



## WHAT IS SIR?

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

**Branch 8 Website:**

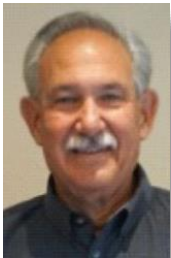
<https://www.sirbr8.com>

**"MAKE NEW FRIENDS FOR LIFE"**

**January 2025**

**Editor: David Glazer**

## BIG SIR COLUMN



**Tom Di Grande**  
**Big SIR**

Thought I would take a few minutes to try to update the membership on how we arrived at a \$38.00 for our 2025 monthly luncheons.

In October of 2023, SIR Branch 8 entered into a contract with Boundary Oak for our monthly luncheon, with us being charged a total price of \$38.55 per plated lunch. The membership was paying \$35.00 at the time for each plate.

The BEC Committee voted to raise the 2024 lunch price by \$1 to \$36.00 per plate, thus leaving the branch to subsidize each lunch plate by \$2.85. This gave us an average expense of \$400-\$500 per month (assuming 100-105 attendees), including debit for speakers and guests and voucher lunches.

In November of 2024, we negotiated a new contract with Boundary Oak for 2025, for the same plated lunch, down to a total of \$36.81 per plate. The Ladies Day Luncheon will remain the same in 2025.

The 2025 price of \$38.00 per luncheon plate will cover the Boundary Oak charge, plus partially covering the expense for the speakers' lunches, guests, and voucher lunches.

We will still have, hopefully, a small debit. But this will give us more funds to be used in other areas, such as increasing membership, marketing, supporting activities, Ladies Day Luncheon, and special events and activities.

Remember the SIR dues in 2025 remain the same as 2024 (\$55.00)!

I hope this information is helpful and explains the increased charge for our monthly luncheon. We understand the quality of the food must remain elevated (constantly), along with strong service, as it has been. These areas have been made perfectly clear to the Boundary Oak staff & management.

Please continue to fill out the comment cards left on the lunch tables. We need your comments and input! Let's increase the luncheon turnout! How about mentioning the lunch to a fellow member who has NOT attended a lunch recently, or since Covid, to join us? Yes, I know that the speakers have an effect on luncheon attendance, and we are working on this also. 😊 SIR is a great organization, so let's get behind it in 2025! Your comments are always welcome & appreciated.

Tom DiGrande, [tomdigrande@comcast.net](mailto:tomdigrande@comcast.net), 925-876-7851

## LITTLE SIR SEZ



**Dan Smith**  
**Little SIR**

It was time. I had been Hotline coordinator for several years. I was also assisting Manuel Dominguez with attendance, including relieving him of several duties. Ray de Wit was reaching out to the membership, searching for our next Little Sir. I had been asked before but had declined because of my efforts in support of the Hotline. I told Ray that I would be willing to take this on, provided we could find a member to relieve me of my current roles. I reached out to our three editors

(David Glazer, Steve Moore, and Chris Wehling), and Chris volunteered for the Hotline. Ray asked John Vallor if he would be willing to take on the job of Assistant Membership Secretary. OK, I was committed. My only regret in giving up my Hotline editor role is that I did not get to rename our newsletter "Senior Moments." Yes, I can be corny.

Time has been spent ensuring that both Chris and John understand the roles they are taking on. They both show that they have the capability to do their new jobs. I thank them for stepping up. Here's the point: SIR operates best when we all pitch in to help. We realize that there may come a point in time when this is not feasible, but we like to see you participate. After all, SIR to me is a community just like the others we have been involved in during our lives. And when we get involved in our communities, we get more out of them. I hope those of you who read this are able, likewise, to volunteer and find a role that is rewarding.

As Little SIR I will be involved with finding speakers for our luncheons. That, and being there to assist or stand in for our Big SIR, Tom DiGrande, are my primary roles. We have the State SIR, comprised of members from all Branches, that is committed to keeping the organization successful and to supporting all that take on any of our many roles. Our Branch has a Speakers Committee that supports me, consisting of Tom DiGrande, Tom Doll, Leo Dominguez, Steve Schramm and myself. If you as a member have a suggestion for someone who you think would be a worthwhile speaker, these are the guys to reach out to. I will also recognize and thank Tony de Losada for supporting this Committee, one of his many roles.

Our speaker for January will be Andrew Parrott, who will be presenting on the subject, 2025 Market Outlook. Andrew comes to us by way of our activity, "\$UMS in Retirement." This is, of course, our investment group, and the subject should be timely considering the recent



election. We will have as a visitor Tom Henry of Branch 174, who our Dave Sutton supports in chairing this activity.

I will appreciate your support as I take on my new role. I hope to have fun with you guys. Bear with me if I get corny.

Dan Smith – Little SIR  
[dns.ins02@astound.net](mailto:dns.ins02@astound.net), 925-588-6792

Happy New Year



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♠♠ Activity Open to Spouse and Partners

**Next SIR Luncheon:**  
**January 13, 2025**  
**Boundary Oak Golf Course**  
**3800 Valley Vista Rd.**  
**Walnut Creek**

**Executive Meeting: 9:00am**  
**Social Hour begins: 10:15am**  
**Luncheon starts: 11:30am**  
**Cost \$38 INCREASED**  
**Greeters: TBD**

  
**MENU**

Boundary Oak Green salad

Chicken Piccata

Cod Piccata

Creamy Tomato Tortelli

Tiramisu



## 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 11:20 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 \$38.00 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, even if uncomfortable with the automatic reply, 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.

**If you cancel after the deadline or do not show-up, we will follow-up with you to find out what happened. We do not expect members to pay for missed luncheons when there has been a health issue within your family.**

## 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 Tom Di Grande at [tomdigrande@comcast.net](mailto:tomdigrande@comcast.net) or call at 925-876-7851 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 Tom Di Grande 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!**



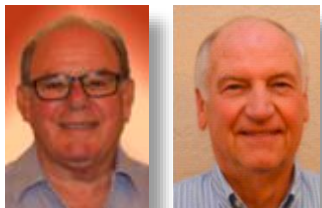
**SHOP NOW:**

<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**

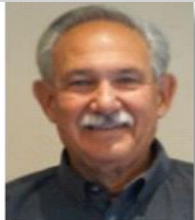


No new report submitted for January.

**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**

Join your fellow SIR Branch 8 members in the Community Outreach-SIR Giving Back program and activities. Participate when you can, while supporting our communities. SIR Giving Back gives you that opportunity! The Community Outreach-SIR Giving Back activities are co-ed. Spouses, partners & significant others are encouraged to participate in and sign up

for any activities. Let's get more of the spouses involved this year!! 🍷

If you have volunteered in an activity previously, please contact us again for the upcoming activity that you would like to participate in.

Our regularly scheduled monthly activity at the Food Bank in December was another HUGE success. We had a group of 16 SIR Branch 8 members and 4 spouses 😊. Participants sleeved bell peppers 🍆 (a little on the soft side) and kiwi. WE DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Thanks for your efforts 🍷.

