



WHAT IS SIR?

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

Branch 8 Website:

<https://www.sirbr8.com>

"MAKE NEW FRIENDS FOR LIFE"

February 2025

Editor: Steve Moore

BIG SIR COLUMN



**Tom Di Grande
Big SIR**

In a past Little SIR Hotline article, I had encouraged SIR members in BR8 to get involved. We need more participation from the membership to "step up" with assisting in leadership roles. "It's Your Branch"! Well the need is here in 2025 to fill some of these positions.

There is an immediate temporary position open to assist our treasurer, Peter Shapiro, with the May and possibly the June luncheons. He will be

out of town. Assistance will be needed to collect funds for the luncheon, record attendance and distribute meal selection. Looking forward, if you have some Excel skills, this may turn into an Assistant Treasurer position 😊.

The SIR BR8 priority positions include:

Public Relations Chairman & Assistant Chairmen whose focus is on increasing membership and getting the SIR organization name out there. These marketing positions are at the top of our list.

A Constant Contact Director/Administrator is needed to assist with the ever growing "Active" Member Email service, assisting and sharing responsibilities with the Attendance Secretary and Assistant Attendance Secretary, with tasks related to Luncheon Attendance, Sign up Forms, Miscellaneous Emails and Constant Contact Surveys.

Do you like to travel? A Chairman is needed to "head up" the BR8 Traveling SIR's activity. Working with another branch helps the activity flow a little easier.

Like to work with computers? We need an Assistant System Manager to work with Dan Weller on BR8 data and various system aspects. What an opportunity!

Get involved and Thanks for your support!

Tom

LITTLE SIR SEZ



**Dan Smith
Little SIR**

I hope you got to listen to our speaker, Andrew Parrott, talk about the various factors one may consider with the market going forward. It was interesting that so much of the current market growth has been vested in a small group of hi-tech companies. I heard Andrew refer to them as the "magnificent seven." Whatever, Andrew did provide us with a parallel report titled "The Great Moderation: Riding a Wave of Economic Stability." If you would like a copy of this report,

whether you attended the luncheon or not, email me at dns.ins02@astound.net.

I learned a lesson in the face of this luncheon. Boundary Oak was starting to serve lunch, and our speaker had not shown up. I was getting worried. What a way to start out being Little SIR. Andrew arrived just in time, as he was targeting noon. My lesson: make sure I communicate when to arrive to our speakers.

There is another lesson stemming from a current event involving the Branch that I will share with all. Videos were made of each of the four sessions of our recent End of Life presentations. The Branch intends to make these videos available after they are edited. Unfortunately, one file was lost in this process. It is being remade, at a cost, so that we will have the complete set. The lesson for all of us is, "back it up." We are dealing with Murphy who has a cruel but wise hand. This Murphy Law is, "Whatever you really value will be lost." Whenever you do something in this wonderful electronic world of ours, make sure that you back it up.

Our next speaker will be Jon Kalan, representing the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team (CoCoSAR). The CoCoSAR team consists of about 200 professionally trained searchers under the direction of the Contra Costa County Sheriff Emergency Services Division. The team is made up of unpaid volunteers with extensive, specialized search & rescue and medical training. Would you want to join them? Come to the luncheon and listen.

Best,

Dan Smith – Little Sir



Contra Costa County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team



Search Briefing

The mission of the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Team (CoCoSAR) is to provide highly trained search and rescue resources for the citizens of Contra Costa County and assist other counties, according to the California Office of Emergency Services Mutual Aid Plan.



We are on-call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The team operates throughout Contra Costa County and is often called to assist other agencies throughout the State of California. SAR missions may involve searching for missing or at-risk adults and children, medical support at public events, assisting law enforcement with evidence searches, and disaster response.



The CoCoSAR team consists of about 200 professionally trained searchers under the direction of the Contra Costa County Sheriff Emergency Services Division. The team is made up of unpaid volunteers with extensive, specialized search & rescue and medical training. You don't need any special skills or experience to join the team -- just the right attitude and a genuine desire to help others. The team provides extensive, ongoing training in what you need to be a qualified searcher and first responder.


