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Teens get scoop on AIDS vaccine

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Korber

SANTA FE – A scientific luminary of Los Alamos National Laboratory captured the attention of a group of seventh- through 12th-graders with her impassioned view from the front lines of the war against HIV-AIDS.

A standing-room-only crowd filled the educational annex of the Georgia O'Keeffe Museum Tuesday evening for a conversation with Bette Korber, renowned immunologist and theoretical biologist at LANL.

Beginning with the dreadful current dimensions of the worldwide epidemic, now having infected 40 million people with another 4.3 million added in 2006, Korber discussed some of the historical milestones since the identification of the disease in 1981. She also spoke cautiously of some new developments.

By 1986, Korber's mentor Gerald Meyers had founded the HIV database at LANL,

enabling research about the evolutionary history and origins, as well as mapping of variations of the virus that causes AIDS. Korber has used this discipline, known as phylogenetics, as a weapon in the cause throughout her career.

Korber achieved national prominence in 2000 when she published a groundbreaking reconstruction of the moment when a non-fatal disease prevalent in

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AUTUMN ORBS



GARY WARREN/Monitor

THE PERFECT PUMPKIN Bill Gray of Ft. Sumner, N.M., gets a pumpkin from his trailer at the Los Alamos Farmers Market last week. The market continues Thursday with farmers' harvests of fall fruits and vegetables.

COUNTY COUNCIL

'Branding' Los Alamos

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The question of "image" and how Los Alamos County is perceived occupied much of council's time at their Tuesday evening meeting in White Rock Town Hall.

The council's strategic goals for 2007 include increasing the number of non-LANL jobs by 1,000, and investing public money to stimulate private investment. Under the heading of those goals, council was presented with several plans Tuesday designed to recruit new businesses, create an image for the town in the eyes of visitors, potential employers and locals, and to get the county's new public transit system to the point where it is recognizable and used by local residents.

Business Recruitment

recruitment will align well with the county's most recent efforts to develop a portfolio of land assets so that those companies that are recruited can be shown available sites and building projects that can meet their needs."

The LACDC's current business development activities include locating space for businesses, understanding the local market, maintaining a community profile, and facilitating connections between property owners, developers and potential tenants.

"The new piece of the puzzle will allow LACDC to proactively identify, qualify and recruit targeted businesses," Sullivan said. "We would target places with a high cost of doing business, like Phoenix or the Bay Area, with no reason to be where they are now, and then sell Los Alamos specifically," Sullivan said that they would be



**ATOMIC CITY
TRANSIT**

land assets within the county, and that the partnership with Growing Economies would bring the requisite experience to execute the project.

Bill Enloe is the CEO of Los Alamos National Bank and the current chair of New Mexico's Economic Development Partnership. Enloe said that the partnership had been responsible for bringing 6,000 jobs to New Mexico in the four

director of the UNM Small Business Development center, which operates contract for UNM-LA, a not a county funded act

"The Small Business Development center i track for 30 new busines with 75-80 employees,"

"I'd like to see us be more aggressive, and move more quickly on this. We are in a



GARY WARREN/Monitor

BUSINESS Business director John Wolfe speaks to the school board Tuesday night.

SCHOOL BOARD

Schools to get 11 new buses

BETHERE

community calendar

TODAY

Utilities Board meets at 5:30 p.m. today at the County Annex, 901 Trinity Drive.

The first in a series of five community forums on the White Rock Master Plan will be held 6:30 p.m. today in White Rock Town Hall.

Que Pasa Singles Club will host a buffet night in Los Alamos today. Participants can enjoy the buffet at China Moon, and the conversation, too. Contact 662-7072 for more information.

THURSDAY

The Los Alamos Arts Council's Film Society in collaboration with UNM-LA will screen "The Aura" at 7 p.m. Thursday at the UNM-LA Student Center Lecture Hall. Admission is \$5/\$3 with UNM-LA ID. Call 663-0477 for more information.

E-mail lacomunity@lamonitor.com to submit. *Be There runs daily, with an extended calendar on Sundays showing the week's events.*

VACCINE

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monkeys and apes crossed over to humans in what was then known as Leopoldville, Belgian Congo – now Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo.

Her research pushed the threshold of the disease back to the 1930s.

"Why didn't we see it for such a long time?" she asked. "Because you die of other things," she said, describing the other "opportunistic" diseases that take lives, including those of people she knew.

Progress in solving the crisis has been slow. "It was the most diverse virus we have seen up to this point," Korber said. "We knew this was really going to be bad news."