Volunteers are needed for the upcoming scheduled activities at the Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano, 4010 Nelson Ave., Concord:

Monthly Food Bank Activities:

Wednesday, 1/8/25

Wednesday, 2/12/25

Scheduled from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Minimum 15 to 20 volunteers needed 😊

Upcoming added Activities:

Food Barrels Sorting Activity

Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano

Friday, 1/24/25, 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

15 - 20 volunteers needed 😊

Mobile Pantry Distribution

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

1924 Trinity Ave., Walnut Creek

Thursday, 2/20/25, 9:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

8 volunteers needed 😊

**FOR ALL ACTIVITIES, PLEASE:**

No open toe shoes

Masks are optional

Wear your SIR Red Volunteer T-Shirt

Arrive 15 minutes prior to scheduled shift starting time 🍷

We will continue to provide Food Barrels 🍷 for needed donations, at our scheduled January 2025 luncheon. Let's start the New Year off with a huge contribution! Look for the SIR "Greeters"; the barrels will be nearby. Your contributions are needed and appreciated. 😊

SIR Branch 8 participation in the Community Outreach-SIR Giving Back program demonstrates the heartfelt effort of our volunteers' support for the community.

"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, or Phil Scimonelli, [rosescim@aol.com](mailto:rosescim@aol.com), 661-917-8060.

## 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. Sam Oommen**  
Chairman

Senior Health is the #1 topic of interest to our members based upon the recently completed member survey and focus groups. SIR Branch 8 is fortunate to have several recently retired physicians as members. These physicians are willing to volunteer their time and expertise to respond to questions from our members.

Prior to our monthly luncheon, member physicians and members with health questions will meet in a suitable space in the main banquet area at the Boundary

Oak Golf Course. Members have the opportunity to ask questions about their own health or the health of family members/friends. These questions may be asked in a group or separate private setting. Our member physicians will respond to these questions or direct the individual on how to get additional information regarding their health topic.

Physicians will NOT provide diagnoses. Per CMA Guidelines, these interactions will be considered "curbside consultations". Care will be taken to avoid giving advice based upon incomplete information. Physicians will respond to questions, provide information, and direct members to seek medical attention. Members will be encouraged to consult their personal physicians, and read articles provided on health websites. They will be under no obligation to follow the advice or recommendations that are provided.

Written health materials may also be distributed. Monthly health topics may be selected for special emphasis and dissemination.

If you have a health question or seek additional information on a health matter, please visit our member physicians in a suitable space in the main banquet area at the Boundary Oak Golf Course. They will be available from about 10:45 am – 11:30 am prior to our SIR luncheon.

For more information, contact Sam Oommen.

**Dr. Sam Oommen, Chairman,** [soommen51@gmail.com](mailto:soommen51@gmail.com), 925-381-3257

## LADIES DAY LUNCHEON

**Holiday Ladies Day Luncheon**

The December 9, 2024, Holiday Ladies Day Luncheon was a lively fun occasion with 110 members and their wives and guests in attendance. Once again there was good food, 36 bottles of wine, Center piece floral arrangements, See's Chocolates along with many other door prizes awarded to lucky ticket holders, donated from the people and businesses shown below.

  
DONATION OF DOOR PRIZES ARE FROM THE FOLLOWING

 <small>ANGELA KALINOWSKI, PROPRIETOR DISCOUNT DINNERS</small>	 <small>DOONNA BISHAW SEE'S CANDY</small>	 <small>ROCCO'S RESTAURANTE PIZZERIA GIFT BASKET</small>		
 <small>BUCK SHOT WINE</small>	 <small>RON CASSANO WINE</small>	 <small>MUSCARINGO WINERY WINE TASTING</small>	 <small>DONNA BENSON WINE</small>	 <small>BUCHANAN GOLF FREE GOLF</small>

The luncheon was topped off by the comedy of mind reader magician Heather Rogers whose finale included freeing herself from a straight jacket.

Sign-up sheets will be issued in April for the June 9<sup>th</sup> 2025 Spring luncheon.

**Buck Cheshire**  
Chair Ladies Day Luncheon  
with the assistance of Ms. Paula Murphy

You can find photos that Meng Horng took at the luncheon in the link:

[https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/2h7sa77pgpb2xrrrvzv45/AKjIBV8VxgsG-t\\_TIBNxPuY?rlkey=60i8obnjyvg003goz43rgk8cq&st=q7nmhd8s&dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/2h7sa77pgpb2xrrrvzv45/AKjIBV8VxgsG-t_TIBNxPuY?rlkey=60i8obnjyvg003goz43rgk8cq&st=q7nmhd8s&dl=0)

## OKTOBERFEST



**Leo Dominguez**



**Ron Maciak**



**Thom Watkins**

### OKTOBERFEST 10/17/2024

The SIR Branch 8 members attended our second annual Oktoberfest event on October 17, 2024. We had 88 attendees at the Concord Community Park on Cowell Road, with pleasant weather and great comradery.

The chefs, Thom Watkins, Ron Maciak, Dianna Bennett met the day before the event to prep as much of the next day's meal as possible, at Leo Dominguez' house. Dan and Lynn Crowley delivered the multiple coolers to Leo's in the famous Yellow Side Step truck that we all can see a mile away, Dan's baby.

The event had great decorations placed by Pete Jordan and his team up on ladders making the park a festive banner filled event. All the volunteers were terrific. The supplies, ice coolers, etc. were picked up and returned from the store rooms by Ken Stehr, Dan Crowley, and Rob Laaback. The set up, take down volunteers swarmed the park and covered the tables, set up the canopy, the bar tenders were ready early for the thirsty crowd.

The many chefs seem to work hard but enjoy themselves. Thom was again wooing the crowd with his "flame thrower" BBQ lighter. Linda Guwara gave Ron M great support. The Oktoberfest music kept us moving and the conversations were terrific, lots of mingling and laughter.

Paula Murphy was fabulous, she made lists of all attendees and created the stylish name badges and what about those gingerbread cookies, yummy and exquisitely decorated.

Thank you to all the volunteers, and attendees, it was great to see many ladies attend that accompanied all the SIR members. THANK YOU TO ALL!!!

**Thom Watkins:** [thomwat831@gmail.com](mailto:thomwat831@gmail.com), 925-330-3780  
**Ron Maciak:** [ronald41mac@gmail.com](mailto:ronald41mac@gmail.com), 925-357-8005  
**Leo Dominguez:** [leordominguez@gmail.com](mailto:leordominguez@gmail.com), 925-949-6454

Ken Belfer Garland Bell Ian Dunn Jamshed Gandhi Steve Greene Steve Hilberg Meng Horng	Peter Jordan Jackie Kaneshiro Rob Laaback Mike Levine Carl Ludwig Terry Mason Buddy May	Hans Pable Phil Philpot Russell Schleske Martin Simmons Rod Spicer Dave Sutton
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## ACTIVITY COORDINATION COMMITTEE



Mike Frey      Ken Main      Chick Lowry      Dennis Mierzwa

### ACC December 23 Meeting Notes Summary

The Activity Coordinating Committee (ACC) breakfast meeting was approved by Tom Di Grande. Mike Frey plans to send out an email inviting the Activity Chairs (ACs) to attend a meeting on Friday, February 21, 2025. The invitation will request that the ACs send an Assistant Chairman to represent their activity if they cannot attend.