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♂♀ Activity Open to Spouse and Partners

Next SIR Luncheon:
February 10, 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: Dennis Lee & Carl Sand



Herb & Potato crusted Cod
Searred Marinated Bistro Fillet
Vegetable Cannelloni

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



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. 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) or Dan Smith (dns.ins02@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 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: TBD**

PUBLIC RELATIONS & COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Do you have a marketing background? We are looking for a chairman and assistant chairman to lead this very important activity. We are always needing to get the word out that we are there to support other guys like us and to gain new members. These activities may be coordinated with the other branches that neighbor to us. It helps to think out of the box so as to take advantage of what opportunities may be available. These members will work with and have the support of the BEC as they carry this very important service out. If this is something you would like to explore, please contact Tom DiGrande, tomdigrande@comcast.net, 925-876-7851.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH- SIR GIVING BACK



Tom Di Grande

Join your fellow SIR Branch 8 members in the Community Outreach-SIR Giving Back program / activities. Participate when you can, in assisting, 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

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 January was "as Off the Chart! We had a group of 17 SIR Branch 8 members and 4 spouses 😊. Participants sleeved apples 🍏

🍏. YES - Approx 6,000lbs!! 😊

WE DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE! A BIG DIFFERENCE

Monthly Food Bank Activities Schedule-

Send Hotline comments to Chris Wehling at chriswehling@sbcglobal.net

Wednesday, 2/12/25
Wednesday, 3/12/25
Scheduled from 1 to 3pm
Minimum 15 to 20 volunteers needed

Mobile Pantry Distribution
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
1924 Trinity Ave.
Walnut Creek, Ca 94596
Thursday, 2/20/25
9am - 12:15pm
8 volunteers needed 😊

ADDED:

Boxing / Bagging Activity
This activity will get your heart pumping!

So much fun 😊

Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano

Friday, 2/21/25

9am - noon

10 volunteers needed 😊

ALL ACTIVITIES- PLEASE:

No open toe shoes

Masks are optional

Wear your SIR Red Volunteer T Shirt

Arrive 15 min prior to scheduled shift starting time 👍

We will continue to provide Food Barrels 🗑️ for donations, at our scheduled February luncheon.

FACT: over the last 3 months, you have donated approx. 425 lbs. of food, that served 400 meals 🍌.

Great Job - Keep it Coming - THANK YOU !

Look for the SIR "Greeters", the barrels will be near by. Your contributions are needed and appreciated. 😊

SIR Branch 8 participation in the Community Outreach-SIR Giving Back program demonstrates the heart felt effort of the 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, 925-876-7851, or Phil Scimonelli, rosescim@aol.com, 661-917-8060.

MEMBER RELATIONS COMMITTEE



Rich Knowles

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

DOCTOR'S OFFICE



Dr Sam Oommen

The Doctors Resource table will have some new faces in 2025. We have ten retired physicians who have volunteered to serve. Two of them will be at the table during the monthly luncheon. Please stop by during the social hour between 10:30 to 11:30 and they will be happy to answer medical and health related questions.

The following physicians are available on the panel to serve at the Doctors resource table.

William Adler
Robert Mayo
Allan Tobias
Thomas Pinckart
Meng Horng

Samuel Oommen
Barry Latner
Michael Levine
Henry Kung
Gene Voelkek

Best Regards,

Dr. Sam Oommen, Chairman, soommen51@gmail.com,
925-381-3257

LADIES DAY LUNCHEON

Holiday Ladies Day Luncheon

The December 9, 2024, Holiday Ladies Day lunch 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.



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 9th 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/sc/fo/2h7sa77pgpb2xzrrvzv45/AKjIBV8VxgSG-t_TIBNxPuY?rlkey=60i8obnjyvq003goz43rgk8cq&st=q7nmhd8s&dl=0

OKTOBERFEST



Leo Dominguez



Ron Maciak



Thom Watkins

OKTOBERFEST October 2025

Look forward to another fun Octoberfest in October 2025. Article to be forthcoming. See January 2025 Hotline for article on Octoberfest 2024.

Thom Watkins: thomwat831@gmail.com, 925-330-3780

Ron Maciak: ronald41mac@gmail.com, 925-357-8005

Leo Dominguez: leordominguez@gmail.com, 925-949-6454

SUNSHINE REPORT



Rich Knowles
Chairman

The Sunshine Committee regrets to inform the Membership that long time Branch 8 member Bob Sherman passed away in early January. On January 10 there was a celebration of his life at the Greenery.

Please contact Membership:

sb8msec@hotmail.com to report

illnesses/surgery or passing of members.

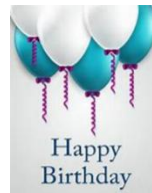
Membership will send electronic "Get well"

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, 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 February. Be sure to open your birthday greeting. Note that this is Gordon Linebaugh's 90th birthday.

