



## WHAT IS SIR?

<https://youtu.be/5j5WsiyKp5s>

**Branch 8 Website:**

<https://www.sirbr8.com>



**"MAKE NEW FRIENDS FOR LIFE"**

**January 2024**

**Editor: David Glazer**

## BIG SIR COLUMN



**Rich Carlston**  
**Big SIR**

### HAPPY NEW YEAR!

What a wonderful time of year! We have recovered (hopefully) from the Holidays and have a whole new year of friendship, activity, and fun ahead. As for your New Year's resolutions, I hope one is to become involved in at least one new activity offered by our Branch. To find that new activity, consider your interests and simply review our activities in the Newsletter or on our website. I'm confident you will find something that you

will find interesting and enjoyable. Whatever you choose, you'll find new friends and fun to share the entire year.

Again, I'd like to recognize Ray and thank him for his tireless service these past two years, first as Little SIR and then as Big SIR. He loves our Branch and our members, which was repeatedly demonstrated by the outstanding job he did. Thank you, Ray!

I feel honored and privileged to follow Ray as Big SIR this year! I am so thankful for our BEC and know that with their guidance and experience, they will keep me on the right path. I am thrilled to be working with Tom DiGrande as our Little SIR this year. Tom brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, and service and will be a terrific asset for me personally and for the Branch.

My goals this year are relatively straightforward. Keep our Branch healthy, vibrant, beneficial, and member-focused. Encourage everyone to participate and invite others to join us. Always remember our Mission "is to improve the lives of our members through fun activities and events while making Friends for Life!"



## HOW BILL SEES IT: (SIR Bill Phelon)

*Bill is not well and has not responded to our contacts. He may read this. Bill, thank you for your wit and contributions to this little newsletter. We wish you well. Editor*

## LITTLE SIR SEZ



**Tom DiGrande**  
**Little SIR**

### HAPPY NEW YEAR!

2024 brings an opportunity for SIR Branch 8 to continue on the path set from prior years leadership and guidance. I am privileged to have been selected and elected to the position of Little SIR for Branch 8.

Thanks to Ray and Rich for the OUTSTANDING focus on directing this SIR Branch to be recognized as a leader in the SIR Organization. 🍌

Rich and I are "blown away" by all the great work the membership has done this past year, so excited to see all we will accomplish in 2024!

Our goal: HAVE FUN - JOIN AN ACTIVITY 😊

Along with assisting Rich with growing the Branch 8 membership, participation, and our mission statement of "making Friends for Life", the Community Outreach - SIR Giving Back activity, will continue as my passion.

Let our New Year resolution be this:

We will be there for one another as fellow members of humanity, in the finest sense of the word. (Gorman Persson)



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(Click on an item and you will be  
taken to that Article.)

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**Next SIR Luncheon:**  
**January 8, 2024**  
**Boundary Oak Golf Course**  
**3800 Valley Vista Rd.**  
**Walnut Creek**

**Executive Meeting: 9:00am**  
**Social Hour begins: 10:15am**  
**Luncheon starts: 11:30am**  
**Cost \$36 INCREASED**  
**Greeters: TBD**

 <b>MENU</b>
Green Salad
Chicken Picata
Rice Pilaf, Vegetables,
Lemon Caper Sauce
Or
Cod Picata
Rice Pilaf, Vegetables,
Lemon Caper Sauce
Or
Creamy Tomato Tortellini
Tiramisu
Coffee/Iced Tea

## NEW ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER or E- mail

If you change your address, phone number or E-Mail address, please notify Rich Knowles at (925) 370-6239 or send him an E-mail at: [sb8msec@hotmail.com](mailto:sb8msec@hotmail.com)



## LUNCHEON SIGN-UP

Sons in Retirement originated in 1958 in San Mateo when four retired businessmen got together for a social luncheon with the purpose of promoting this activity for all retired men. This idea evolved into the organization that you are involved with today. We continue to believe that holding luncheons for social interaction and to listen to timely presentations is a wonderful activity. We hope that you value this, as well. **The monthly luncheon is the backbone of SIR and why SIR exists. If you have not attended these luncheons for a while, we encourage you to join your fellow SIR members and enjoy retirement life.**



We ALL must sign up to attend the Branch 8 luncheon held at Boundary Oak Golf Course, 3800 Valley Vista Rd., Walnut Creek, CA. You will have a choice of a meat, fish, or vegetarian entrée. You can also select no meal. **Please tell us which entrée you want when you sign-up:**

1. Three sign-up methods will be available for yourself and if you want to bring a guest. Just let us know including your choice of meal:
  - a. A Constant Contact email requesting your action to sign up to attend a Branch 8 luncheon will be sent to you. Click on the link in this email to electronically sign up for the next luncheon. You will need to enter your name as well as any guest's names, your and your guest's meal preference. You should receive a message immediately that your response has been recorded. This is the preferred method.
  - b. Send an email message to [sirbr8attendance@outlook.com](mailto:sirbr8attendance@outlook.com). You will receive a confirming email.
  - c. Call 925-901-4826 to sign up for the luncheon by phone.
2. You must sign 5 calendar days before the next luncheon (i.e., the Wednesday before the luncheon). This deadline is necessary because we must provide a final headcount to Boundary Oak.
3. We have been fortunate in being able to accommodate those who sign up late or simply walk-in. If you are not on the sign-up list for the meal and want to attend; do come, and, if available, we will sell you a meal. If meals appear to be sold out, we will ask you to wait until 11:15 AM so we can confirm that a meal is available. You are always welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the speaker.
4. As before, you will bring a personal check for **\$36.00** made out to SIR Branch 8, or cash to the luncheon as payment.

5. If you sign up, but do not attend the luncheon, or if you cancel after 5-days prior to the luncheon, you remain subject to payment because we owe Boundary Oak for the lunch that they have prepared for you.
6. If you have any questions regarding the sign-up process, contact Manuel Dominguez ([dominguezx@comcast.net](mailto:dominguezx@comcast.net)) or Dan Smith ([dns.lns02@astound.net](mailto:dns.lns02@astound.net)).

Constant Contact emails have been very successful and makes sign-up easy. However, these emails do not reach all members for one reason or another. If you believe that you have been missed, or if away during the sign-up period, you can always use the attendance email or voicemail given above anytime. You should do this at least 5-days prior to the luncheon to ensure that you have a meal.

**Again, we request that if you sign up and then change your mind about attending, please cancel before the 5-days prior to the luncheon cutoff. Late cancellations and no shows cost the Branch. We do not charge membership for missed meals when the reason is health related.**

## NEED A RIDE

In the interest of getting more guys to our monthly luncheons, the BEC would like to know who needs a ride to and from Boundary Oak and has not yet arranged for one each month. If you need a ride to/from the luncheon, please send an email to Ray de Wit at [raydewit11@gmail.com](mailto:raydewit11@gmail.com) by the first of the month.

In addition, we have arranged to have a golf cart available for transporting limited-mobility members to and from the upper parking lot to the luncheon entrance. Please email Ray de Wit at least 3 days before the monthly luncheon if you need that service.

## NEW MEMBER BADGES



These badges belong to our newest members. Don't forget to say "Hi" and introduce yourself. Let's make them feel at home. Talk about your SIR activities and ask them to join you.



**NEW SIR STORE  
APPAREL- NEW ITEMS!  
NEW SHIPPING  
CHANGES!**



**ALL SIR orders over \$50 ship FREE! Shop now to take advantage of this offer!**



**SHOP NOW:**

<https://sir.go.customprintcenter.com>

**SHOW YOU ARE PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF SIR  
BRANCH 8, SPORT A LOGO! Be well!  
Public Relations Chair: Tony de Losada**

**PUBLIC RELATIONS &  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH**



No new report submitted for  
**JANUARY.**

**Tony de Losada Tom Mohrman  
Chairmen**

Tony de Losada [tonydelosada@gmail.com](mailto:tonydelosada@gmail.com) 925-945-1730  
Tom Mohrman [mustangpm@gmail.com](mailto:mustangpm@gmail.com) 516-242-1635

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH –  
SIR GIVING BACK**



**Tom Di Grande**

Come join your fellow SIR Branch 8 members in the Community Outreach - SIR Giving Back activities. Participate when you can, in assisting with projects, while supporting our communities, SIR Giving Back gives you that opportunity. 👍

The 2 scheduled activities at the Food Bank in December were a HUGE success. The "Holiday Bagging" activity was a fast-paced event and at the end, VERY SATISFYING! The volunteers (10 members & 3 spouses) assisted in filling 2250 large bags, containing a variety of foods. Our regular schedule monthly activity had 12 volunteer / members & 2 spouses inspecting incoming food from donations, for expiration dates, labeled ingredients and condition of

containers. These items were then sorted by categories, boxed and weighed for future distribution to needed facilities. We have this assignment down!! 🙌

Volunteers needed for the upcoming scheduled Food Bank activities:

Friday, 1/19/24. - Boxing / Bagging Activity 📦

9am - Noon

Food Bank Warehouse (Concord)

10 volunteers needed!