Mike will reach out to Dave Dawson to clarify the status of the combined partner/contract bridge activity (i.e., when do they meet and what is the name of the activity).

Mike will contact Ira Dorf regarding the Travel Activity. Will the Travel Chairman at BR146 agree to be a contact for travel opportunities for our Branch?

Ken Main will prepare a discussion guide and questions for the AC breakout session.

## SUNSHINE REPORT



**Rich Knowles**  
Chairman

Sunshine regrets to inform the membership that SIR George Schulze has entered hospice. He would be happy to hear from members via email [georgeschulze1213@gmail.com](mailto:georgeschulze1213@gmail.com) (not telephone). Charlene reads him his emails every day. He is home from the hospital now and doing as well as can be expected during hospice care.

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 re obituaries and services. In addition, Membership continues to maintain a current obituary file on the web site.

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

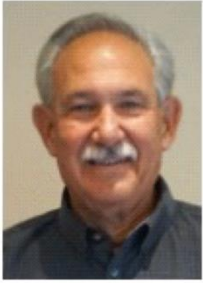
## BIRTHDAYS



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 January. Be sure to open your birthday greeting.

## SIR BIOGRAPHIES

### Big Sir, Tom DiGrande



Born in San Francisco and raised in Oakland. Graduated from Oakland Technical High School. Married my high school sweetheart, Sharon. Have two beautiful and smart daughters, two great sons-in-law, and two amazing grandsons.

Started working as a Lube Technician in Oakland, and advanced to a Service Management position. 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). Had the opportunity to join a local Dealer Group as a Managing Partner & Director of Fixed Operations (12 Dealer facilities). After 50 years in Dealership Fixed Operations, I retired in December 2016 and joined SIR.

### Little Sir, Dan Smith



I was born in Norfolk, Virginia, and have family there. I like to say that I grew up from Maine to Florida, so as to include upstate New York. It turned out that during these years we lived either close to or on various bodies of water; thusly I spent a lot of time on the water. This and my mother's family having operated a shipyard influenced my decision to become a naval architect. I graduated from Virginia Tech (BS) and M.I.T. (MS) with degrees in naval architecture and marine engineering.

I went to work at Newport News Shipbuilding when I graduated. While there I got to research the application of a newly developed computer based structural analysis (NASTRAN) to the design of the Los Angeles Class submarine. I left Newport News because of a divorce and came to California by way of Texas. I met my wife Lynda in LA. We soon ended up here in the Bay Area. We have been married over 50 years, now. I've worked for several different companies here before going back to Rosenblatt 30 years ago where I became their Chief Naval Architect. I worked part time after retirement, mostly in the engineering of the ShipLift dry dock system.

There have been two aspects of the marine field that I have particularly liked: the diversity of work and the worldwide travel. When I tell someone that I weigh ships, I get a quizzical look in response, as to how you do that. I tell them that we measure the hole it makes in the water, which is pure Archimedes. I've lost count of how many vessels on which I have either performed a deadweight survey or a stability test (or inclining, a test where we heel the vessel to determine its VCG). I've inclined drill rigs, naval ships, ferries, oceanographic ships, a cruise ship, even floating caissons (gates) for dry docks. I have also been involved with structural analyses for many different projects, frequently using NASTRAN, and I get involved with marine systems.

My hobbies range from genealogy, gardening and carrying out home projects. I like to play cribbage and bridge with the guys. I also like the sociability of walking. I became the editor of the Hotline, relieving Chuck Joyce after he moved to Arizona. I assist Dennis Mierzwa with cribbage. And I took on attendance under Bill Peterson, later assisting Manuel Dominguez, which is a BEC position. I will pass on the Hotline to Chris Wehling and Assistant Attendance Secretary to John Vallor when I take on Little Sir in 2025. I will state that SIR has become a community for me with all of its guys and what we do.



# JANUARY ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Activities at SIR Branch 8

Jan 2025 (Pacific Time - Los Angeles)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29 1pm - Internet Cribbage	30 10am - 18 Hole Golf @ 1pm - Internet Cribbage	31 10am - Hike: Hard 1pm - Internet Cribbage	1 9am - 9 Hole Golf. @ 10am - Bowling @ 11am - LIVE-Domino 5 @ 1pm - Cribbage @ 1pm - Internet Cribbage	2 8:30am - Pickleball @ 9:30am - Heads-Up 11am - Contract Bridge @ 1pm - Internet Cribbage	3 8:30am - Open Bocce @ 1pm - Internet Cribbage 1pm - Internet Mexican 1pm - Poker	4 10am - Woodpeckers 1pm - Internet Cribbage
5 1pm - Internet Cribbage	6 10am - 18 Hole Golf @ 1pm - Internet Cribbage	7 10:30am - Book Group @ 12:30pm - Car 1pm - Internet Cribbage 1pm - Poker 5pm - Dine Out Single	8 9am - 9 Hole Golf. @ 10am - Bowling @ 1pm - Community 1pm - Internet Cribbage 1pm - Pinochle @	9 8:30am - Pickleball @ 9:15am - Mixed League 9:30am - Heads-Up 1pm - Internet Cribbage 1pm - Recently Read 6pm - Dine In 1 @ 1	10 8:30am - Open Bocce @ 9am - Duplicate Bridge 1 10am - Digital 12pm - Chess @ Pleasant 1pm - Internet Cribbage 1pm - LIVE-Mexican Train	11 1pm - Internet Cribbage
12 1pm - Internet Cribbage	13 9am - BEC meeting @ 10am - Book Exchange @ 11:30am - SIR Luncheon 1pm - Internet Cribbage	14 10am - 18 Hole Golf @ 10am - Easy Hike 1pm - Internet Cribbage 4pm - Podcast	15 <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">HOTLINE Input</span> 9am - 9 Hole Golf. @ 10am - Bowling @ 1pm - Internet Cribbage 1pm - Poker	16 8:30am - Pickleball @ 9:30am - Heads-Up 1pm - Internet Cribbage 6pm - Dine out 1 @ 6pm - Wine Finders 3	17 8:30am - Open Bocce @ 1pm - Internet Cribbage 1pm - Internet Mexican 6pm - Dine In #1 @ #1	18 1pm - Internet Cribbage
19 <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">HOTLINE input deadline</span> 1pm - Internet Cribbage	20 1pm - Bridge - Partners @ 1pm - Internet Cribbage	21 10am - 18 Hole Golf @ 1pm - Cribbage @ 1pm - Internet Cribbage	22 9am - 9 Hole Golf. @ 10am - Bowling @ 1pm - Internet Cribbage 1pm - Pinochle @ 1:30pm - \$UMS in	23 8:30am - Fishing @ 8:30am - Pickleball @ 9:30am - Heads-Up 1pm - Internet Cribbage 1pm - Poker	24 8:30am - Open Bocce @ 12pm - Chess @ Pleasant 1pm - Community 1pm - Internet Cribbage 1pm - LIVE-Mexican train	25 1pm - Internet Cribbage
26 1pm - Internet Cribbage	27 10am - 18 Hole Golf 12pm - Poker 1pm - Internet Cribbage	28 10am - Hike: Hard 1pm - Internet Cribbage 1pm - Poker @ Rossmoor 1pm - Writing Your Life 3pm - Mixer @ Jack's 4pm - Podcast 6pm - Bargain bites	29 9am - 9 Hole Golf. @ 10am - Bowling @ 1pm - Internet Cribbage	30 8:30am - Pickleball @ 9:30am - Heads-Up 1pm - Internet Cribbage	31 8:30am - Open Bocce @ 1pm - Internet Cribbage	1 10am - Woodpeckers 1pm - Internet Cribbage