Steve Burrows Art Fabsits Lee Hannam Martin Hawco Tom Hodgson Andy Jaramillo Joe Karg	Gordon Linebaugh Roger Lockwara Ron Maciak Ken Mitcheli Steve Moore Gary Nicholson	Terry Norton John Osborne Mel Petersen Ron Shahade John Sutton Chris Wehling
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ACTIVITY COORDINATION COMMITTEE



Mike Frey



Ken Main



Chick Lowry



Dennis Mierzwa

ACC December 23 Meeting Notes Summary

Mike reported that we have 18 participants so far for the AC Breakfast on Friday 2/21/25. Mike to reach out to the remaining AC's that have not yet committed to attend (about 8).

AMS notification process: Dennis is working with Dan Weller to understand and resolve this system issue (i.e. how new member interests and member resignations are reported to the AC's & the ACC). We are hoping this will be resolved before the AC breakfast meeting.

The new AI investment group was discussed. This activity will be categorized as a "sub-activity" (& a shared activity) of the \$UMS activity.

Chick Lowry plans to present his Car Enthusiasts Activity at the February luncheon. Plans are to ask Dennis if he will present his Cribbage activity at the March luncheon.

Mike discussed the updates he is making to the Website content (e.g. under the benefits & members tab).

SIR BIOGRAPHIES



Peter Shapiro

Treasurer: Peter Shapiro

Peter Shapiro grew up in Western Massachusetts, the nephew of a Chevrolet dealer and son of a Dodge dealer. He has degrees in Automotive Marketing and Business Management. In his high school years, he worked on a dairy farm and was active in Future Farmers of America. But his future was not to be in farming. He worked for auto parts giant NAPA, Goodyear, ADP and 3M, all in automotive-related capacities. Peter is an alumnus of a small group of ADP employees who worked for three out of four of ADP's divisions, two of which were automotive-related the third being payroll.

In 1993 Peter bought a home in Walnut Creek where he was elected to the Board of Directors of the HOA. He enjoyed overseeing the finances and maintaining the property. He eventually changed careers and completed fourteen years in HOA Management in December 2022 when he retired for the second time. As a new retiree, Peter keeps busy. He is now back on the board of the HOA where he lives, is active in SIR Car Enthusiast, Single Dine Out, and Bocce Ball. He walks around the Lafayette Reservoir frequently and attends lectures and various activities with friends. Peter is also on the board of the East Bay Jewish Film Festival.



Director: Martin Simmons

Martin Simmons

I am Retired after almost 40 years in Information Technology working for a variety of employers. I joined SIR Branch 8 a year later in 2012. Dan Weller, with whom I worked was my sponsor. I was born in England and immigrated with family at age 12 from small town England to Los Angeles. A slight culture shock, especially as it was the 60's. I graduated from high school at age 16 and attended UCLA for two years before enlisting in the US Air Force as a Computer Programmer. I spent those years primarily in Alabama. Then I Moved to Wisconsin where I met my wife, Sandy and we moved together to Texas, and then eventually on to Walnut Creek. Our 2 sons were born and raised here and still live in California. During my career in the Bay Area (almost 30 years) I worked for Bank of America, American President Lines (APL), Delta Dental, McKesson, and PG&E. I programmed initially in COBOL on mainframes, then followed the evolution of the field into Client Server computing and the web (Java on UNIX servers). I also worked on SAP.

Within Branch 8, I have been primarily active in Hikers and have also participated in the Walkers, DanSirs, and Dine Out groups. I was Assistant Chairman of Hikers for several years before becoming Chairman in 2021. I stepped down due to a Parkinson's diagnosis. I'm currently on my 5th year as a BEC Director.

FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

Activities at SIR Branch 8

Feb 2025 (Pacific Time - Los Angeles)

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



ASTRONOMY



David Bushnell

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



David Bushnell, Chairman and Editor, dbushn@swbell.net, 925-838-3914
Larry Lange, Assistant Chairman

OPERA IN THE THEATERS



**David Bushnell
Chairman**

No operas in theaters in February. The next transmission will be Beethoven's *Fidelio* on March 15. Not a great opera, but you hear the overture now and then.



