish* have escaped the nuclear destruction and radiation. Captain Dwight Towers (Gregory Peck) takes the *Sawfish* on a mission to see if an approaching radiation cloud has weakened, but returns with grim news: the cloud is lethal. With the days and hours dwindling, each person confronts the situation in his or her own way.

## Help Your Local Historical Society: Call for Volunteers

We need your help! As you can see from the rest of this newsletter, the Los Alamos Historical Society is busy with numerous programs and projects. With the pending archives move, a temporary closure and revamping of the museum in 2014, and other large ventures, we are looking to create a corps of dedicated volunteers to help out in a number of areas. Some require a specific time commitment while others are open ended. Some require specialized skills while others are simple and unstructured. Some must be done on site at the museum while others can be done in the comfort of your own home. Please look at the following list and determine how and when you can help.

Volunteering with the Historical Society is fun. It's an opportunity to meet new friends, experience history first-hand, and be of service to the community.

**Museum docent:** From one to four times a month (or more!).

Museum docents greet visitors, orient them to the museum, answer questions about the community and its history, and sell items in the Museum Shop. Shifts are 3 hours (winter) or 3.5 hours (summer) and require some computer skills. Training available!

**Mailing labels:** Once or twice a month, plus one big mailing for the Annual Campaign and Membership Drive in May. May be done at home; volunteer(s) will be on an as needed basis.

**Office/Administrative:** Weekly. Filing, photocopying, etc. Can be set to volunteer(s)' schedule.

**Hospitality Committee:** Monthly or bi-monthly. Help with set up and clean up after

monthly lectures, exhibit openings, and other special programs.

**Tour Guides:** Times vary, heaviest in spring and summer. Guide students, tour groups, and others around the Historic District. Training available!

**Editing:** Times vary. Volunteers can help write and edit the quarterly newsletter, work on membership communications such as letters and postcards, or join our publications team. Inquire for more information. Work time and place are flexible.

**Membership Communications:** Weekly, with a larger time commitment in June. Learn the simple membership database; send out membership reminders and thank you letters.

**Greeters:** Times vary. Have you always wanted to work in the museum but don't want to learn the computer? Help us be friendly by greeting and guiding visitors to the museum or at our programs and events.

**Handyperson/Carpentry:** Times

vary. Are you handy with a paintbrush or screwdriver? The Museum can always use help with sprucing up the building and the exhibits. Let us know your skills, and we'll put you on the list to help out as needed.

**Anything else:** Can you offer a skill that we haven't thought of but you think we might need? Let us know about that, too.

Volunteers receive a twenty percent discount in the Museum Shop as well as other perks.

Please contact Museum Specialist Judith Stauber at 505-695-5254 or e-mail [judith@losalamoshistory.org](mailto:judith@losalamoshistory.org) to volunteer.



# Museum Shop has Wonderful Gifts for the Season

With the closure of Otowi Station in October, community members are lamenting the loss of a landmark as well as a convenient shopping place for gifts, books, and other items. The Los Alamos Historical Museum Shop, as much as is possible within its mission, is working to fill the gap to assist local shoppers.

Along with a terrific selection of books on area history and the Southwest, the Museum Shop carries a wide variety of science toys, jewelry, notecards and postcards, gift items, and Los Alamos souvenirs. Gift memberships to the Los Alamos Historical Society are also available.

Purchases made at the Museum Shop directly support the operating budget of the museum, helping improve exhibits and programs. Remember, Historical Society members receive a ten percent discount, and merchandise is tax free.

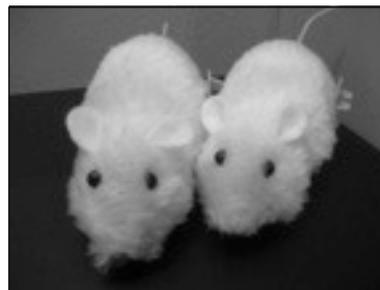
This year, the Museum Shop is also the only place in Los Alamos with Christmas tree permits, as the U.S. Forest Service office is closed. Permits are \$10.



**Handmade pots from Jemez Pueblo make great gifts.**



**This mug, with the Los Alamos Ranch School logo, says "Los Alamos Historical Museum" on the other side. Manhattan Project mugs and mugs with the chemical composition of caffeine are also available.**



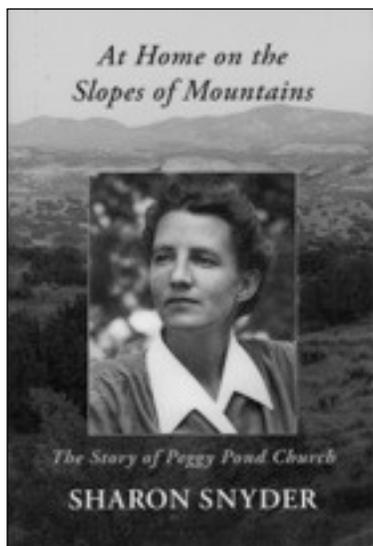
**Lab rats (of course!)**

**Los Alamos souvenirs, such as this key chain, are available in the Museum Shop.**



**These science kits are among the many toys and gifts available at the Museum Shop.**

## Awards Roll in for "At Home on the Slopes of Mountains"



We are pleased to announce that *At Home on the Slopes of Mountains: The Story of Peggy Pond Church*, written by Sharon Snyder and published by the Los Alamos Historical Society, has recently won two awards.