## ASTRONOMY



**David Bushnell**  
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.



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

## OPERA IN THE THEATERS



**David Bushnell**  
Chairman

Our January Met Opera in theaters will be the live matinee performance of Aida at 9:30 a.m. local time on Saturday, January 25, followed by "encore recordings" on Wednesday at 1:00 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. Note that Aida is a very long opera, so the matinee starts early.



Reviews of "Aida" at the Metropolitan Opera generally praise the grand scale of the production, with its large sets, elaborate costumes, and powerful chorus, but often criticize the staging as feeling somewhat static and outdated, particularly when paired with casts that lack dynamic acting ability; some reviewers have noted that while the music and chorus shine, the overall production can feel routine and tired.

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

## BOCCE BALL - LEAGUE PLAY



**Chick Lowry**  
Chairman

League Play Bocce is currently in hibernation awaiting next season. Watch for our start up in early spring. If current team members find other things to occupy their time, I will be looking for some replacements. Watch for the 2025 team status. If you have a desire to join the team, please send me a note and I will add you to a list of possible players. We can investigate a second team with the CBF if



there are several new players. We currently only have a one team option to continue.

Winter is on the way. Bocce will return when the temperatures are warmer. Go Sir Bocce!

Chairman: Chick Lowry - [Clowry2845@gmail.com](mailto:Clowry2845@gmail.com)  
Asst. Chair: Bob Barnes - [Bob\\_Barnes@msn.com](mailto:Bob_Barnes@msn.com)

## BOCCE BALL - OPEN PLAY



**Martin Hawco**  
Chairman

Open Play Bocce is currently in hibernation awaiting next season. Watch for our start up in early spring next year. If you have a desire to join Open Play, please send me a note and I will add you to the contact list.

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

## BOOK EXCHANGE



**Alan Curtis**  
Chairman



The book exchange has escaped from the back corner of the bar where we've been hidden for the last few meetings. We are now out in the dining area, much more accessible.

We have several new titles that have been donated by our fellow SIRS. Stop by and check us out.

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)

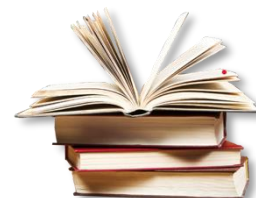
## BOOK GROUP



**Ron Rizzo**  
Chairman

*Cochrane: The Real Master and Commander* is a non-fiction account of one of the most daring and successful British naval heroes of all time, a man Napoleon nicknamed "The Sea Wolf." David Cordingly, the author, recounts the adventures of Lord Cochrane as he terrorized the French and Spanish forces in Europe, and later the Spanish on both coasts of South America.

Typical of his successes was his overcoming a Spanish frigate of 300 men in his 60-man sloop by eventually boarding the larger vessel. His exploits were largely credited for forming the basis of Patrick O'Brian's fictional "Master and Commander" series, as



well as the Horatio Hornblower stories by C. S. Forester. Unfortunately, Cochrane's triumphs at sea were matched by political reverses at home in Parliament, and he even spent time in Bathgate Prison because of a reputed scandal on the stock market that is still being contested in this century. Like our own John Paul Jones, Cochrane went on to serve in other navies because of personal conflicts and lack of recognition at home. The book was generally well-received by our book group, although there were some reservations with the slow beginning before the action picked up. It received a rating of 3.7 out of a possible 5.

Our next book is a work of fiction, *East of Eden*, by John Steinbeck. We meet at 10:30 a.m. the first Tuesday of each month at the Concord Round Table Pizza on Treat Boulevard.

If you like to read and have lively 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).

## 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 are 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 from 2021 through 2023 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 2024 will be added to the website within a month of each meeting.

## BOWLING



**Dan Weller**  
Chairman

### Bowling League

The 2024–2025 “winter” league started September 6. We have eleven 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.

### 2025 Tournaments

The 2025 SIR bowling calendar with fifteen tournaments was approved by the SIR Inc. Board. We are looking ahead to participating in many tournaments, making new friends, and connecting with 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 website 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, 2025	Napa Bowl	Our first “string pins” tournament
February 15–16, 2025	Sacramento / Country Club Lanes	

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

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

## CAR ENTHUSIASTS



**Chick Lowry**  
Chairman



Car enthusiasts participated in both the Branch 8 Ladies Day Holiday Luncheon AND our own CE Holiday Celebration to close out 2024. We filled a wonderfully located table at the LDL and enjoyed an intermingling of CE members at other activity tables with longtime friends. A nice turnout of CE members.

Thirty CE members and guests also attended a catered buffet dinner on December 19, in a quiet clubhouse environment where we could mingle and talk without a lot of extra noise. The room environment was wonderful. It was a departure from previous years when we gathered at a local restaurant to celebrate, occasionally finding ourselves in cramped spaces or with loud noises from other parts of the restaurant. The buffet meal was excellent, with hand-carved prime rib or salmon filets in cream sauce. The caterer had brought enough for everyone to sample both, rather than declaring a meal choice in advance. Salad, entrées, coffee and dessert, all at a cost lower than what we would be faced with to stage the dinner in a restaurant, made for an outstanding event, an outstanding event that we might even repeat again next year.

We have not yet completed an event schedule for 2025. Recovery from all the messes created by the COVID era is

returning slowly. We also lost two terrific CE members recently; Dennis Reschkey and Bill Koski will be missed, as they were very active CE members and great guys.

Moving forward into 2025 (our tenth year as an activity) we will attempt to find more interesting and fun things to do. The group is looking for more Rally Drives and short travel-oriented trips, in addition to the local Car Shows and automotive events. We will attack the schedule in January, so all members can get events scheduled in to busy calendars.

Hope you all had a Merry Christmas and have scheduled a safe New Year's Celebration plan to start 2025. See ya in '25, and Happy Motoring....

The next CE meeting will be Tuesday, January 7, 2025, at 1 p.m. 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 Chick or Tom as noted below.