David Bushnell, Activity Chairman,
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
Asst. Chair: Bob Barnes - 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
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
Assistant Chairman: Ron Rizzo, ronbrizzo@gmail.com
Assistant Chairman: Rob Laaback, rlaabak@yahoo.com
Assistant Chairman: Tom Keehn, tom242q@gmail.com

BOOK GROUP



**Ron Rizzo
Chairman**

At the Book Group's January meeting, we discussed John Steinbeck's *East of Eden*, which is widely regarded as one of his masterpieces and has cemented its place as a classic in American literature. Set in the rich farmland of California's Salinas Valley, this sprawling and often brutal novel follows the intertwined destinies of two families—the Trasks and the Hamiltons, whose generations helplessly reenact the fall of Adam and Eve and the poisonous rivalry of Cain and Abel. Adam Trask comes to California from the East to farm and raise his family on the new land, but the birth of his twins, Cal and Aron, brings his wife to the brink of madness. Adam is left alone to raise his boys to manhood. One boy thrives nurtured by the love of all those around him; the other grows up in loneliness enveloped by a mysterious darkness. In this novel Steinbeck created some of his most mesmerizing characters and explored his most enduring themes: the mystery of identity, the inexplicability of love, and the murderous consequences of love's absence.



The members of the book group held high opinions of the book, with an average rating of 4.3 on a scale of 1 to 5.

At our February meeting we will discuss a non-fiction work, "Prequel: An American Fight Against Fascism", by Rachel Maddow.

We meet at the Concord Round Table Pizza on Treat Boulevard at 10:30 a.m. on the first Tuesday of each month. If you like to read and have lively discussions about the books you have read, you should consider joining our group. If you are interested, please contact our chairman, Ron Rizzo, at ronbrizzo@gmail.com. Our reading lists for 2025 and 2024 are in the Book Group activity section of the Branch 8 website.

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. 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 and / or tournament bowling.

2025 Tournaments

The first 2025 SIR bowling tournament was at Napa Bowl. This place has the only "String Pins" machines for managing full racks and spares by lifting all pins, cleaning the deck, and drop the pins in the original spot. It is crazy to watch the pins dance while getting up after they fall on the deck.

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. You can find tournament schedules, applications and results on the site.

Upcoming SIR Bowling Tournaments:

DATE	LOCATION	COMMENTS
February 15 – 16	Sacramento / Country Club Lanes	
March 25 – 26	Clayton Valley Bowl	Local area. Come and check out how much it is fun just to watch.

ACTIVITY CHAIRMAN: Dan Weller, 925-935-5510, dweller@astound.net

ASSISTANT CHAIRMAN: Rob Norris, 925-788-6958, robert.norris@natca.net

CAR ENTHUSIASTS



Chick Lowry
Chairman



Car Enthusiasts met in January to attempt a completion of the 2025 event schedule. Unfortunately, we were missing some key players of the activity, so the attempt did not result with an approved schedule. I am preparing a survey of possible events that can be used to complete the schedule at the February meeting.

Some of the suggestions discussed in January include:

Overnight travel trip to Amador County (Ione/Jackson area) to tour the countryside via self-powered (pedal) rail car with an electric motor assist. I'm looking into how much actual human power is required to propel the vehicle. Rail Explorers might be an outstanding adventure.

Another trip to consider is to Redding, CA to attend the Kool April Nights Car Show. A truly overwhelming event that spans 10 days (we would pick a one day, two night) period for the visit.

Another suggestion was the 29th Toyotafest in Long Beach with a combined Rally Drive to get there and back. More effort will be required to make this idea work.

Local possibilities:

Classic Car Racing at Sonoma Raceway is coming in April. Ray Pixton is looking into how we might make this event happen.

The Silicon Valley Auto Show in San Jose is a possibility for February on Feb 21st.

The Fuelfest Car Show at the Alameda County Fairgrounds is an event we haven't visited in the past. It occurs in May on Saturday, the 31st.

Two Rally drives are proposed for 2025 one in April another in October before the rains. Locations TBD as the year progresses.

Our Annual Poker Run will be staged again in June. We will make it a little less difficult to find the check points this year.

I am looking into a driving simulator activity that allows members to virtually drive various Race Facilities. The event location is in the same shopping center where we meet monthly.

Monster Jam (monster truck show) will get a repeat visit if we can find an outside location as the indoor event is kinda Ho-Hum. More review for this event will be required.

The Blackhawk Museum in Danville and the Stock Car Races in Antioch are also possibilities.

We will also attend various local car shows over the summertime months giving members an opportunity to fit them into busy schedules.

We hope to attend all the various Branch 8 events like Ladies Day Luncheons, Oktoberfest, and our own CE Holiday Luncheon/Dinner event in December. We have an abundance of suggestions and will determine which ones the group wants to pursue. We kind of missed our January event opportunity due to my delay in getting the line up ready before our 2025 start.