This "fast paced" activity will be challenging, but well worth it! 😊

Thursday, 2/1/24 - Produce Distribution Activity 🚚

11:15am - 12:45pm

Pittsburg - First Baptist Community Church

224 Linda Vista Ave.

Pittsburg, CA 94565

6 volunteers needed!

Also:

Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano

4010 Nelson Ave.

Concord, CA 94520 :

Wednesday, 1/10/24

Wednesday, 2/14/24

Minimum 15 volunteers needed

All scheduled from 1 to 3pm

No open toed shoes

Masks are optional

Wear your Red Volunteer T shirt

Arrive 15 minutes prior to scheduled time

All Community Outreach - SIR Giving Back activities are co-ed. Spouses, partners & significant others are encouraged to sign up & participate for any upcoming activity. The Branch needs to "step up our game" in informing and inviting the spouses to attend & volunteer in our Food Bank activities, I believe that they are just waiting for the invitation! 😊

If you have volunteered in an activity previously, please contact us again for the upcoming activities.

We will continue to provide barrels 🗑 or large food bags, for needed food donations, at our scheduled monthly luncheons, look for the SIR "greeters". Your continuing contributions are appreciated 🙌. Let's Fill the Barrels! We really need better participation here!

SIR Branch 8 continues to demonstrate a strong effort in supporting our activities and having the community at heart! Thanks for your continuing volunteering of time, energy & support in these needed programs. "Giving Back" doesn't require inordinate commitments of time or talent, you can do what you want, when you can and still reap the rewards of Volunteering.

To sign up contact:

Tom DiGrande

[tomdigrande@comcast.net](mailto:tomdigrande@comcast.net)

925-876-7851

Phil Scimonelli

[rosescim@aol.com](mailto:rosescim@aol.com)

661-917-8060

Send Hotline comments to Dan Smith at [dns.lns02@astound.net](mailto:dns.lns02@astound.net)

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## MEMBER RELATIONS COMMITTEE



**Rich Knowles**  
Chairman

The Member Relations Committee (MRC) reports to the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) on member concerns. To do this effectively we need input from our members. The MRC wants to hear from you on all issues concerning the viability of Branch 8. MRC welcomes any comments from members on how to improve their branch experience.



**Chairman:** Rich Knowles 925-681-9191 [grichthek@gmail.com](mailto:grichthek@gmail.com)

## DOCTOR'S OFFICE



**Dr Bill Adler**  
Chairman

We have retired MDs, who are willing to give informal medical information to SIR members. The doctors do not diagnose illness, but will answer basic questions, provide referrals, and direct our members to medical resources.

The "Doctor's Office" is open at 10:45 AM on Luncheon days.

**Dr. Bill Adler, Chairman**  
**Dr. Bob Stein, Co-Chair**

## LADIES DAY LUNCHEON



**Buck Cheshire**  
Chairman

### Holiday Ladies Day Luncheon

The December 11, 2023 Holiday Ladies Day Luncheon had 143 attendees, and everyone had a very enjoyable time. The door prize recipients were spread out across the room of beautifully decorated tables. The wine, See's chocolates, dinner discounts, and donated prizes were very well received. The luncheon was capped by



a performance by the extraordinary COSMO, who besides being a great magician, is part motivational/inspirational speaker and comedian. His performance kept the audience fascinated by how he was able to perform his magic. The performance was the highlight of the luncheon and was enjoyed by everyone, with the floral center pieces being taken home by the seat-holder having the lucky number seat at the table.

The spring LDL will be held on June 10, 2024. A theme has yet to be determined; however, once again there will be tasty food, wine, and flowers, along with many door prizes awarded to lucky ticketholders.

Buck Cheshire  
Chairman Ladies Day Luncheon (Ret.)  
[BJCHESHIRE@COMCAST.NET](mailto:BJCHESHIRE@COMCAST.NET)

## OKTOBERFEST



**Leo Dominguez**



**Ron Maciak**



**Thom Watkins**

### SIR BRANCH 8 OKTOBERFEST!!!

Our first Oktoberfest was on Thursday October 19, 2023. We had 93 members and guests, the weather cooperated and Concord Community Park looked like a German Bier Garden with all the terrific decorations everywhere. We began with pretzels and a variety of mustards, while the chefs were hard at work.

The cooking began the day before with three of us at Leo's place and after 5 hours of cooking potatoes, cabbage, and other prep, we were ready for the next day. On event day Exec Chef Thom Watkins, led the crew to cook sausages, kielbasa, German potato salad, cabbage etc. Ron Maciak, could not attend, but he was a key player with Thom to hunt down all the food, recipes etc, we missed Ron. The volunteers made this happen, Rob L and Ray W picked up all the supplies and returned to the storeroom Dan Crowley has provided, thanks Dan. Ron M, Thom W, Ken S, Leo picked up coolers at the rental company days before. Ken M picked up ice cream and another cooler. We had about 25 volunteers from Branch 8, and then many spouses pitched in to help set up bar, hang decorations etc. Dennis R. pre and day of cooker, Dan K enjoyed using Thom's propane grill torch to start the coals, careful Dan! Pete J did a great job using his ladder to hang Oktoberfest banners and all sorts of other items. Roger L, treasurer extraordinaire. Terry M decided to recycle, since park does not offer. Jim S, head environmentalist, he cleaned up previous refuse from other events. Tom D, manned the welcome table, wearing his lederhosen, we had to pull him away, so he could partake of all the food and drink. The name labels by Paula M were decorative and fun. All enjoyed German beers, wine, sodas, water, even non-alcoholic beer! Big thanks to the spouses that helped, Dale J, Gayle D, Linda G, Paula M, Maureen M, Sandi L.



We could not have succeeded with the event without the numerous volunteers, that cannot all be listed here, but you all know that you were highly valued and we all benefitted from great conversations and physical work setting up and taking down all the rental equipment.

Remember that SIR enriches the lives of our members through fun activities and events-while making friends for life. SO TRUE!

## SUNSHINE REPORT



**Rich Knowles  
Chairman**

Please contact Membership: [sb8msec@hotmail.com](mailto:sb8msec@hotmail.com) to report illnesses/surgery or passing of members. Membership will send electronic "Get well" Cards via email and continue to mail condolence cards to the families via the mail.



Membership will report member deaths to the branch via email and as they become known obituaries and services. In addition, Membership continues to maintain a current obituary file on the web site.

**Membership Secretary:** Rich Knowles, [grichthek@gmail.com](mailto:grichthek@gmail.com) or call (925) 681-9191

## BIRTHDAYS



Membership began sending birthday emails to members during the Covid-19 shut down and has continued daily since. The Sirs below have a birthday in either December or January. Be sure to open your birthday greeting. We will acknowledge December birthdays in January along with January birthdays. **Highlighted names are those who are our nonagenarians!**

Alan Curtis  
Alan Schulze  
Bill Hunter  
**Bill Phelon**  
Bob Bogardus  
**Bob Mayo**  
Bob Weiss  
Bud Bartz  
Buddy May  
Carl Ludwig  
Dave Sutton  
Dick Marvin  
Dick Schally  
Franco Diamond  
Hans Pable

Ian Dunn  
Jackie Kaneshiro  
Jamshed Gandhi  
Ken Bekfer  
Ken Main  
Larry Setren  
Martin Simmons  
Meng Horng  
Mike Hennessey  
Nick Maufe  
Pete Boss  
Peter Jordan  
Phil Philpot  
Ray de Wit

Rich Burke  
Rich Knowles  
Rob Laaback  
Rob Norris  
Rob Spicer  
Ron Kosich  
**Ronald Brown**  
Russell Schleske  
Steve Greene  
Steve Hilberg  
Terry Harris  
Terry Mason  
Tom DiGrande  
Tom Keehn

## ACTIVITIES COORDINATING COMMITTEE



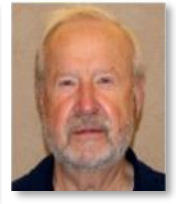
Mike Frey



Ken Main



Chick Lowry



Dennis Mierzwa

### The DECEMBER 2023 Activity Announcements

The ACC Team takes a break in the last month of the year as there is no BEC meeting due to the annual Ladies Day Holiday Celebration Luncheon festivities. However, the team still conducts business required to ready for next year's efforts.