Activity Chair - Chick Lowry - [Clowry2845@gmail.com](mailto:Clowry2845@gmail.com)  
Assistant Chair - Tom Hodgson - [tomehodgson1945@gmail.com](mailto:tomehodgson1945@gmail.com)

## CRIBBAGE



**Dennis Mierzwa**  
Chairman



The Cribbage Activity meets on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month. We play at Rocco's Pizzeria at 2909 Ygnacio Valley Rd. in Walnut Creek. Social half hour and lunch is at noon, and play is from 12:30 to 3 p.m. 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 and half hours we play. Our members prefer to play four-person games, which is two partners with the two winners advancing to the next table. Cribbage is a fun, friendly, fast-paced game.

### December 2024 RESULTS

Our first session, December 4<sup>th</sup>, had fourteen players at three tables of four for partner play and a table of two. The winners were

1 <sup>st</sup>	Bob Beitler	189 points
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Bud Grisanti	157 points
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Steve Greytak	156 points
4 <sup>th</sup>	Terry Mason	131 points

The first session had more than the usual number of hands with high scores: Steve Greytak with a 24, Rod Spicer with a 21, and Rob Laaback and Steve Monksfield each with a 20!

The second session of the month was Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>, and twelve players gave us three tables of four for partner play.

## Our top four finishers were

1 <sup>st</sup>	Greg Ryan	162 points
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Don Atwater	147 points
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Dan Smith	141 points
4 <sup>th</sup>	Rob Laaback	127points

High hands went to Don Atwater, with a 24, and Dan Smith, with a 20.

With 2024 in the books for Branch 8 Cribbage, the top four players with the highest averages for the year were Dan Smith (135.0), Don Atwater (128.8), Bob Beitler (128.0), and Ray de Wit (119.8). 2024 High Score went to Bob Beitler with 261 points. The most first place finishes in 2024 went, not surprising, to our high-average player, Dan Smith, with five firsts.

**SPECIAL NOTE: AS THE FIRST WEDNESDAY IN JANUARY 2025 IS THE 1<sup>ST</sup>, CRIBBAGE WILL NOT PLAY UNTIL THE THIRD TUESDAY, JANUARY 21<sup>ST</sup>**

Chairman, Dennis Mierzwa: [dennis.mierzwa@att.net](mailto:dennis.mierzwa@att.net)  
Assistant Chairman, Dan Smith: [dns.lns02@astound.net](mailto:dns.lns02@astound.net)

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## BRIDGE RUBBER



**Dave Dawson**  
Chairman

The contract bridge group has been paused until we can get some new members. Anyone wanting to play bridge should come to the Partners Bridge sessions and contact Dave Dawson, 925-673-5118, [dawsonfam@astound.net](mailto:dawsonfam@astound.net).

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## 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.

We're playing duplicate bridge on January 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 AM, at Round Table Pizza in Pleasant Hill.

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



**Dave Dawson**  
Chairman

For the Partner Bridge group, we are going to allow single or other bridge teams to play. We'll do our best to partner up any single players with existing partners, or as substitutes. New players can come with any current bridge partners they may have (spouse, existing bridge partners). If you are coming, contact Dave Dawson at [dawsonfam03@gmail.com](mailto:dawsonfam03@gmail.com) or 9256735118 and leave me a message with your contact information. Partners Bridge play is on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at the Round Table Clubhouse (Treat and Oak Grove). A reminder email goes out to the group the week before.

Dave Dawson, 925-673-5118, [dawsonfam@astound.net](mailto:dawsonfam@astound.net)

## 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 from 12:30 to 3:00. We play 3, 4, 5, or 6 handed games, so we can accommodate any number of players. Ladies and new players are welcome. We share this activity with Branch 146. Contact Stan Johnson.



On November 27, we had two tables with a total of 9 Players. At one table, Stan Johnson won the 5-handed table with a two-game total of 662 with Art Fabsits second with 597 and Terry Mason third with 581. At the other table with four players, Dennis Mierzwa and Roy Hodgkinson (of Branch 146) won two close games 1080 to 1023. On December 13, we had 11 participants. Dennis Mierzwa, Tom Amann, and visitor Frank Jordan won the 6-handed table. At the 5-person game, Jeff Morrow from Branch 146 won the first game with Bob Weiss winning the second.

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

## POKER, COME JOIN US FOR POKER!

**Ron has resigned to care for his wife. The Branch is looking for someone to carry on this popular activity.**

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 TBD



## SIR CHESS



**Steve Schram**  
Chairman



Please join us for Chess at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center in January.

**We will continue our Chess events on Fridays, January 10 and 24, at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill.** We will play in the Game Room from Noon to

3:00 pm.

Our chess activity is scheduled on the second and fourth Fridays of each month. We welcome anyone from beginners to expert players. Please remember to bring your chess sets, and any beverages that you will enjoy during this activity.

As we continue to play at the PH Senior Center, we will all have to become members for a modest fee of \$20 per year. Contact Steve Schramm, Activity Chairman, if you have any questions at [sschramm01@gmail.com](mailto:sschramm01@gmail.com).

I look forward to playing chess with all of you this month.

## DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY



**Meng Horng**  
Chair Pro-Tem

Our group consists of photography enthusiasts who continue to show interest in learning new digital techniques to improve their photography. With new software advancement and AI concepts, the learning has no limitation. Our goal this year is to grow our membership, meeting in-person with instruction lectures and adding field trips to our schedule. This is a big step forward since the Pandemic isolation.

Any members who are interested in joining the group, please sign-up at the lunch meeting at our Photo display table or call or email us.

We meet at 10:00 a.m. every second Friday of the month, in the meeting room of the Ygnacio Valley Library, at 2661 Oak Grove Rd. (phone 925-938-1481) in Walnut Creek. We have monthly assigned topics and encourage participating members to bring their photo images on a flash drive to the meeting for a fun "Show and Tell" session.

Dr. Meng Horng, Chair: 309-287-5654 [mengymc@gmail.com](mailto:mengymc@gmail.com)  
Dave Davis, Vice Chair: 925-838-1753 [dav.davis@comcast.net](mailto:dav.davis@comcast.net)

## SIR SCIENCE



**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

## 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)



## INTERNET GAMES



**Don Atwater**  
Chairman

Internet Games is an activity you can enjoy wherever you have an internet connection. But instead of playing against the computer, here you get to play against SIR friends. New games may be started, and that is where it is hoped we will help interested members to connect as well as find links. So let Chairman Don know of your interest, and perhaps others will be found for the game.

**Mexican Train** – Currently, we play Mexican Train on the 1st & 3rd Fridays of

each month with games starting at 1:00 p.m. Thanks to Danny Rinaldi, our connection is via Zoom to razzle our competitors while playing on a site reserved just for us.

December Winners were Terry Norton & Don Atwater

**Cribbage** – Each month we have a Cribbage tournament where competitors play each other on an Internet site while conversing on the phone with one another. Internet Cribbage is played as a two-man game during the first 2 weeks of the month. We connect on a good Cribbage Internet site that deals with the cards and counts the points.

Internet Cribbage completed a successful year with many challenging and interesting games reported by its seven members. Don Atwater was the winner for the month with 17 wins. Other monthly winners in 2024 were Ray de Wit, Stan Johnson, Dennis Mierzwa, Dan Weller & Don Atwater.