During the 15 years it took to come up with a therapy, Korber said with emotion, "I lost a few people I loved very much."

Existing therapies remain expensive.

"You can't stop," Korber said. Also, she added, there are side effects – like nausea – and sometimes patients develop drug resistance until they run out of drugs that can be used."

The primary object of HIV-AIDS research remains the quest for a working vaccine that can respond to the AIDS virus' adaptability, key to its success in overcoming both natural and engineered defenses.

"We know it's going to get worse and it has other tricks up its sleeve," Korber said.

Her emphasis has been on boosting the human

immune system with an artificial protein, designed to enable the body's own defenses, T-cells, to attack the more stable components of a the virus. The target is a "consensus" virus, modeled from an "average" or "centralized" type of HIV.

Toward the end of her talk Korber said she had just received some encouraging test results, not yet published.

"The theory works," she said, but warned that it only works in monkeys so far, and there were still many uncertainties to overcome.

Quiet, at first, the audience of young inquiring minds, opened up with a barrage of questions toward the end.

"Are they going to start killing people off and wearing rubber suits and staying in plastic bubbles and stuff?" asked a high school student.

"I was never afraid around a person with AIDS," Korber answered, leading into a discussion on the availability and reliability of tests and the difficulties of transmitting AIDS except through sex and needles.

The students, many of whom were there on a recommendation or special credit assignment from their science teachers, inaugurated a new season of the Science Café, which is sponsored by the Santa Fe Alliance for Science, the Santa Fe Institute, the George O'Keeffe Museum and the N.M. Public Education Department.

Korber is a Laboratory Fellow and recipient of the Department of Energy's E.O. Lawrence Award, one of the highest honors for scientists in the national laboratories.



THE CYCLE OF LIFE AND UNDEATH

HERE COMES

DRACULA Mark Dunn rides home from work Friday afternoon, promoting New Mexico Dance Theater's "Dracula" on the back of his bike. Dunn and other dancers in the company will present "Dracula" at 7:30 p.m. Friday, 2 and 7:30 p.m. Saturday, and 2 p.m. Sunday at Duane Smith Auditorium. Tickets are \$13/\$6 for students and seniors. Admission is free for children 4 and under. The audience is invited to come dressed for Halloween.

GARY WARREN/Monit

SCHOOLS

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• utilities - \$894,591/2.62 percent.

The total current budget is \$34,202,383. The upcoming budget will be discussed again in future meetings, before it is finalized.

"Trying to get the best possible budget to have everything the teachers and students and administrators need is near and dear to my heart," Wolfe said.

Attorney John Kennedy is a partner in the Cuddy, Kennedy, Albetta, Ives & Archuleta-Staehlin, LLP law firm who represents LAPS. He discussed the school board's superintendent search and advised them to utilize the expertise of a former superintendent as a consultant rather than a headhunter or search firm.

"What you want is a good fit, somebody who is going to serve your needs and be here for a long time," he said.

Kennedy and Superintendent Jim Anderson mentioned some names the board might consider.




The superintendent search issue will be on the school board agenda until

the process is complete. Anderson is scheduled to retire Aug. 1.

Seven people, school personnel, at Tuesday's work session following the session board went into executive session for the purpose of reviewing Trinity Site and Basin Site documents.

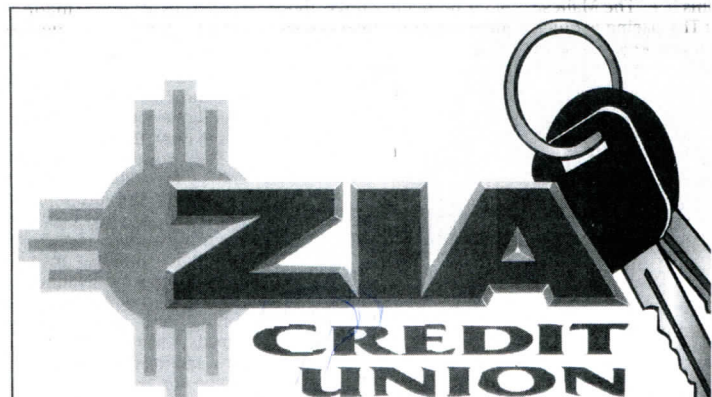
Today's Weather

Local 3-Day Forecast


Thu 10/18	Fri 10/19	Sat 10/20
		
58/40	68/52	72/47



Happy 16th
Tiffany

ZIA CREDIT UNION



SALAZAR