We continue working towards an update to the Activity Website pages posted on the Branch site. It entails a robust change in design to make it easier to locate details providing the What, When, and Where information and a current description of the activity. By keeping the Branch 8 Activities listings current, existing Branch 8 members, or interested parties searching the web for senior activity opportunities will find our most current offerings. Updated information will be posted in the January 2024 posting.

We have a couple of Activity Chair vacancies that will require some volunteer help to keep them active. Bridge Partners and a leader for the Ladies Day Luncheon Activities are currently open positions. Efforts will be made to find replacements.

Current Branch 8 Activity status:

BR 8 Activity Count = 52; Co-Ed = 37; Includes 3 Events; 2 Community Outreach  
Shared Branch Activity Count = 22; Additional EX Branch Co-Ed opportunities = 6  
Total Activity Opportunities = 60

There will also be some changes in ACC leadership as Mike Frey will take on the leadership role within our team. Chick Lowry will remain a team member and continue to contribute to activity committee coordination efforts.

We wish all our Branch Members a happy, healthy, and safe Holiday Season.

The next ACC meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 27th at 2:00 PM

# JANUARY ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

## Activities at SIR Branch 8

Today			January 2024		Print	Week	Month	Agenda	
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat			
31	Jan 1	2	3	4	5	6			
		10:30am Book Gro 12:30pm Car Enth 1pm Poker 5pm Dine Out Sin	9am 9 Hole Golf. 10am Bowling 11am LIVE-Domin 1pm Cribbage 1pm Cribbage Tou	8:30am Pickleball 9:30am Heads-Up 11am Bridge - Rut	8:30am Open Bocc 1pm Poker 1pm Internet Mex	10am Woodpecker			
7	8	9	10	11	12	13			
	9am BEC meeting 10am Book Excha 11:30am SIR Lund	10am 18 Hole Gol 10am Easy Hike 4pm Podcast	9am 9 Hole Golf. 10am Bowling 1pm Community C 1pm Pinochle	8:30am Pickleball 9:15am Mixed Lea 9:30am Heads-Up 1pm Recently Rea 6pm Dine In 1	8:30am Open Bocc 9am Duplicate Bri 1pm LIVE-Mexica				
14	15	16	17	18	19	20			
	<b>HOTLINE input</b> 8am Birding 1pm Bridge - Part	10am 18 Hole Gol 1pm Cribbage	9am 9 Hole Golf. 10am Bowling 1pm Poker	8:30am Pickleball 9:30am Heads-Up 6pm Dine out 1 6pm Wine Finders	<b>HOTLINE input c</b> 8:30am Open Bocc 10am Digital Phot 1pm Internet Mex 6pm Dine In #1				
21	22	23	24	25	26	27			
	10am 18 Hole Gol 12pm Poker	1pm Poker 1pm Writing Your 4pm Podcast 6pm Bargain bites	9am 9 Hole Golf. 10am Bowling 1pm Pinochle 1:30pm \$UMS in R	8:30am Pickleball 8:30am Fishing 9:30am Heads-Up 1pm Poker	8:30am Open Bocc 11:30am BRIDGE - 1pm LIVE-Mexica				
28	29	30	31	Feb 1	2	3			
	10am 18 Hole Gol	10am Hike: Hard 3pm Mixer	9am 9 Hole Golf. 10am Bowling	8:30am Pickleball 9:30am Heads-Up 11am Bridge - Rut	8:30am Open Bocc 1pm Poker 1pm Internet Mex	10am Woodpecker			
Events shown in time zone: Pacific Time - Los Angeles									

Events shown in time zone: Pacific Time - Los Angeles

+ Google Calendar



## ASTRONOMY ONLINE



**David Bushnell**  
Chairman

David Bushnell, Chairman and Editor, [dbushn@swbell.net](mailto:dbushn@swbell.net), 925-838-3914

Larry Lange, Assistant Chairman



If you would like to get the semi-daily emails about astronomy, please respond to me at [dbushn@swbell.net](mailto:dbushn@swbell.net). I get them from Sigma Xi SmartBrief, where they have been "down-edited" to language we can all understand.

## OPERA IN THE THEATERS



**David Bushnell**  
Chairman

On January 6, we get to see Giuseppe Verdi's epic 1842 opera Nabucco, the Bible-inspired story of a war between Babylon and Jerusalem. It contains the famous chorus of the Hebrew slaves, which later became the unofficial anthem of the Italian nationalism movement. You can access the OperaWire



review of the opening performance with the link below. OperaWire wasn't totally pleased, but the Met has had a couple of months to iron out the problems, and the HD cinema performances are usually spectacular, with the stars performing for the whole world and their home countries. New York Classical Review, link below, was less critical.

The Saturday matinee performance of Nabucco comes to our Century cinemas live on January 6 at 9:55 am, running 125 minutes, plus intermission (probably 30 minutes). But as you all know, sometimes the intermission is the most interesting part. "Encore" performances of the same show will be the following Wednesday at 1:00 pm and 6:30 pm. It is one of the great operas I watch whenever I get a chance.

[Metropolitan Opera 2023-24 Review: Nabucco - OperaWire](#)

[New York Classical Review](#)

On January 27, the Met presents a modern version of Bizet's classic opera Carmen. It hasn't opened yet, so I don't have a review.

David Bushnell, Activity Chairman, [dbushn@swbell.net](mailto:dbushn@swbell.net), 925-838-3914

## BOCCE BALL - LEAGUE PLAY



**Chick Lowry**  
Chairman

Asst. Chair: Bob Barnes [Bob\\_Barnes@msn.com](mailto:Bob_Barnes@msn.com)

League Bocce Play for SIR is a seasonal opportunity made available through the Concord Bocce Federation. We currently have one ten-person team available. If there is interest beyond those currently on the team, we can investigate adding another. Contact either of the names listed below for additional information. Bocce Ball League play will resume next spring.

Chairman: Chick Lowry,  
[Clowry2845@gmail.com](mailto:Clowry2845@gmail.com)

## BOCCE BALL - OPEN PLAY



**Martin Hawco**  
Chairman

Bocce Ball Open Play will resume Spring 2024. I will contact you then; I have a contact list that includes players from past seasons who did NOT play at all this season. If anyone is not interested and is on that list I have, please let me know and I'll remove them from that distribution list.

Chairman: Martin Hawco 925-689-4251,  
[not4u2bee@gmail.com](mailto:not4u2bee@gmail.com)

## BOOK EXCHANGE



**Alan Curtis**  
Chairman

As shown below, plenty of SIRS enjoying our book collection at the August Luncheon. We have lots of new titles, including history, fiction, and nonfiction, some first editions, and some large print editions. Come check out the Book Exchange!





Be sure to stop by and browse, a good opportunity to pick up a book or two, and chat with your fellow readers and book-lovers. As usual, we welcome donations of titles you think your fellow Sirs might enjoy. Happy reading!

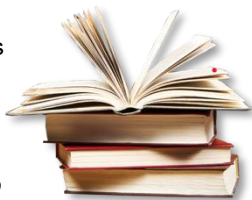
Chairman: Alan Curtis, [alancurtis@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alancurtis@sbcglobal.net)  
Assistant Chairman: Ron Rizzo, [ronbrizzo@gmail.com](mailto:ronbrizzo@gmail.com)  
Assistant Chairman: Rob Laaback, [rlaabak@yahoo.com](mailto:rlaabak@yahoo.com)  
Assistant Chairman: Tom Keehn, [tom242g@gmail.com](mailto:tom242g@gmail.com)

## BOOK GROUP



**Ron Rizzo**  
Chairman

The Book Group's selection for December was *The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order*, by Rush Doshi. The author is currently the Deputy Senior Director for China and Taiwan at the White House National Security Council. Most of our members didn't like the book, feel that, while



the book had some interesting points, it was a long slog to read and was much too repetitive. It received an overall rating of 2.5 out of 5.

Our next book is a work of fiction, *My Absolute Darling*, by Gabriel Tallent. The Book Group meets the first Tuesday of the month at 10:30 am at the Concord Round Table Pizza on Treat Boulevard.

If you like to read and have good discussions about the books you have read, you should think about joining our group. If you are interested, please contact our Chairman, Ron Rizzo, at [ronbrizzo@gmail.com](mailto:ronbrizzo@gmail.com). The list of books to be read during the year is on the SIR website, along with a list of books read the prior year.

## RECENTLY READ BOOKS



**Ron Rizzo**  
Chairman

The Recently Read Books Group consists of members who share short summaries of the book(s) they have read the previous month and pick up ideas about what to read next from other members. There are always a variety of books covered, both fiction and non-fiction, such as novels, literature, biography, history, science, and current affairs.