Come join us for these games. Perhaps suggest a new game for this Internet connection. SIR members and partners are welcome.

**Chairman Don Atwater, 925-673-1669, [datwater@pacbell.net](mailto:datwater@pacbell.net)**  
**Asst. Chair: Dan Rinaldi, 925-825-0519, [danrinaldi944@gmail.com](mailto:danrinaldi944@gmail.com)**

## MEXICAN TRAIN DOMINOES

Mexican Train Dominoes meets in-person 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 [danrinaldi944@gmail.com](mailto:danrinaldi944@gmail.com)

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

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

## BARGAIN BITES



**Ron Smith**  
Chairman

Hello Bargain Bites!!

We wrapped up 2024 on Monday, October 29, with a great group of 43 Sirs and spouses (or significant others) at the Old Spaghetti Factory in Concord, which has always been a favorite of the group. Nothing lined up for 2025 but I think we will be at the



China Palace to kick off the year unless something new develops.

Hope you all enjoyed safe, happy holidays with your family and friends and are ready to face the new year. Watch for our flyers and announcements and of course we appreciate all leads.

Remember the motto of Bargain Bites: Good Food! Good Price! Good Friends! And guests are always welcome. This is a great event to invite friends to and 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. Chair, Bill Barber, 925-222-0095, [billhiker4411@gmail.com](mailto:billhiker4411@gmail.com)

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## DINE IN #1



**Ron Cassano  
Chairman**

We will start the new year off with Donna Benson hosting us. More to come.

Ron Cassano, Head Eater

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## DINE OUT - SINGLE SIRs



**Glenn Gilman  
Chairman**

We start the New Year by dining at an old favorite, The Old Spaghetti Factory, 1955 Mt. Diablo St., Concord, Tuesday, January 7, at 5:00 p.m. Branch 8 Sirs, single at dinner time, are welcome to join us. Just confirm you will attend with our host Glenn Gilman.

Our Dine Out group has come of age. We will start our 21<sup>st</sup> consecutive year as a Branch 8 activity when we meet in January.

**Happy Holidays, and a Happy New Year!**

Glenn Gilman, Chairman, 925-798-5155

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

Don Atwater, Asst. Chairman 925-673-1669

[datwater@pacbell.net](mailto:datwater@pacbell.net)

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## JIGSAW PUZZLE EXCHANGE



**Carl Moyer  
Chairman**

Carl Moyer has an activity called **Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange**. The jigsaw puzzle exchange is at the Luncheon fishing table with Carl Moyer. Bring Puzzles & Take Puzzles.



Contact Carl at [carlmarc@astound.net](mailto:carlmarc@astound.net)

## MIXER



**Ray de Wit  
Chairman**

Our December get-together was two weeks earlier than usual (December 17<sup>th</sup>) to avoid any conflict with Christmas and New Year's Eve. We had a great turnout with 16 people and a new couple, Thom and Paula Watkins. The group was so large that we had to use two complete tables. What a great time. Our January 2025 event will be back on the usual last Tuesday of the month (January 28<sup>th</sup>) at 3:00 at Jack's in Pleasant Hill.

Everyone is welcome and we hope to see some new faces and smiles at the 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.

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## 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 Phil Scimonelli, 661-917-

8060, 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 23, at 8:30 a.m. Come early.

Weather has been a problem for us all year! Wind is our enemy, and it has been BLOWY all year. Oh, woe was us! Crab-catching began December 1st, but wind and big waves were so bad, even the party boats did not go often. But Brion Beetz, Carl Moyer, Lee Clark, Barry Latner, Steve Paulick, and Stan Wong braved the turmoil and got crabs and rockfish. Dennis Lee, Ken Konzak, and Carl Moyer got trout in the East Bay, but Fred McNeil travelled to Bridgeport for his. Ron Lew and Ken Belendir caught dorado and marlin all the way down to Baja, Mexico. Phil Scimonelli, Sam Oomen, Stan Wong, Tom Kostik and Dennis Lee landed stripers from the Delta. And over 50 of us enjoyed our annual Christmas dinner with our ladies. May the new year bring you joy, health, laughing children, light winds, and calm waters. Come join us!

Carl Moyer, Chairman, [carlmarc@astound.net](mailto:carlmarc@astound.net)



## GOLF - 9 HOLE



Mike Frey  
Chairman



The 9-hole Golf Group plays at Diablo Hills Golf Course on Wednesdays at 9:00 a.m.! Following is a summary of recent play:

December 11, 2024

Twelve golfers teed off starting at 9:00 a.m. at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a very chilly morning for golf. Ken Castleman shot the low round of the day with a very nice score of "37." Ron Shahade won the closest to the pin event: 2<sup>nd</sup> shot on the 3<sup>rd</sup> hole, with a 6'-5" shot on the 4<sup>th</sup> hole, which he then went on to two-putt for a bogie -- Ron!!!! The group had 16 pars and two birdies, one each by Ken and Mike Frey on the 4<sup>th</sup> hole.

December 4, 2024

Eight golfers teed off starting at 9:00 a.m. at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a chilly morning for golf. Rich Knowles shot the low round of the day with nice score of "42." Rich Knowles won the closest to the pin event with a 15' shot on the 4<sup>th</sup> hole, just nudging out Roger Lockwara's shot of 15'-8". Rich went on to two-putt for a par. The group had 9 pars and no birdies for the round.

November 27, 2024

Eleven golfers teed off starting at 9:00 a.m. at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a clear but damp morning for golf. Gary Grice and Ron Shahade (who was joining us for the first time this year) shot the low rounds of the day with nice scores of "42," just nudging out Pat Hoy, who shot a "43." Bob Sherman won the event of the day, closest to the pin on the 4<sup>th</sup> hole, with a 14'-9' shot; Bob went on to two-putt for a par. The group had 14 pars and one birdie by Mike Frey.

Join us for a round of golf followed by a bite to eat while we rehash the round. Go to the Branch 8 website and, under the Nine Hole Golf link, click on the Signup link. Call or email me or Ray with any questions.



Left to right: Will St. Clair, Ray de Wit, Stan Johnson, Pat Hoy, Gary Grice, Terry Baldwin, Pat Dodson, Ron Shahade, George Vogt

Mike Frey, 9 Hole Golf Chair: [mfrey1784@gmail.com](mailto:mfrey1784@gmail.com)  
925/699-1784

Ray de Wit, 9 Hole Golf Asst. Chair: [raydewit11@gmail.com](mailto:raydewit11@gmail.com)  
925/948-5962



David Platter  
Chairman

## GOLF - 18 HOLE



On December 16<sup>th</sup> during the Boundary Oak tournament, it rained all day. Despite wet conditions, Branch 8 players were ready for the challenge. The tournament was hotly contested. Media reported that Peter Jordan receiving first place, Mike Furtado took the applause for second, and Garland Bell became a strong third. The tournament Director, Jim Shrha, decided NOT to present the fourth-place medal, since only three showed up to compete.