The next CE meeting will be **Tuesday, February 4th, 2025 at 1 PM**. We will meet in at Round Table Clubhouse Pizza, 2960 Treat Blvd. Concord, CA (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
Assistant Chair - Tom Hodgson - 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 half hour/lunch at noon and play is from 1230pm 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 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.

January 2025 RESULTS

Unfortunately, we only played one time in January as the first Wednesday of the month was the first of January! Our only session, January 21st, had eleven players with two tables of four for partner play and a table of three. The Winners were:

1 st	Dave Dawson	172 points
2 nd	Dennis Mierzwa	172 points
3 rd	Jerry Ward	149 points
4 th	Gerg Ryan	139 points

This month Dave Dawson and Dennis Mierzwa tied for high score with 172 points; a cut of the cards had Dave drawing a two and Dennis an Ace- in cribbage an Ace is worth one, high card of a two wins first place! No one reported a 20 hand this month.

**FEBRUARY CRIBBAGE DATES: FIRST WEDNESDAY
FEBRUARY 5TH AND THIRD TUESDAY FEBRUARY 18TH.**

Chairmen, Dennis Mierzwa: dennis.mierzwa@att.net
Assistant Chairmen, Dan Smith: dns.Ins02@astound.net

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.

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 24th 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

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 or 9256735118 and leave me a message with your contact information. Partners Bridge play is on the 3rd 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

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 December 22, we had a record number of participants. 13 people attended which gave us one table of 5 and two tables of 4. At one table of four, Dennis Mierzwa and Art Fabsits had a quadruple Pinochle for an instant 500 points and the game win. They also won the final game of the day while Terry Mason and Jerry Ward won the other game in a tight battle. In the other table of four, Stan Johnson and guest, Frank Jorden, won all three games. In the table of five, Charlie Kahsen of branch 146 won the first game, Pete McNeill won the second while Jim Barry won the most overall points,

On January 8, we had 10 participants for two five-handed tables. Art Fabsits won the first game and Tom Amann won the second. At the other table, Pete McNeill of Branch 146 won the first game and Jeff morrow (146) won the second.

Stan Johnson, Chairman, 925-938-7016,
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, February 14 and 28, 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 Schram, Activity Chairman, if you have any questions at 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
Dave Davis, Vice Chair: 925-838-1753 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. 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, 925-838-3914

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. Let Chairman Don know of your interest to join existing games or to start new games.

Mexican Train – Currently, we play Mexican Train on the 1st & 3rd Fridays of each month. Thanks to Danny Rinaldi, our connection is via Zoom to

razzle our competitors while playing on a site reserved just for us. Our last two games were won by Terry Norton and Stan Johnson.

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.

Our winner in January with 17 wins is Stan Johnson. In fact he was undefeated in all his matches. Only Dan Weller was able to tie Stan in their match. Don Atwater completed a rare double Skunk in one of his matches. Fun and competitive matches were reported by all.

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
Asst. Chair: Dan Rinaldi, 925-825-0519, danrinaldi944@gmail.com

DOMINOES



Dan Rinaldi
Chairman

We need new players. Call Dan Rinaldi, 925-381-5486 or email danrinaldi944@gmail.com if you are interested in playing.



Co-Chairman: Alan Schulze 925-876-7537
a_schulze@sbcglobal.net

MEXICAN TRAIN DOMINOES



Dan Rinaldi
Chairman

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: Dan Rinaldi, 925-381-5486 or email daniirinaldi944@gmail.com
Asst. Chairman: Terry Norton, 925-798-6023, nortont@sbcglobal.net
Asst. Chairman: Stan Johnson, 925-938-7016, stan.johnson88@gmail.com

BARGAIN BITES



Ron Smith
Chairman

Hello Bargain Bites!!

No new report for February.

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 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
Asst. Chair, Bill Barber, 925-222-0095, billhiker4411@gmail.com

DINE IN #1



Ron Cassano
Chairman

Our January dinner was hosted by Donna Benson. She served Ed Benson's special meatloaf and gravy. We started with appetizers. The meal was rounded out with salad, mashed potatoes, and roasted carrots, and cheesecake for dessert. The wine flowed as usual. A great evening and the start to the New Year.

Ron Cassano, Head Eater

DINE OUT - SINGLE SIRs



Glenn Gilman
Chairman

Our February host, John Vallor, has selected Alborz Persian Restaurant, 1829 Mt. Diablo Blvd in Walnut Creek (just west of California Blvd). The reservation is in John's name for Tuesday, February 4th at 5:00 p.m. Please confirm with John whether you will be attending.