Please feel free to join us if you've read a book (or two) you've enjoyed that you'd like to recommend to other members or if you just want to some suggestions for your own reading. If you're interested, contact our Chairman, Ron Rizzo, at [ronbrizzo@gmail.com](mailto:ronbrizzo@gmail.com). We meet on Zoom at 1:00 PM the 2nd Thursday of each month.

The books recommended by members in 2021 and 2022 are listed in the Recently Read Books section of the SIR Branch 8 website. Each recommendation includes the title, author, and a short summary of the book. The recommendations made in 2023 will be added to the website within a month of each meeting.

Send Hotline comments to Dan Smith at [dns.lns02@astound.net](mailto:dns.lns02@astound.net)

## BOWLING



**Dan Weller**  
Chairman

### Bowling League

The 2023-2024 "winter" league started September 6.

We have thirteen teams of four bowlers each. We are looking for four more bowlers to create the fourteenth team. Low average bowlers, spouses, and friends are welcome.

Please contact Dan Weller if you are interested in league or tournament bowling.



### 2024 Tournaments

The 2024 SIR bowling calendar with fifteen tournaments was approved by the SIR Inc. Board. We are looking ahead to participating in many tournaments and making new friends and seeing great current friends from several different branches.

### SIR State-Wide Tournament Schedules, Applications, and Results Are On-Line:

To access the SIR State bowling information, open the state bowling web site at [SIRBowling.org](http://SIRBowling.org). You can find tournament schedules, applications and results on the site.

### Upcoming SIR Bowling Tournaments:

DATE	LOCATION	COMMENTS
January 16-17, 2024	Napa Bowl	Our first "string pins" tournament
February 15-16, 2024	Sacramento / Country Club Lanes	

**ACTIVITY CHAIRMAN:** Dan Weller, 925-935-5510  
[dwyler@astound.net](mailto:dwyler@astound.net)

**ASSISTANT CHAIRMAN:** Rob Norris, 925-788-6958  
[robert.norris@natca.net](mailto:robert.norris@natca.net)

## CAR ENTHUSIASTS



**Chick Lowry**  
Chairman



Twenty Car Enthusiasts Activity members participated in the group Holiday Celebration Luncheon on December 7th at La Veranda Restaurant in Clayton. The food was good, the appetizers outstanding, and the enthusiastic participation of the "Car Guys" and their companions made for an outstanding end

of year celebration. The group is ready to charge into 2024 activities and events.

As we typically do, we took a break from a December meeting to ensure we focused on holiday events for family and friends that fill CE members' schedules. The activities for 2024 that were discussed at our November meeting are being prioritized and will be presented to the group in survey form so we can decide which ones we will deliver, set dates for, and secure in members' schedules. Hopefully, the 2024 schedule will run more smoothly than in the past year, when many members had conflicts that reduced the number of planned events delivered.

Efforts continue for setting up a California Highway Patrol Academy visit for a January or February outing. Possible dates and times have yet to be accepted by the CHP representative we are working with to schedule the event. If you are interested in joining this event, please contact me at [Clowry2845@gmail.com](mailto:Clowry2845@gmail.com).

The next CE meeting will be Tuesday, January 2nd, at 1 pm. We will meet in at Round Table Clubhouse Pizza, 2960 Treat Blvd., Concord (corner of Treat and Oak Grove). Arrive a little early to get your food and drink ordered prior to the meeting. Meetings last about an hour. Come join us and see what Car Enthusiasts is all about.

If interested in joining the Car Enthusiasts Activity, please contact any of the folks listed below. Happy Motoring....

Activity Chair: Chick Lowry - [Clowry2845@gmail.com](mailto:Clowry2845@gmail.com)

Assistant Chairs:

Tom Mohrman - [mustangtpm@gmail.com](mailto:mustangtpm@gmail.com)

Bill Koski - [billkos36@comcast.net](mailto:billkos36@comcast.net)

Tom Hodgson - [tomehodgson1945@gmail.com](mailto:tomehodgson1945@gmail.com)



## CRIBBAGE ♠ ♡



**Dennis Mierzwa**  
Chairman

The Cribbage Activity meets on the 1st Wednesday and 3rd Tuesday of each month. We play at Rocco's Pizzeria at 2909 Ygnacio Valley Rd in Walnut Creek. Social hour/lunch at noon and play is from 1pm to 3pm. Please join us if you have played or wish to learn. Depending on attendance we play two, three or four person games. We normally get in five games in the two hours we play. Members prefer to play four person games, which is two partners with the two winners advancing to the next table. This is a fun, friendly, fast-paced game.

### December 2023 RESULTS

We met on December 6th, the first Wednesday of the month and had twelve players, our best turnout in some time. We welcomed back a somewhat lighter Dennis Mierzwa. We were able to play three tables of four each. Our members prefer to play partners whenever possible as this gives us higher scores, as was this case. And closely contested for top score. Terry was aided by a 99-pt skunk and a 21-pt hand. The winning scores follow:

1st	Terry Mason	186 points
2nd	Rob Laaback	185 points
3rd	Don Atwater	184 points
4th	Stan Johnson	131 points

On the third Tuesday, December 19th we had nine players. We had tables of four, three, and two each. And scores were not as high of scores as the first Wednesday. Our winners were:

1st	Dennis Mierzwa	141 points
2nd	Jerry Ward	109 points
3rd	Dave Dawson	102 points
4th	Don Atwater	98 points

Chairmen, Dennis Mierzwa: [dennis.mierzwa@att.net](mailto:dennis.mierzwa@att.net)

Assistant Chairmen, Dan Smith: [dns.lns02@astound.net](mailto:dns.lns02@astound.net)

## BRIDGE ♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ RUBBER



**Rod Spicer**  
Chairman

The last meeting of the year gave us a solid two tables of players. We hope to get up to three tables in the new year. The top players this month were David Bushnell (2880) and Jan Perrson (2460). The scores ran from 380 to 2880, and the median score was about 1800.

All members are invited to our coed game. We meet on the first Thursday of the month at 11:00 am for lunch and social hour. The game is played at Round Table Pizza, 2960 Treat Blvd.,

Concord.

Rod Spicer, Chairman, 1-925-935-5306, [marod61@att.net](mailto:marod61@att.net)

## BRIDGE ♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ DUPLICATE ♀ ♂



**Bud Grisanti**  
Chairman

Sir Duplicate Bridge II members play on the fourth Friday of the month. We meet at Round Table Pizza at 1938 Oak Park Blvd., Pleasant Hill. Arrive early by 11:30 AM to get your lunch and sign up. The game starts at 12:00 PM. If a Member is unable to attend, please notify Bud Grisanti.

Substitutes are often needed. Please contact the chairmen below to get on the substitute list.

Chairman: **Bud Grisanti**, 672-3023 [budgrisanti@gmail.com](mailto:budgrisanti@gmail.com)

## PARTNERS ♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ BRIDGE



**George Schulze**  
Chairman

Combining friends, food, cards, and friendly competition made for a nice afternoon of Partner's Bridge on Monday, October 16th. This month Steve & Honora Greytak were high scorers followed by Rod & Mary Ann Spicer and Ron Rizzo & Chloe Laube.

We enjoy meeting and dealing in new players (intermediate). So, if interested, give us a call (925-429-1756). Partner's Bridge plays at

1:00 on the 3rd Monday of each month at Round Table on Treat.

George & Charlene Schulze, 925-429-1756

## PINOCHLE



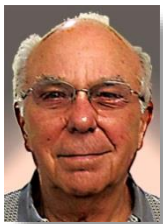
**Stan Johnson**  
Chairman

We are meeting in person twice a month on the second and fourth Wednesdays at Rocco's Restaurant, 2909 Ygnacio Valley Rd., Walnut Creek (in the Encina Grande shopping center near Whole Foods). We have lunch starting at noon with card play 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM. We play 3, 4, 5, or 6 handed games so we can accommodate any number of players. Ladies and new players are welcome.



Stan Johnson, Chairman, 925-938-7016,  
[stan.johnson88@gmail.com](mailto:stan.johnson88@gmail.com)

## POKER, COME JOIN US FOR POKER!



**Ron Draper**  
Chairman

Poker games are being played throughout the month, but openings are limited. If you're interested in joining, I'm establishing a new member poker list. Call Ron Draper at 925-324-6786 or send an email to [r-draper@pacbell.net](mailto:r-draper@pacbell.net).



## DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY



**Bill Phelon**



No new report submitted for **JANUARY**.

Bill Phelon, Chair  
[rphelon@juno.com](mailto:rphelon@juno.com)  
925-254-8338 (lv. msg.)