A word on conditions: imagine standing out in the open, holding a steel club high above your head and, just as you start to swing, this electric storm crashes down on your game. Think about dodging deadly lightning flashes hitting the hills and trees, and sometimes just screaming a short distance away. (It was not that bad, but I just wanted you to think about it.)

Rick Trudell is one of our up-and-coming stars. His putting at San Ramon was specular. In addition, he was sinking several shots from the high grass fringe, along with placing in the hole immodest 30+ putts.

Carl Sand finished first at Shadow Lakes with 89 gross and 69 net. Carl also won the closest to the pin contest. (Next to PGA tour.)

Don Dennler took honors at San Ramon with a below-par 70 net. While in late November, Pat Hoy was the best at another Boundary Oak contest.

With winter biting at our heels, we find our best scores usually come during the bright warm summer. Yet, with the index assignments, players are equal, and our tournaments become score-tight. We play a serious-fun type of game. However, most important is comradeship. That alone takes us out on the course.

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

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



## MODEL TRAINS



**Rich Knowles**  
Chairman



There will be another meeting – time and place to be determined. Activity Coordinator is vacationing for a month, traveling all over the world (in reality, not via model trains).

Rich Knowles, [griethek@gmail.com](mailto:griethek@gmail.com), or

(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

This month the podcast activity met just once – on December 10. Our next meeting will be on January 14.

We discussed two very different podcasts that we had listened to. The first was a podcast that chronicled the first bank robbery in the United States. It was in 1798, in Philadelphia. And its history was bizarre. The first thing is that they put a

guy in jail for a long time (months) without even charging him. And they did not let him go after they had proof that someone else committed the robbery, that he was in Delaware when the robbery occurred, and that the actual robber confessed and said the jailed man had nothing to do with it. However, the guy they put in jail had helped build the vault and told the Bank board of directors that they should not be using the lock they were using as it was not up to the task. Although it turns out that the robbers



## HEADS-UP WALKERS



**Dan Weller**  
Chairman

We walk every Thursday morning at 9:30 a.m. 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/>

**1/2/2025: 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: Dave Allen. Difficulty: M

**1/9/2025: 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: Dave Davis. Difficulty: E

**1/16/2025: Danville: Railroad Museum Iron Horse.** Exit I-680 at Diablo Rd., west to Hartz Ave., left to Prospect Ave., right to Railroad Ave. Meet in Railroad Museum parking lot, corner of Prospect & Railroad Ave. Cafe: Lunardi's Market. Leader: Jan Persson. Difficulty: E

**1/23/2025: Moraga: Lafayette/Moraga Trail SMC staging area.** Meet at the staging area on St. Mary's Road approx. 1/10<sup>th</sup> mile

did not break the lock but got the key and just opened the vault up. I suspect the Board was just so embarrassed they had the wrong guy that they did not want to let him go, and they had connections with the police. So, the guy spent months in jail and was never charged with a crime. The guy later won a suit against the Board, and they had to pay him quite a bit. He went on to become somewhat famous for making fire engines (since he couldn't get any work for banks after this).

Second, we discussed a serious podcast about ADHD – what it is, what its treatment history has been, and what the symptoms are. Actually, it is very widespread and not just among kids. Adults tend to be able to hide it better, but still have it.

Contact the Activity Chair to get the names of the podcasts and the zoom meeting information, so you can join us to discuss these two podcasts. Or contact the Activity Chair to get the zoom link for the next meeting and find out the latest podcasts to be listened to and discussed.

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

## SIRS AT THE GAMES



**Steve Schramm**  
Chairman

**NO NEW REPORT FOR JANUARY.**

Please contact Steve Schramm for more information, [sschramm01@gmail.com](mailto:sschramm01@gmail.com).

north of the entrance to St. Mary's College. Cafe: Peet's Coffee.  
Leader: Jim Sowell. Difficulty: M

**1/30/2025: Walnut Creek: C.C. Canal Heather Farm.** Meet at the Heather Farm parking lot at the far north end of San Carlos Dr. Cafe: Sweet Affair Bakery. Leader: Manuel Dominguez. Difficulty: E

**2/6/2025: 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: Phil Trapp. Difficulty: E

CHAIRMAN: Dan Weller, 925-939-5510, [dweller@astound.net](mailto:dweller@astound.net)  
ASSISTANT CHAIR: Dave Morse, 925-938-3078, [dmorse88@yahoo.com](mailto:dmorse88@yahoo.com)  
ASSISTANT CHAIR: Phil Trapp, 925-963-1819, [prtrapp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:prtrapp@sbcglobal.net)

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## SIR HIKERS



**Carl Ludwig**  
Chairman

We have two great hikes lined up for the month of January to start the new year. Detailed information for interested hikers will appear by the end of December 2024 on the Hikers' webpage of the Branch 8 website at <https://www.sirbr8.com/hikers/>.

**January 14, 2025, Easy Hike – Diablo Hills Golf Course to Downtown Walnut Creek, 10:00 a.m.**

**Hike Description** – This venue has become the mainstay for the first easy hike of the year. It is perfect for a wet-weather outing, and we don't have to drive to get to a burger/beer lunch spot. What could be better for starting out the new season?!

This is an out and back hike of 3-4 miles starting at 10:00 a.m. The paved hike starts at the Contra Costa Regional Canal Trail, which we access from the parking lot near The Gardens, which is across the street from the Diablo Hills Golf Course parking lot. We pass through 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 parking lot, 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

**Hike Coordinator** and Hiker Chairman – Carl Ludwig, [cludwig171@gmail.com](mailto:cludwig171@gmail.com), 415.350.7372

## January 28, 2025, Hard Hike – Briones Valley to Tabletop and Seaborg Trail Loop – 10:00 a.m.

**Hike Description:** A return to Briones Regional Park for our first hard hike of the year. It is a 5.6-mile, 1000-foot AEG hike beginning at 10:00 a.m. The route is a loop that is exposed on the outbound leg and offers 40% shade on the return. We head east 1.8 miles on the Old Briones Road and Valley Trails, which are mostly level with limited shade. Shade arrives at the end of the Valley Trail, with a steep climb to a trail junction. If there is enough excitement, we'll turn left to include Briones Peak panoramic views. This will add 0.6 miles and 300 feet more climbing to our hike (see route, AllTrails map below).

We then head south via Tabletop and Briones Crest Trail, which offers Diablo and southern views, before descending on Seaborg Trail. This 1.6-mile trail is wooded for the descent, bordered by trees along Homestead Valley and heavily shaded at the end s-portion where we re-connect to the Old Briones Road very near our start.

**Optional lunch:** Europa Hofbrau in Orinda, 64 Moraga Way.

**Bring:** Hiking boots and water. Trekking poles are useful for the steep stretches. Assume restrooms are not available, although one porta potty is often available at the trailhead.

**Directions:** Take Hwy 24 west from Walnut Creek to Orinda. Exit on Camino Pablo northward toward Orinda Village/Richmond. Proceed 2.5 miles, then turn right at the light onto Bear Creek Road. Proceed 4.4 miles to the Briones entrance road on your right. Enter the park, and after passing the entrance booth, go straight ahead to the parking lot.