John Vallor 324-5660 jvallor@gmail.com

Last month 15 of us dined at the Old Spaghetti Factory. We celebrated our 21st continuous year as a Sir Branch 8 activity and we hope to welcome, during the year, additional members who enjoy dining monthly with friends. Save the first Tuesday of the month for a good dinner, good friends, and separate checks.

Glenn Gilman, Chairman, 925-798-5155
glennfam@sbcglobal.net
Don Atwater, Asst. Chairman, 925-673-1669
datwater@pacbell.net

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

on Port Chicago Highway and Highway 4 on Thursday, February 27th at 8:30am. Come early.

2025 got off to a slow start. Ocean fishing is closed to almost everything. A very few of us got crab in late December. The ocean was inhospitable for the most part then. Carl Moyer, Dennis Lee, Stan Wong, Zbig Mrozek, and Gordon Linebaugh caught a few small trout at local reservoirs. Tom Kostik continued to catch striped bass. Ken Bellendir celebrated the New Year in Florida boating some red snappers. Brion Beetz, Paul Dubow, Dave Havlik, and Gordon Linebaugh limited on striped bass in the delta. 2024 was not a good year for we fisherfolk, but we remain optimistic and hopeful for a great year ahead.

Carl Moyer, Chairman, carlmarc@astound.net

MIXER



Ray de Wit
Chairman

Our January 2025 event had a great turnout with 14 people, including four couples, showing up (see below). Great conversations and good eats for all. Our February event will be on the usual last Tuesday of the month (**February 25th**) 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) or Alan Curtis (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.



GOLF - 9 HOLE



Mike Frey
Chairman

The 9-hole Golf Group plays at Diablo Hills Golf Course on Wednesdays at 9:00 AM!



Following is a summary of recent play:

Jan 8th, 2025

Twelve golfers teed off starting at 9:00 AM at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a very surprisingly nice "cart path only" morning. Ken Castleman shot the low round of the day with a score of 38. Ken also won the closest to the pin on the 3rd hole with a 23' shot which he then went on to two putt for a par. The group had 13 pars and one birdie by Ken for the round.

Very Nice round Ken!

Lowest Gross Averages for 2024 (with a minimum of 20 rounds for the year)

Rich Knowles – 44.1
Gary Grice – 44.8
Ray de Wit – 45.4

Jan 1st, 2025 No golf due to New Years Day

Dec 25th, 2024 No golf due to Christmas Day

Dec 18th, 2024 Eight golfers teed off starting at 9:00 AM at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a very chilly/sloppy cart path only morning for golf. Pat Hoy shot the low round of the day with a score of 40. Pat also won the closest to the pin event on the 4th hole with an 18' shot which he then went on to two putt for a par. The group had 10 pars and no birdies for the round.

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 Nine Hole Golf link, click on the Signup link. Call or email me or Ray with any questions.

Mike Frey, 9 Hole Golf Chair: mikefrey1784@gmail.com 925-699-1784

Ray de Wit, 9 Hole Golf Asst. Chair: raydewit11@gmail.com 925-948-5962

FISHING - AREA 16



Carl Moyer
Chairman

SIR members and guests are welcome, and indeed encouraged, to participate in fishing trips as well as attend the 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



GOLF - 18 HOLE



David Platter
Chairman

Member Carl Sand finished first net posting (71) while low handicap Steve Burrows used professional talent to score a 79 gross at Blue Rock East.



During the Diablo Creek tournament, Rick Knowles and Garry Palhegyi (also new), tied with scores of 71 at Diablo Creek. The great Don Dennler (72) finished one stroke behind.

Boundary Oak golf range will be completed by April of this year. They believe everyone will be pleased.

Apparently, all legal avenues attempted by the city of Hercules have been exhausted. The 162 acres Franklin Canyon 18-hole golf facilities will be eliminated. Only the driving range will remain. Date for the innovative construction will be announced within a couple of months. Then the new owners will assemble 60 places for recreational vehicles, The value of the RV park will be enhanced by its neighbor John Muir's 484 acres open space This open sanctuary will be altered to add trails, bungalows and overnight tents. Traffic speed on highway #4 will be slowed to 55 mph upon the completion of this area. Swimming pools and cleaning facilities will be included in this project. It shall be called an RV resort. This will be our area's 13th course closing within the past decade.

Boundary Oak should have their driving range ready by early summer (maybe even late March). Management states everyone should be pleased.