Dave Davis, Vice Chair  
[dav.davis@comcast.net](mailto:dav.davis@comcast.net)  
925-838-1753

## SIR SCIENCE – ONLINE

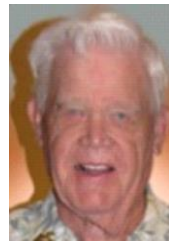


**David Bushnell**  
Chairman

If you would like to get daily emails about science, please respond to me at [dbushn@swbell.net](mailto:dbushn@swbell.net). I get them from Sigma Xi SmartBrief, where they have been down-edited" to language we can all understand.

David Bushnell, Chairman and Editor  
[dbushn@swbell.net](mailto:dbushn@swbell.net), 925-838-3914

## INTERNET GAMES



**Don Atwater**  
Chairman

Internet Games has been a successful operation in 2023 and will continue with both an Inter Cribbage game in 2024, as well as the bi-monthly Mexican Train game. Let Chairman Don know if joining these activities or perhaps a new game for the Internet group interests you.

December cribbage game was the most exciting of the year, as scorekeeper Dennis Mierzwa announced that five players tied for first place with eleven wins. They are Don Atwater, Ray de Wit,

Stan Johnson, Greg Ryan, and Dan Weller. Dennis Mierzwa and Dan Rinaldi were just a game or two behind the winners. It should also be noted that all the players were champions for one of the months in 2023.

Mexican Train is played twice a month, and during the year each player enjoyed being a winner. Regular players were Dan Rinaldi, Terry Norton, Rob English, Stan Johnson and Don Atwater.

Chairman, Don Atwater  
925-673-1669, [datwater@pacbell.net](mailto:datwater@pacbell.net)  
Asst. Chairman, Dan Rinaldi  
925-381-5485, [danrinaldi944@gmail.com](mailto:danrinaldi944@gmail.com)

## DOMINOES



**Dan Rinaldi**  
Chairman

We need new players. Call "Dan Rinaldi, 925-381-5486 or email [danrinaldi944@gmail.com](mailto:danrinaldi944@gmail.com) if you are interested in playing.

**Co-Chairman: Alan Schulze** 925-876-7537 [a\\_schulze@sbcglobal.net](mailto:a_schulze@sbcglobal.net)





## MEXICAN TRAIN DOMINOES

Mexican Train Dominoes meets in-person on the second and fourth Fridays of each month at 1:00 PM in the Round Table Pizza at Treat and Oak Grove in Concord. We generally come earlier to have lunch as well. We need new players. We can accommodate any number of people. Ladies and beginners are welcome.

We also have online Mexican Train on the first and third Fridays, also at 1:00 PM. Contact any of the people below if you are interested.

Chairman: Danny Rinaldi, 925-381-5486 or email

[danirinaldi944@gmail.com](mailto:danirinaldi944@gmail.com)

Asst. Chairman: Terry Norton, 925-798-6023, [nortont@sbcglobal.net](mailto:nortont@sbcglobal.net)

Asst. Chairman: Stan Johnson, 925-938-7016, [stan.johnson88@gmail.com](mailto:stan.johnson88@gmail.com)



## DINING OUT

### BARGAIN BITES

HELLO  
BARGAIN  
BITERS!!



**Ron Smith**  
Chairman

We already have made plans for our first event of 2024, and I hope this year is good to all of us. It has a nice ring to it. It is smooth, and even and the digits add to "8," lucky in Chinese. So where should we go--China Palace in Walnut Creek. YEAR OF THE DRAGON!!!

We've made some changes to the menu, and I hope it pleases everyone. So watch out for the Flyer, and if you like what you see, sign up right away because it will be sold out quickly.

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2023 AND HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US.

Remember the motto of Bargain Bites: Good Food! Good Price! Good Friends! And guests are always welcome. This is a really good event for inviting friends to introduce them to SIR, but do it early as we often fill up.

\*\*If you would like to be placed on the Bargain Bites e-mail list, just send a note to [resmith62@aol.com](mailto:resmith62@aol.com) and say "Place me on the Bargain Bites List." Oh yes, include your name. You will receive personal e-mails in advance of the Hotline. Again, thanks for your interest and wonderful support. It makes the effort worthwhile.

Chairman: Ron Smith, 925-314-3066, [resmith62@aol.com](mailto:resmith62@aol.com)

Asst. Chairman: Bill Barber, 925-222-0095, [billhiker4411@gmail.com](mailto:billhiker4411@gmail.com)

## DINE IN #1



**Ron Cassano**  
Chairman

Our next dinner is on January 20, 2024, hosted by Ron & Judy Smith.

Ron Cassano, Head Eater  
[roncassano@gmail.com](mailto:roncassano@gmail.com)

## DINE IN #4



**Roger Lamm**  
Chairman

No new report submitted for **JANUARY**.

Roger Lamm, Chair,  
[rogerlamm@gmail.com](mailto:rogerlamm@gmail.com)  
Dan Casella, Co-Chair

## DINE OUT - SINGLE SIRS



**Glenn Gilman**  
Chairman

Our Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup> dinner will be at La Tapatia Mexican Restaurant and Cantina, 1802 Willow Pass Rd., Concord (across from Park & Shop). Social hour at 5:00 and dinner shortly after that. Our host will be Glenn Gilman, and you are asked to respond to him whether you will be attending or not. We gather to enjoy our camaraderie and perhaps share our favorite moments in the New Year.

We dined at the Old Spaghetti Factory in December, and the lighting and decorations in the plaza, as well as the restaurant, stirred our holiday spirits. John Valler hosted, and eleven of us enjoyed the dinner and the evening,

Chairman, Glenn Gilman, 798- 5155 [glenngfam@sbcglobal.net](mailto:glenngfam@sbcglobal.net)  
Asst. Chairman, Don Atwater, 673-1669 [datwater@pacbell.net](mailto:datwater@pacbell.net)

## JIGSAW PUZZLE EXCHANGE



**Carl Moyer**  
Chairman

Carl Moyer has a new activity called **Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange**. The jigsaw puzzle exchange will be at the Luncheon fishing table with Carl Moyer. Bring Puzzles & Take Puzzles. Contact Carl @, [carlmarc@astound.net](mailto:carlmarc@astound.net)



## MIXER



**Ray de Wit**  
Chairman

Our last Mixers get-together of 2023, in November, was a great success, with 14 showing up and all enjoying the snacks, drinks, and conversation. Since our December Mixers was scheduled for two days after Christmas, it has been cancelled. We look forward to kicking off 2024 with our next event on Tuesday, January 30th.

Everyone is welcome and we meet at Jack's in Pleasant Hill at 3:00. Hope to see some new faces and smiles at the January

Mixers. Please contact Ray de Wit ([raydewit11@gmail.com](mailto:raydewit11@gmail.com)) or Alan Curtis ([alancurtis@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alancurtis@sbcglobal.net)) for information and to reserve a spot. All are welcome (spouses, significant others, or guests), so watch for information on upcoming events.

## FISHING - AREA 16



**Carl Moyer**  
Chairman

SIR members and guests are welcome, and indeed encouraged, to participate in fishing trips, as well as attend our monthly meetings. Contacts

are Bob Lively, 925-383-5193, and Carl Moyer, 925-685-5243. Next meeting will be at the Legends restaurant at the Diablo

Creek golf course on Port Chicago Highway and Highway 4, on Thursday, January 25, at 8:30 am. Come early.

Ten of us enjoyed bountiful crab fishing on the ocean. Most of us used party boats, combining crab and rockfishing. The crabs were huge! The rock fish were delicious. The day was long, with a launch at 5 am and a return to the dock at 3 pm. The usual suspects, Tom Kostik, Mike Corker, Stan Wong, and Harry Sheridian, all caught stripers in the Delta. 2024 will be a sad fishing year. There will probably be no salmon fishing at all. Halibut in the Bay have been overfished, with the limit dropped to 2. Nobody knows what the rockfish regulations will be, but a continuation of the deep-water-only rule seems likely at the outset. Sturgeon will be limited to 1 keeper per year, with a limit of 2 per boat, and reduced size restrictions. We have enjoyed some great fishing, but need to restrain ourselves in the future.

Come join us! **Carl Moyer**, Chairman, [carlmarc@astound.net](mailto:carlmarc@astound.net)



## GOLF - 9 HOLE



**Mike Frey**  
Chairman

**The weekly 9-hole golf group at Diablo Hills Golf Course!!**

**Following is a summary of recent play:**

**Dec. 13th**

Nine hardy golfers teed off starting at 9:00 am at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a chilly morning for golf. Gary Grice recorded the low rounds of the day with a scores of "44," just nudging out

Carl Sakofsky, who shot a "45." Rich Knowles won the "closest-to-the-pin" event (second shot on the on the 7th hole) with a 23" shot, and Rich parred the hole. The group recorded 11 pars, and Stan Johnson had the lone birdie on the 4<sup>th</sup> Hole.