**Hike Leader** – Carl Ludwig, [cludwig171@gmail.com](mailto:cludwig171@gmail.com), 415.350.7372

**Hike Coordinator** and Hiker Chairman – Carl Ludwig, [cludwig171@gmail.com](mailto:cludwig171@gmail.com), 415.350.7372

**AllTrails:** [https://www.alltrails.com/explore/recording/afternoon-hike-f900afc--399?sh=carl-ludwig&utm\\_campaign=memory&unfurl=false&showMemory=true](https://www.alltrails.com/explore/recording/afternoon-hike-f900afc--399?sh=carl-ludwig&utm_campaign=memory&unfurl=false&showMemory=true)

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## \$UMS IN RETIREMENT



**Dave Sutton**  
Co-Chairman

We will meet at 1:30 pm on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday in January. Topic to be determined.

Email Dave Sutton to be included or to learn the topic.



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



**Ira Dorf  
Chairman**

We've identified five trips with the most interest generated among the members of the several SIR Branches that are working together on this. They are - Australia/New Zealand, Japan/Korea, Vietnam, England/Scotland/Ireland and the northeast for fall colors. I've sent emails to those members of our branch that have shown



interest in any of these destinations to set up interviews with them to get a more detailed idea of what they're looking for. Only one member has responded so far, so I will be sending an additional email to them to remind them that we need to talk. If anyone else is interested in going on any of these trips, please let me know.

Ira Dorf, Travel Chairman

Chairman: [iradorf2@comcast.net](mailto:iradorf2@comcast.net) 408-761-1429

## BARGAIN WINES



**Dennis Mierzwa  
Chairman**

Bargain Wines- Wishes you Happy Holidays and a healthy New Year!

Watch for January 2025 emails for Bargain Wine opportunities.

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

## 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

## WINE FINDERS 1



**Ron Smith  
Chairman**

Usually, we finish our tastings for the year in the month of October. But this was one of those special years when we also scheduled a HOLIDAY CHAMPAGNE TASTING. ROB AND GAY LAABACK hosted the Holiday Champagne tasting on Thursday, December 12, at 6 p.m. at their beautifully decorated, warm, and comfortable home in Walnut Creek. This was a great event to end the year. Everyone brought a bottle of their favorite bubbly and an appetizer, and we enjoyed a beautiful evening of wonderful conversation, good champagne, and appetizers. I know I always comment on the appetizers, but the selection this month was really outstanding. Everything was special and hand made. The entire evening certainly got us ready to face the Holidays.



Wine Finders 1 is a couple's activity that meets every other (even) month starting in February, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, and continuing in April, June, August, and October. We have five tastings a year, and some years we add a 6<sup>th</sup> over the Holidays. A different member hosts each tasting, and they get to pick the varietal to be tasted. Everyone tastes, votes on their top 3, and then we rank them. The tastings are always fun and interesting. Of course, each couple brings an appetizer, which provides more than enough great food. Some of us are serious about our tasting, but the evening is always casual, with good conversation, snacks and, of course, wine.

If you don't belong to Wine Finders 1, 2 or 3, but are interested in learning more about our tastings, or in starting a new group, just drop me, Ron Smith, an email and I will get back to you. A special note: In 2025 we will lose our Asst. Chair, Tony de Losada, as he is moving from the area. If you are interested in helping me run this activity, please let me know. Not a lot of work but important to help events run smoothly.

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

## WINE FINDERS 2



**Ron Cassano  
Chairman**

Our Holiday sparkling wine fest was hosted by Ron Cassano on December 14. Great food was had, and of course great fellowship flowed. A good time for all. Happy Holidays.

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

## WINE FINDERS 3



**Larry McEwen**  
Chairman

At 3 p.m. on Thursday, November 21, fourteen members of Winefinders III gathered at the home of Gayle and Leo Dominguez. Guests included Sirs Ron Maciak & Linda Guwara, Thom Watkins and Paula Murphy, and Leo's friends Diane and Cobb Bennett. The hosts provided pallet cleansers of Prosecco to placate the guests while the tasting got organized. There were two winners: 2021 Clos du Bois provided by guests Cobb & Dianna and a 2021

Butterknife Chardonnay brought by Margo and Jeffrey Peckham and available at \$12 from Total Wines. Second place was awarded to Jim Sowell and his daughter, Lisa, who brought a 2023 Carneros Grand Reserve Chardonnay, available for \$13 at Trader Joe's.

See photos on photo page of the wonderful display of goodies, featuring a bottomless shrimp plate, Jim Sowell's famous caprese salad, Amy Rizzo's tasty Chinese noodles with hot sauce, Margo Peckham's pomegranate Xmas log, and Mardi Lockwara's spicy meat balls. The evening was capped off with Leo's scrumptious homemade key lime pie.

Although the weather was threatening, we still were able to wander around Leo's huge back yard and admire the last days of his array of roses and other flowering bushes and trees. Things finally broke up around 7:30, when Leo presented guests with a sample of his key lime pie filling, and all were able to make it home before it got too dark.

## WOODPECKERS



**Thom Watkins**  
Chairman

There was not a regular meeting in December. Instead, we held our 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Woodpeckers Christmas Brunch. As usual, it was held at the Murphy-Watkins Chateau and hosted by Thom and Paula.

It was another festive occasion with lots of food, various beverages, and great conversation. The conversation began with simultaneously toasting the year with Mimosas, Bloody Mary's, and mulled apple cider (furnished by Jackie Kaneshiro). Appetizers consisted of lots of snacks and goodies from Hawaii brought by Jackie's wife, Jennifer. And, of course, Roger Lamm's famous Cranberry-Orange-BBQ meatballs. The sit-down eats consisted of Quiche Lorraine, baked Crème Brulee French Toast, sausage, coffee, tea, and the hot cider. During the consumption of the above, the ladies of the Henpeckers (Woodpeckers' Ladies Auxiliary) were presented with a variety package of paprika with some utensils that were acquired in Budapest during Thom and Paula's summer trip to Europe (see photo). Woodpecker, Roger Lamm will be leaving us (hopefully returning at some point) and was

presented with the first "Woodpecker Emeritus Award" (see last page for photos).

Woodpeckers do not meet in January, so our next meeting will be in February 2025. So, on behalf of the Woodpeckers and Henpeckers, I wish everyone a very happy and a very peaceful 2025!

Thom Watkins, Chair Woodpeckers, 925.330.3780

## 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

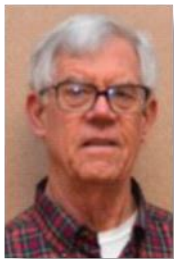


**HOTLINE E-MAIL ADDRESS:**

[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)



## RESOURCES FOR OUR MEMBERS, FAMILY & FRIENDS

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



[mowdiableregion.org](http://mowdiableregion.org)  
(925) 937-8311

Meals on Wheels, Fall Prevention  
Care Management, Friendly

### 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.**



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





Ladies Day Luncheon Photos