Phil Philpot discontinued his SIR membership. He has been an active participant in both the 18 hole and the 9 hole golf that he directed at one time. A painful hip problem dictated his retirement from golf. We will miss this good friend.

Kepler's golf shop in Walnut Creek has smothered any normal approach to helping. I would not recommend embracing this shop as long as they keep promoting their strange system of selling.

David Platter, 925-283-9146

Correspondence: Bill Koski, billkos36@comcast.net
925-672-7650

Membership/Handicap/Data: Buddy May,
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, grichthek@gmail.com, or (925) 681-9191.

PICKLEBALL



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 to join. Nick Maufe, Chairman

PODCASTS



Rich Knowles
Chairman

No new report for February.

Contact the Activity Chair to get the names of the podcasts and the zoom meeting information, so you can join us to discuss upcoming podcasts.



Rich Knowles, grichthek@gmail.com, 925-681-9191.

SIRS AT THE GAMES



Steve Schramm
Chairman

No new report for February.

Please contact Steve Schramm for more information, sschramm01@gmail.com.

HEADS-UP WALKERS



Dan Weller
Chairman

February 2025 Walks

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/>

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

2/13/2025: 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: Rich Burke. Difficulty: E

2/20/2025: 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 Rosin. Difficulty: E

2/27/2025: Walnut Creek: Countrywood C.C. Canal. Meet at the flagpole near Safeway in the Countrywood Shopping Center, corner of Treat & Bancroft. Cafe: Noah's New York Bagels. Leader: Rob Laaback. Difficulty: E

3/6/2025: Lafayette: Lafayette Reservoir. WARNING!! THIS IS OUR MOST DIFFICULT WALK WITH MANY FAIRLY STEEP HILLS. PLEASE SKIP THIS WALK IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS DOING OUR FLAT WALKS. Entrance on Mt. Diablo Blvd., about 1 mile west of Happy Valley Rd. Meet at the EAST (far left) end of metered parking lot. Bring 8 quarters or use a VISA or Master Card. Cafe: Peet's Coffee. Leader: Ron Woods. Difficulty: H

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

SIR HIKERS



Carl Ludwig
Chairman

We have two great hikes lined up for the month of February. Detailed information for interested hikers will appear by the end of January on the Hiker's webpage of the Branch 8 website at <https://www.sirbr8.com/hikers/>.

February 11, 2025 - Easy Hike, Lafayette Reservoir, Lafayette

Hike Description – This is an easy hike on a fully paved trail for a total of about 4 miles and 200 feet of elevation gain. From our parking spot, we first walk West along Mt. Diablo Blvd to the Lafayette Reservoir Park entrance, up Shore Trail to the main parking area, then clockwise around the reservoir. The hike starts at **10:00 AM** from Mt Diablo Blvd and Village Center.

For those of you who wish to park in the Reservoir parking lot (\$5) and skip the initial uphill climb, meet our main group at

10:15 at the head of the Shore Trail next to the fish station/rest rooms, the north end of the main parking lot.

The 2.7-mile reservoir trail has some short uphill climbs. The total hike should take about 2 hours. There are restrooms at the trailhead and along the route near the 1.5-mile marker. Water is not available on the trail.

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 on the corner of Mt. Diablo Boulevard and Village Center, Lafayette, across from the Veteran's Memorial Center. There is FREE PARKING on the South side of Mt. Diablo Boulevard as well as on Mosswood Dr. (1 block south of Mt. Diablo Blvd)

Bring: Hats, water, trekking poles if you use them. Umbrellas if needed.

Optional lunch: at Branch & Brine. 3602 Mt. Diablo Blvd. Branch & Brine is across from Pizza Antica. There is metered parking behind the restaurant.

March Leader: Steve Moore (925) 699-9001, stevmoor@pacbell.net

Hikers Chairman: Carl Ludwig 415-350-7372, cludwig171@gmail.com

February 25, 2025 Hard Hike – Fernandez Ranch, 10:00 a.m.

Hike Description

This is a "lollipop" hike of about 4.3 miles and 700 feet elevation gain. We will start at 10 a.m from the parking lot, where there is a rest room (there are no rest rooms along the trail); cross Rodeo Creek and take the Windmill Trail up to the Pinole Valley multi-use Trail where we will turn right. After about 0.6 miles on relative flat fire trail; then we will take the Franklin Ridge Trail for a short way to the Vista Trail which leads us to a Vista Point that will provide us with a great view of the Bay, Mt Tam, Grizzly Peak, Rocky Ridge and Mt. Diablo. We then retrace our steps down Vista Trail and Franklin Ridge Trail before returning to the trailhead by the Woodland and Windmill Trails.