**Dec. 6th**

Eight hardy golfers teed off starting at 9:00 am at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a chilly and cloudy morning for golf. The possible early morning rain showers kept most of our regular golfers at home. Rich Knowles and Gary Grice recorded the low rounds of the day with scores of "45." Roger Lockwara won the "closest-to-the-pin" event on the 3rd hole with a not-so-close 51' shot. Roger went on to three-putt for a bogie. The group recorded 6 pars and no birdies.

**Nov. 29th**

Three hardy golfers teed off starting at 9:00 am at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a chilly and cloudy morning for golf. The early morning rain showers kept most of our regular golfers at home. Pat Dodson recorded the low round of the day with nice very nice score of "39." The group recorded 7 pars, and Pat recorded the lone birdie on the par 4 1<sup>st</sup> hole. Nice round, Pat !!!

**Nov. 22nd**

Ten golfers teed off starting at 9:00 am at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a chilly morning for golf, but then after about 30 minutes it warmed up nicely. Rich Knowles and Gary Kunz (Gary Nicholson's guest) recorded the low round of the day with nice scores of "40." Ray de Wit won the "closest-to-the-pin" event on the 3rd hole with a not-so-close 25' 3" shot. Ray then went on to three-putt for a bogie--Ray!!! The group recorded 15 pars, and Stan Johnson recorded the lone birdie on the par 4 6<sup>th</sup> hole.

You are welcome to join us for a round of golf followed by a bite to eat. Go to the Branch 8 website and, under the Nine Hole Golf link, click on the Signup link. Call or email me with any questions.

Mike Frey, Chair: [mfrey1784@gmail.com](mailto:mfrey1784@gmail.com) 925/699-1784



## GOLF - 18 HOLE



**David Platter**  
Chairman

2023 was another great year for 18-Hole Golf. In addition to our weekly play and Branch 8 Tournaments, our chairman, **Dave Platter** organized play with other branches. According to Dave, plans are underway for another inter-branch play later in the year. Here are the 18-Hole Golf committee members for 2024: **David Platter**, Chairman; **Frank Bosworth**,



Tournament Director; **Don Dennler**, Golf Course Coordinator; **David Green**, Treasurer; **Stan Johnson**, Marshal Coordinator; **Bill Koski**, Correspondence; and **Buddy May**, Handicap/Membership Coordinator. These are the guys who make sure that Branch 8's largest activity is run smoothly. Our 2024 schedule is in place. Don Dennler contacted golf courses, negotiated prices and dates, and Frank Bosworth set up Branch 8 Tournaments. Stan Johnson solicited Marshals. Our 2024 schedule includes our Branch 8 Annual Golf Outing. This will be in October. We had five new members sign up in 2023 and need more. Where else can you play golf once a week without having to call for reservations. Come and play.

**Correspondence:** Bill Koski, [billkos36@comcast.net](mailto:billkos36@comcast.net)  
925-672-7650

**Membership/Handicap/Data:** Buddy May,  
[fvtrpylut@comcast.net](mailto:fvtrpylut@comcast.net) 925-833-6098

## GOLF - 9 HOLE MIXED LEAGUE



**Gordon Batesole**  
Chairman

Maybe the "Faithful 8" should be called "SIR golf snowbirds," for we truly had the Diablo Hills Golf Course all to ourselves on that lovely, cold morning of December 14, at 10:00 am. Golfers were Stan Johnson, Roger and Mardee Lockwara, Paul and Elaine Laderer, Paul and Millie Hersch, and Margaret Batesole, with chairperson Gordon Batesole giving us our Start Times. Pars were made by Stan, Mardee, Roger, Paul L., and Paul H., and

Elaine and Millie. Stan even made a birdie. If you doubt these facts, come join us, and you, too, will surely make a PAR!

The Sir Mixed League Golf group is always welcome to all golfers! No handicap is necessary, nor do you need a partner to play. Friends are welcome, too! We look forward to meeting on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, JANUARY 11, 2024, at Diablo Hills Golf Course, at 10:00 am (note new time)

To sign up, contact Gordon Batesole, [gkbatesole@aol.com](mailto:gkbatesole@aol.com), or 925-946-1989, or go the SIR website and sign up to play. ([www.sirbr8.com/sign-up-to-play](http://www.sirbr8.com/sign-up-to-play), password par4, double-click on "Click Here" for signup sheet.)

## MODEL TRAINS



**Rich Knowles**  
Chairman

The  
Model  
Train



Activity is suffering from a lack of interest. If anyone is interested in something relating to model trains, please send an email to the activity chair about your interest. He will respond.

Rich Knowles, [grichthek@gmail.com](mailto:grichthek@gmail.com) or call (925) 681-9191.

## PICKLE BALL



**Nick Maufe**  
Chairman

Pickleball is a great activity for keeping you fit, enjoying a social get together and having fun. It will bring back those long dormant bat and ball skills from an earlier life and remind you how much of that life is still left in the old bones! Come out and give it a try. Free introductory lessons (from yours truly) guaranteed to get you to the level of a few laughs.



We meet every Thursday at 8:30 AM at the Willow Pass Community Park and play for a couple of hours.

Email [Nickmaufe@gmail.com](mailto:Nickmaufe@gmail.com) to join. Nick Maufe, Chairman

## PODCASTS



**Rich Knowles**  
Chairman

On December 12, the podcast activity met and discussed two podcasts from opposing sides. One was about what it is like to be a Palestinian in Gaza, by a Palestinian. The other was what it is like to be an Israeli in Israel, by an Israeli. Basically, both discussed the reasons the two sides are at odds with each other and how fundamental the differences are. What was clear was that there is reason for strong feelings and no solution in sight. Both have valid reasons for their positions.

On January 9, we will be discussing a light-hearted look at the 10-ish Worst Business Decisions ever. Please join us. Contact the Activity Chair for Zoom credentials.

Rich Knowles, [grichthek@gmail.com](mailto:grichthek@gmail.com), or call (925) 681-9191.





## SIRS AT THE GAMES



**Steve Schramm**  
Chairman

### SAVE THE DATES! ST. MARY'S AND WARRIORS BASKETBALL

It is time to plan for our winter season activities. Here are a couple of fun events for you to put on your calendars.

Instead of balls, strikes, and home runs, let's think about baskets, rebounds, and 3-point shots.

The St. Mary's Gaels made the NCAA Basketball Tournament in March. They are projected to have another outstanding team, and perhaps even win their conference. Mark your calendars for a Thursday night game in Moraga on **January 11**. Details to come.

Also, the Golden State Warriors will play Kevin Durant and the Phoenix Suns on **Saturday February 10**, at 5:30 pm at the Chase Center. We are exploring options to include bus transportation to this game from the Sun Valley Mall in Concord. Please consider joining us with your family and friends. Warriors vs. Suns should be a good matchup.

Please send an email to Steve Schramm at "[sschramm01@gmail.com](mailto:sschramm01@gmail.com)" if you are interested in either of these two basketball games.

## SIRS IN THE GARDEN



**Tony de Losada Tom Mohrman**  
Chairmen

### Master Gardeners. TIPS!

Fall is the ideal time to plant California natives and other Mediterranean plants that grow with our winter rains and bloom in late winter and spring. Planting now gives the roots of these plants time to grow into the soil and become established before the high temperatures and dry climate of our summers.

Shrubs are multi-branched plants smaller than trees and more prominent than bushes. Shrubs are long-lived perennial woody plants that can be evergreen or deciduous (lose their leaves). Although not as long-lived as multi-century-old trees, most native shrubs can live for decades in nature and our gardens, compared to commercial, hybridized, and non-native shrubs, which must be replaced more frequently than native shrubs.