The first is the Lansing B. Bloom

Award from the Historical Society of New Mexico, an award for an outstanding publication in New Mexico history from an institution affiliated with the HSNM.

The book also won first place for an outstanding New Mexico biography from the 2012 New Mexico-Arizona Book Awards.

*At Home on the Slopes of Mountains* tells of New Mexico's first lady of poetry and the daughter of the Los Alamos Ranch School founder. Hardcover copies have sold out, but softcover editions are available for \$22 in the Museum Shop or online (click on the books link) <http://shop.losalamoshistory.org>.

### Need a holiday gift for that hard to buy for person on your list?

Consider a gift membership to the Los Alamos Historical Society.

Go online to <http://www.losalamoshistory.org/membership.htm> and click. It's that easy!\*

\*(Almost. Just follow the instructions on the page.)

### Los Alamos Historical Society Staff

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archives@losalamoshistory.org or 695-5252

Registrar Stephanie Yeamans  
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Publications Department Diane Starkovich  
publications@losalamoshistory.org or 662-2660

### Mission

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.

### Vision

Los Alamos Historical Society is respected worldwide as the source and repository for the compelling history of Los Alamos and its people from prehistory to contemporary times.

# Membership Communication Survey

We are trying to find out the most effective ways to share information with you and how we can better serve you. Please complete the following survey and mail to Los Alamos Historical Society, P.O. Box 43, Los Alamos, NM, 87544. Alternatively, you may complete the survey online at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/X7L3L9Z>. We thank you in advance for your input.

1. Are you a member of the Los Alamos Historical Society?

Yes  No

2. Do you regularly attend Los Alamos Historical Society lectures?

Yes  No

3. Do you feel as though you receive enough information from the Los Alamos Historical Society about events, programs, exhibits, and other activities?

Yes  No

Why or Why Not?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. How often would you like the Los Alamos Historical Society to communicate with you?

Weekly  Monthly  Quarterly

Other (please be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

5. From where do you receive information about the Los Alamos Historical Society? (check all that apply)

Newsletter  Postcards  Website  E-mails  Facebook  Twitter

\_\_\_\_\_Media (LA Daily Post, LA Monitor, KRSN) Other (please be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

6. Which communication method do you find most effective? (choose one)

Newsletter  Postcards  Website  E-mails  Facebook  Twitter

\_\_\_\_\_Media (LA Daily Post, LA Monitor, KRSN) Other (please be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

7. If the Los Alamos Historical Society held quarterly membership meetings, what sort of information would you find useful? (check all that apply)

Upcoming Events  Upcoming Exhibits  Fundraising Information  Work Parties

Volunteer Opportunities  Behind-the-Scenes Tours  Special Speakers

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. If the Los Alamos Historical Society held quarterly membership meetings, what time(s) would be most convenient for you? Check all that apply.

Early morning/Breakfast meeting  Noon/Brown Bag meeting  Early evening (5ish)

Evening (7ish)  Other (please be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

9. If the Los Alamos Historical Society held quarterly membership meetings, would you attend? Why or why not?

Yes  No  Perhaps/Depends

Why or Why Not (please be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

10. If the Los Alamos Historical Society does not hold quarterly membership meetings, what ways do you suggest members communicate with and provide feedback to the Society?

\_\_\_\_\_

### The Los Alamos Historical Society and Museum

Open free of charge every day except New Year's Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas.

October to March, Monday to Friday 10-4, Saturday 11-4, Sunday 1-4

April to October, Monday to Friday 9:30-4:30, Saturday 11-4, Sunday 1-4

**Address:**

P.O. Box 43, 1050 Bathtub Row  
Los Alamos, NM 87544

**Administrative Offices:** 505-662-6272

**Archives:** 505-695-5252

**Museum Educator:** 505-695-5251

**Publications:** 505-662-2660

**Shop Manager:** 505-695-5250

**Email:**

*historicalsociety@losalamoshistory.org*

**Website:** *www.losalamoshistory.org*

**Online shop:** *shop.losalamoshistory.org*

**Facebook:** Los Alamos Historical Museum

**Twitter:** *twitter.com/losalamosmuseum*

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage PAID  
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Permit 105

### Los Alamos Historical Society 2012-2013 Membership

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Check one: \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Gift \_\_\_\_\_ Donation

Heritage Benefactor \$2,500+

Heritage Supporter \$1,000-\$2,499

Heritage Contributor \$500-\$999

Heritage Friend \$100-\$499

Family \$50

Individual \$40

Student/Senior Individual \$35

Youth, 18 and under \$10

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ Additional Contribution

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_