This link should provide you with our route. [Explore SIRs Hard Hike Feb 25 2025 | AllTrails](#)

Driving Instructions to the Trailhead:

This address takes you to the Fernandez Ranch entrance and parking lot: **1081 Christie Road, Martinez, CA 94553. Parking is ample and free.**

From Walnut Creek area: Head north on Hwy 680 Take exit #53 onto Hwy 4 towards Martinez/Hercules for about 9.5 miles Take the Franklin Canyon Exit #3. Turn left, go under the freeway and merge onto Highway 4 EASTBOUND (yes back towards where you just came from!). In about 1 mile, take the first exit after the Franklin Canyon Golf Course onto Christie Road, the low Fernandez Ranch sign marks the exit for Christie Road.

Use caution; Christie Road is a minor exit off Highway 4. Just after Franklin Canyon Golf Course there is a low sign stating "Fernandez Ranch" on right. The exit is about 50 feet past the sign. It is not well-marked or easy to spot. Fernandez Ranch

parking is 0.7 miles down Christie Road on your right. The road is rough and 15 mph and really a one lane road.

What to Bring – Water, appropriate footwear, trekking poles, hat, and sunblock. This is an open area with limited shade. None of the ascents or descents are very steep.

Optional Lunch – Venue to be confirmed.

Hike Leader – Mike Spink – mikespink@sbcglobal.net, tel: 317 459 9878.

Hike Coordinator and Hiker Chairman – Carl Ludwig, cludwig171@gmail.com, 415.350.7372

\$UMS IN RETIREMENT



As usual we will Zoom with SIR Branch 128 (San Ramon) on the 4th Wednesday of every month at 1:30 PM.

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

Dave Sutton
Co-Chairman

Chair: Tom Henry-Branch 174, tomhenry925@gmail.com
Co-chair: Dave Sutton-Branch 8, davesutn@comcast.net

TRAVELING SIRS

Travel: Do you and your partner like to travel? Do you enjoy doing this with a group? Many of us do. I think that we all recognize that there are rewards and risks in travel. The risks that we see are addressed by guidance provided by State SIR to the Travel Chairman. The rewards are what you receive by being able to travel with fellow SIRS. If this is something you would like to explore, please contact Tom DiGrande, tomdigrande@comcast.net, 925-876-7851.

BARGAIN WINES



No new report for February.

Chairman: Dennis Mierzwa, dennis.mierzwa@att.net

Dennis Mierzwa
Chairman

WINE CELLAR FILLERS



No new report for February.

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, 925-457-7746 (cell)
Scott Graff, Ass't Chair, scottkgraff@gmail.com, 925-552-6097

WINE FINDERS 1



No new report for February.

Wine Finders 1 is a couple's activity that meets every other (even) month starting in February, on the 2nd Thursday, and continuing in April, June, August, and October. We have five tastings a year, and some years we add a 6th over the

Ron Smith
Chairman

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, 925-314-3066

WINE FINDERS 2



The next Wine Finders will be on Feb 13. Nothing to report now as there was no meeting in January.

Ron Cassano. Head Wino, roncassano@gmail.com, 925-944-1238

Ron Cassano
Chairman

WINE FINDERS 3



No new report for February.

**Larry
McEwen
Chairman**



HOTLINE E-MAIL ADDRESS:

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.

WOODPECKERS



Woodpeckers did not meet in January.

The next scheduled meeting is Saturday, February 1st. The meeting should be exciting to see what new projects the guys will bring to work on.

On a side note, the Henpeckers (Woodpeckers ladies auxiliary) will also be having their regular lunch meeting on the 1st.

**Thom
Watkins
Chairman**

Thom Watkins, Chair Woodpeckers,
925-330-3780

HOTLINE EDITORS



Steve Moore
semoore9128@gmail.com



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Chris Wehling
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WRITING YOUR LIFE STORY



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

Tom Hodgson

Chairman

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 or call 925-818-1533 for more information or to join the group

COORDINATOR



Chris Wehling
chriswehling@sbcglobal.net

WEB MASTER



Derek Southern
derek.southern@gmail.com

Note: If you like to know the news earlier than everyone else, volunteer to be a hotline editor. Position now open. Need to have good working experience with MSWord. Contact Chris Wehling for more information. Thanks.



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
(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 / 925-933-0107
3276 McNutt Ave., WC