Chair Tom Mohrman: [mustangtpm@gmail.com](mailto:mustangtpm@gmail.com) OR  
Co-Chair: Tony de Losada: [tonydelosada@gmail.com](mailto:tonydelosada@gmail.com)

## HEADS-UP WALKERS

We walk every Thursday morning at 9:30 am. We walk for one hour and then go for coffee and snacks. Go to our online page for further info., <https://www.sirbr8.com/heads-up-walkers/>

**12/28/2023: Alamo: Stone Valley Rd., Iron Horse.** Exit I-680 on Stone Valley Rd. across Danville Blvd. Meet at the south end of the Alamo Plaza Parking lot north of Stone Valley Road. NOTE, the first few rows of parking are now reserved. BUT there is parking to the west of the reserved area and to the north of the area, across from the yogurt shop and Safeway. Cafe: Peet's Coffee. Leader: Jim Sowell. Difficulty: E

**1/4/2024: Concord: Hester Park.** Meet at Hester Park, corner of Hookston & Bancroft, street parking on Hampton or Hookston, adjacent to the park. Cafe: Noah's New York Bagels. Leader: Manuel Dominguez. Difficulty: E

**1/11/2024: Alamo: Stone Valley Rd., Iron Horse.** Exit I-680 on Stone Valley Rd. across Danville Blvd. Meet at the south end of the Alamo Plaza Parking lot north of Stone Valley Road. NOTE, the first few rows of parking are now reserved. BUT there is parking to the west of the reserved area and to the north of the area, across from the yogurt shop and Safeway. Cafe: Peet's Coffee. Leader: Phil Trapp. Difficulty: E

**1/18/2024: Walnut Creek: Arbolado Park, Ygnacio Canal.** Take Ygnacio Valley Rd. to Oak Grove Rd. Then south past W.C. library to Arbolado Dr., left to Arbolado Park, meet at the upper parking lot near the soccer field and rest room. Cafe: Whole Foods - Oak Grove / Ygnacio Valley Road. Leader: Rich Burke. Difficulty: E

**1/25/2024: Pleasant Hill: C.C. Canal.** Meet in the shopping center parking lot at the corner of Taylor & Morello (north of the service station). Cafe: Panera Bread Cafe. Leader: Rich Rosin. Difficulty: M

**2/1/2024: Concord: C.C.C. Regional Trail, Via Montanas.** Take Treat Blvd. east. Go 3/4-mile past Oak Grove and turn left on San Miguel. Turn right on Via Montanas. Turn left into the parking lot just past the bridge over the canal. Cafe: Peet's Coffee. Leader: Dan Weller. Difficulty: E

CHAIRMAN: Dan Weller, 925-939-5510

[dwyler@astound.net](mailto:dwyler@astound.net)

ASSISTANT CHAIR: Dave Morse, 925-938-3078

[dmorse88@yahoo.com](mailto:dmorse88@yahoo.com)

ASSISTANT CHAIR: Phil Trapp, 925-963-1819

[ptrapp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ptrapp@sbcglobal.net)

## SIR HIKERS



**Carl Ludwig**  
Chairman

There will be two hikes along weather-appropriate trails in January 2024. Detailed information for interested hikers will appear by the end of December 2023 on the hikers' webpage of the Branch 8 website, at <https://www.sirbr8.com/hikers/>.

**January 9, 2024 Easy Hike – Diablo Hills Golf Course to Downtown Walnut Creek, 10:00 a.m.**

**Hike Description** – Yes, this is the November easy hike that got cancelled.

We are repurposing this hike because the venue is perfect for a wet-weather outing should it be a rainy start to 2024.

This is an out-and-back hike of 3.2 miles, starting at 10:00 a.m. The paved hike starts at the Contra Costa Regional Canal Trail, which we can access from the parking lot near The Gardens at Heather Farm on Marchbanks Drive, across the street from the Diablo Hills Golf Course parking lot. We hike past the Heather Farm Community Garden and Lake. When we reach the Iron Horse Trail, we make a left to downtown Walnut Creek. We return to our trailhead via the reverse route.

**Directions to Trailhead** – Take Ygnacio Valley Road to Marchbanks Road. Turn left on Marchbanks if heading east on Ygnacio (or right if heading west on Ygnacio). When you reach the golf course on the right, park on the street. There are plenty of spaces.

**What to Bring** – Water, appropriate footwear, trekking poles, hat, and sunblock.

**Optional Lunch** – The Greenery Restaurant at the Diablo Hills Golf Course.

**Hike Leader** – Carl Ludwig, [cludwig171@gmail.com](mailto:cludwig171@gmail.com), 415-350-7372

**January 30, 2024 Hard Hike – A Modified Lafayette Reservoir Rim Trail, 10:00 a.m.**

**Hike Description** – This is a 5.3-mile loop hike, with 712 feet of elevation gain. It incorporates ½ of the Lafayette Reservoir Rim Trail with ½ of the paved Lakeside Trail. (This “modification” eliminates the infamous “cardiac hill” climb, which dogs all Rim Trail hikers.) We will travel the full route if the weather has remained relatively dry, but if the dirt Rim Trail is muddy, we will stick to the paved Lakeside Trail, shortening the hike to about 4 paved miles in total. We first hike from your parking spot, near the intersection of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Village Center, up to the main Reservoir parking lot. Then we head up to the Rim Trail in a counterclockwise direction until we find ourselves at its western-most edge, before descending on the Canyon Trail to the paved Lakeside Trail. We continue counterclockwise on the paved foot trail to the parking lot and then down to our parked cars.

There are restrooms at the Reservoir parking lot.

**Directions to Hike** – Highway 24 west to Acalanes Rd. exit, turning south to Mt Diablo Blvd. Take a left and travel about one mile. We will meet at 10:00 am on the corner of Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Village Center, Lafayette, across from the Veteran's Memorial Center. There is FREE PARKING on the South side of Mt. Diablo Boulevard.

**Bring:** Hats, water, sturdy hiking boots, trekking poles. Umbrellas optional.

**Optional Lunch:** Batch & Brine, 3602 Mt Diablo Blvd.

**Hike Leader and Coordinator:** Carl Ludwig 415-350-7372, [cludwig171@gmail.com](mailto:cludwig171@gmail.com)

AllTrails Map:

<https://www.alltrails.com/explore/recording/morning-run-4a5876b-8?p=-1&sh=ls05uy> with photos

## \$UMS IN RETIREMENT



**Dave Sutton**  
Co-Chairman

We will again join Branch 128's (San Ramon) Investment Group Zoom meeting. We may change the meeting date, so stay tuned. The topic will be announced. Email Dave Sutton to be included.



Chair: Tom Henry, Branch 174, [tomhenry925@gmail.com](mailto:tomhenry925@gmail.com)  
Co-chair: Dave Sutton, Branch

8, [davesutn@comcast.net](mailto:davesutn@comcast.net)

## TRAVELING SIRS



**Larry Yarberry**  
Chairman

Larry is putting together a trip, “The Best of Spain & Portugal”; April 27 - May12, 2024. It will include Grand Castles, Incredible Art & Iconic Sights. This will be a 15-day guided tour. He will have flyers at the Ladies Day luncheon.



[L.yarberry42@comcast.net](mailto:L.yarberry42@comcast.net) 925-890-9245

## BARGAIN WINES



**Dennis Mierzwa**  
Chairman

Bill Koski took the lead with Dennis side lined and set up a wine tasting event at Total Wines in Pleasant Hill as Bargain Wines' November activity. Bill had reserved 20 seats for Bargain Wine members plus we opened up reservations across the entire Branch and had 23 members signed up for tastings!

The event was two hours and we had mixed reviews. Our more sophisticated members with a well-developed palate thought the presentation was too basic but the majority enjoyed the presentation and would consider future classes about different wine regions.

Bargain Wines meets on an ad hoc basis. Our objective is to find a reasonably priced wine that you would drink as an everyday wine- not every day of course -let's say your Thursday wine!

At most of our tastings the attendees will have the opportunity to rate the wines being presented. As our name Bargain Wines denotes, we are not high-end wines and often our selections go unappreciated and unpurchased, but everyone enjoys the event.

For 2023 we raised our purchase amount but will stay below \$9.00 per bottle and hope to find wines our members will consider as their weekday wine.

While we will still explore Contra Costa vineyards the planned event of a tasting at Shadow Brook Winery in Walnut Creek was met with an almost universal NO!

We will be working towards a first quarter 2024 event. One member expressed an interest in Livermore Valley and if other members have a recommendation- please let Bill and I know!

Chairman: Dennis Mierzwa, [dennis.mierzwa@att.net](mailto:dennis.mierzwa@att.net)  
Assistant Chairman: Bill Koski, [billkos36@comcast.net](mailto:billkos36@comcast.net)

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## WINE CELLAR FILLERS



No new report submitted for **JANUARY**.

If you have questions, would like your name added to the mailing list, or would like to join the purchasing committee, please contact one of us:

**Jim Sowell, Chair**, [sowell4jim@aol.com](mailto:sowell4jim@aol.com), 925-457-7746 (cell)  
**Scott Graff, Ass't Chair**, [scottkgraff@gmail.com](mailto:scottkgraff@gmail.com), 925-552-6097

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## WINE FINDERS 1



**Ron Smith**  
Chairman

Our 2024 Schedule is complete. Thanks to each of the couples who stepped up early. Once again it is nice to have that task behind us. Thanks to so many, including Rob and Gay Laaback, Helen Choi and David Glazer, Dan and Lynn Crowley,



Linda and Ken Stehr, and Chloe Laube and Bill Barber, for filling in next year. And to my wife, who has agreed to have a non-competitive Holiday Champagne Tasting in December. It is going to be a good year.

And my apologies to Tom and Connie Hodgson. They had so much fun hosting last August, they thought it was automatic and they were ready to do it again. I explained that we start fresh each year. So next year they'll get up earlier.

The first tasting will be on Thursday, February 8, at the home of Rob and Gay Laaback in Walnut Creek. For the first time in I don't know how many years, we won't be at the Mercer in Walnut Creek, since Tom and Sheila Mohrman will not be celebrating winter in WC (at least not in February). But not to worry--Gay Laaback has a way of turning her home into a warm, cozy, and appropriately decorated place no matter the season.

Members/spouses volunteer to hold the tastings at their homes, and they select the month they would like to host and the varietal to be tasted. So the venue moves around, and we taste different wines from all over California and the world. Always interesting, educational and fun.

If you don't belong to Wine Finders 1,2 or 3, but are interested in learning more about our tastings, or starting a new group, just drop Ron Smith or Tony de Losada an email, and one of us will get back to you.

In the meantime, enjoy your wine, whatever your choice. And of course Happy Holidays to you all. In vino veritas!!

**Ron Smith, Chair**, [resmith62@aol.com](mailto:resmith62@aol.com), 925-314-3066  
**Tony de Losada, Asst. Chair**, [tonydelosada@gmail.com](mailto:tonydelosada@gmail.com)

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## WINE FINDERS 2



**Ron Cassano**  
Chairman

Our Holiday sparkling wine event was held on December 14 at Ron Cassano's. The appetizers were "over the top." A great choice of wines and wonderful holiday spirit. A nice event without having to rank the wines.

Happy New Year.

**Ron Cassano, Head Wino**,  
[roncassano@gmail.com](mailto:roncassano@gmail.com)  
925-944-1238

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## WINE FINDERS 3



**Larry McEwen**  
Chairman

No new report submitted for **JANUARY**.

**Chairman Larry McEwen**: [elmwoodeux@comcast.net](mailto:elmwoodeux@comcast.net)

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## WOODPECKERS



**Thom Watkins**  
Chairman

In December, the Woodpeckers Activity held their annual Christmas Brunch. Of course (er, tradition), this was a co-ed event.

The Entrée this year was Prime Rib, presented by the hosts, Thom and Paula. The members' households contributed the rest of the meal. Before I list the individual contributions, let me point out that ALL the dishes were an unmitigated hit!

- **Appetizer**: Roger and Eveline Lamm brought one of their favorite appetizer dishes: meatballs cooked in a BBQ and cranberry sauce. Super Duper!



- Salad: Bob and Peggy Wheaton contributed a delicious salad plus...get ready for this...huge light and fluffy, made-from-scratch dinner rolls. Whoopee!
- Side Dish: Jackie and Jennifer Kaneshiro served us a luscious creamy corn casserole. Have Mercy!
- Dessert was brought to us by Dennis and Maureen Reschke. It was a sumptuous tiramisu cake. Oh, Boy!

Prior to getting to work on the main course, we all took that time to catch up and share, all the while noshing on the meatballs and sipping on bloody Marys and mimosas. Dessert was accompanied by coffee, tea, and eggnog. During that post-meal period, Dennis expressed it very well: "It's all about getting together and sharing...."

I will close with the following sentiment, which I believe to be the sentiment of all the Woodpecker family:

*"We hope that everyone had a very, very Happy Holiday period and celebrated the beginning of what we all hope will be joyous, prosperous, above all, a peaceful 2024."*

Thom Watkins  
Chairman, Woodpeckers  
925-330-3780  
Bob Wheaton, Co-Chair

## WRITING YOUR LIFE STORY



**Tom Hodgson**  
Chairman



Many of us have wondered what our grandfather's life was like, the questions we never had a chance to ask.

Our group meets as a fun way to document fun and interesting memories from your past or current situation. It's fun to share stories with friends, who actually care to listen. Their stories also trigger memories for us. Someday your kids or grandkids may also find them interesting.

WYLS Has been meeting for the past 3 months IN PERSON & via Zoom.

We meet on the 4th Tuesday from 1:00 to 2:30 PM at:  
Rocco's Ristorante Pizzeria  
2909A Ygnacio Valley Rd. Walnut Creek, Ca

(It's located at Oak Grove Rd & Ygnacio Valley Rd – near the center of the "L" shaped strip mall.)

Contact SIR Tom Hodgson [Tomehodgson1945@gmail.com](mailto:Tomehodgson1945@gmail.com) or call 925-818-1533 for more information or to join the group



## HOTLINE E-MAIL ADDRESS:

[Hotline@sirinc3.org](mailto:Hotline@sirinc3.org)

Send your articles and photos BEFORE the 20th of the month. Include meeting information & dates for the following month, to keep your group informed about meetings, deadlines and upcoming events. Late reports may not be included in the Hotline.

## HOTLINE EDITORS



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## STATE SIR HAPPENINGS

A Home Page for SIR Members on the State website is at:  
[Home – SIR \(sirinc.org\)](http://sirinc.org)



Held once a month on the SECOND THURSDAY!  
Sponsored by the City of Concord and Contra Costa Legal Services. Sixty years of age and older, M/F invited to attend for a 45 Minute personal advice from Attorneys on: Advance Health Care Directives (AHCD). No income requirements. By appointment only! Call Concord Senior Center: 925-671-3320 and sign up. There are six appointments

*Mention you are a SIR from Branch 8!*

Tony de Losada P & I Chairman

### ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES:(APS)

There is a free non-profit facility in Concord that provides assistance in case of elder abuse (physical or financial), domestic violence or sexual abuse.

It is the Family Justice Center at 2151 Salvio St, Room 201 (office building opposite Todos Santos Plaza behind the fountain). Their website is:  
<http://www.cocofamilyjustice.org/>

We also have literature about Adult Protective Services run by the county. They have offices in Martinez at 2530 Arnold Dr. #300. **To report abuse please call Adult Protective Services at (877) 839-4347.**



## RESOURCES FOR OUR MEMBERS, FAMILY & FRIENDS



[mowdiabloregion.org](http://mowdiabloregion.org)

(925) 937-8311

Meals on Wheels, Fall Prevention  
Care Management, Friendly



Visitors/Callers

So that No One Faces Cancer Alone  
[www.cancersupport.net](http://www.cancersupport.net) / (925) 933-0107,  
3276 McNutt Ave, WC., 94597







SIR Branch 8 continues to support the Food Bank by Giving Back



Diablo Valley Regional Park Hard Hike  
This is our more intrepid group

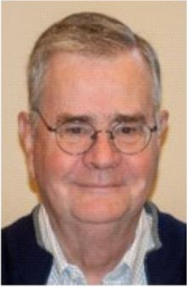


Diablo Valley Regional Park has deep valleys and granite formations; hence "Little Yosemite"



# SIR Biographies

## 2024 Big SIR Rich Carlston



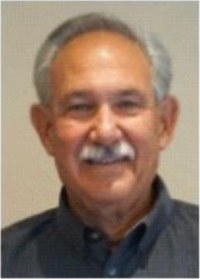
Rich Carlston

I was born in Denver, Colorado. I received a B.A. in Mathematics from the University of Colorado and a J.D. from George Washington School of Law. Between undergraduate and law school, I spent four years as an officer in the U.S. Army. My wife Sue and I have been married 50 years in February and have lived in Walnut Creek for over 40 years. We have two sons (both college professors), each of whom is married. We have six grandchildren.

Before retiring, I was an attorney with a national practice in the real estate industry, both as a trial attorney and a regulatory attorney. I was frequently consulted on various legal topics for corporations, state and national trade associations, and the California State Bar, state, and federal regulators.

For many years, I have been involved in the community service in numerous capacities with numerous organizations. I served on the PROS Commission for the City of Walnut Creek, as well as on the City Council. I am a former Mayor of Walnut Creek.

## 2024 Little SIR Tom DiGrande



Tom DiGrande

I was born in San Francisco and raised in Oakland. I graduated from Oakland Technical High School. I married my high school sweetheart, Sharon. We have two beautiful and smart daughters, two great sons-in-law, and two amazing grandsons.

I started working as a Lube Technician in Oakland and advanced to a Service Management position. I was eventually offered a management position with a large national dealership group in fixed operations (service and parts). As time went on, my reputation grew, and I moved to another dealership group out of Oregon as Area Service and Parts Director (over Fixed Operations of 16 facilities). I had the opportunity to join a local Dealer Group as a Managing Partner & Director of Fixed Operations (12 Dealer facilities). After 50 years in the Dealership Fixed Operations, I retired in December 2016 and joined SIR.

Happy New Year