



MAY 2025

WHAT IS SIR?

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

Branch 8 Website:

<https://www.sirbr8.com>

"MAKE NEW FRIENDS FOR LIFE"

Editor: Steve Moore

BIG SIR COLUMN



Tom Di Grande

Since the later part of 2024 until now, SIR Branch 8 has had a need for a Chairman and committee to guide the Public Relations/Image/Marketing Activities. I want to say a "Special Thank You" to Greg Konsavage, Dan Crowley, George Vogt and Steve Schramm for "stepping up" to assist in forming and guiding this extremely important committee. Mike Frey, Dan Smith and I attended their first meeting, we will assist, as much as they need us, because the Activity

is "off and running"!

There has always been a lot of discussion on how to increase the membership numbers. It is now time to recognize that as a SIR Branch, we need to do a better job of promoting and marketing SIR. That is why we have added Marketing to the Committee name.

You will start to see more marketing from the state, thru advertising, promoting SIR.

As Big SIR, I am taking the direction of "Let's give it a try"! There is no idea, thought or activity, that should not be discussed for possible "moving on it". A couple more members to serve on the committee would certainly help in organizing and coordination of the activities.

We will need SIR Branch 8 members to volunteer for the upcoming events/activities. The committee is working on participating in festivals, such as the Walnut Creek Art & Wine @ Civic Park, Pleasant Hill Art & Wine @ Crescent Drive and Concord Spring Fest @ Todos Santos Plaza, plus Farmers Markets.

Let's support the Public Relations/Image/Marketing Committee and their Activities.

Be ready! Information will be coming out soon on times, schedules to be filled & locations.

What's the best way to increase the membership?

"Meet and Greet" - Tell them about SIR and Branch 8!

Tom
Big Sir Branch 8

LITTLE SIR SEZ



**Dan Smith
Little SIR**

We are truly fortunate in having a diverse membership with many different backgrounds and interests. These members can share with us life experiences that engage and interest us. Roger Lamm presented an accounting of a trip during which he and his son visited 7 of the 12 very distinct, primitive tribes that reside in the Omo River valley of southern Ethiopia. This was not a Tauck tour. They were tribal people that opted to retain their customs as opposed to modernize (except

that I did see a cell phone hanging on one guy). If you attended the April luncheon, you were exposed to a fascinating accounting in the history of mankind. My question to myself was, "Is this where we came when they say that human civilization is out of the cradle of Africa." In quick review of the tribes that Roger and his son visited, using Roger's description:

With the **Hamer** tribe, Roger's camping host "was a nice man, the tribal chief, who had killed nine people and had three wives." Their coming-of-age ceremony, jumping on the backs of bulls, and women asking to be whipped, was truly directly out of the National Geographic magazine of old.

Nyangaton women "wear adornments of things we throw away, like old watch bands."

Karo members "paint white and black geometric designs on their bodies."

Dasanach "appear to be the poorest based upon their housing, their cattle, and their children's clothing, or lack thereof."

Mursi are famous for their lip plates.

Dorsi weave everything including 20-foot-tall huts, shaped like elephant's heads.

Konso live in "densely populated, stone enclaves."

Next, we shift gears and learn how one of our communities is addressing a current issue. We are pleased to have Sue Noack, mayor of Pleasant Hill presenting about the changes in housing we see happening around us. Sue states, "In an attempt to reduce the lack of housing in the state and more specifically in the Bay Area, many new state mandates and laws have been enacted along with new processes to require cities to plan for more dense housing. The presentation will attempt to explain the processes and the rationale behind them. In addition, the presentation will discuss what affordable housing truly is and the continued difficulties in meeting the demand."

I hope to see many of you at our May luncheon. I think that we can learn from what Sue has to say.

Best,

Dan Smith – Little Sir



End-of-Life Planning Video Access

Last year, Tony de Losada and Phil Trapp organized four sessions to educate SIR Branch 8 members and their families about topics dealing with End-of-Life Planning. These health and lifestyle issues will face all of us later in our lives, and planning for those challenges should begin before we are confronted with difficult and urgent problems.

For the benefit of all, short videos have been created from those two-hour sessions. They capture the essence of the worthwhile information that was presented.

ELP Session 1A – The State of Aging in California
ELP Session 1B – Care Services available in your Home
ELP Session 2 – Navigating Long Term Care
ELP Session 3A – Palliative and Hospice Care
ELP Session 3B – Advanced Care Planning
ELP Session 4A – Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia
ELP Session 4B – Home Care and Assisted Living

To access the videos, you can go to the ELP article on the homepage of our website (Sirbr8.com/ELP). Just click on the link provided to open each video. The videos are approximately 25-35 minutes in length.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Steve Schramm (sschramm01@gmail.com) or Sam Oommen (soommen51@gmail.com).

























SIR BRANCH 8 AUTHOR'S CORNER (where a Branch 8 author can describe their book and why it was written). See below for this month's author.

Oregon Coast: A Family Travel Adventure By David Bushnell, Branch 8

A few years ago on a vacation trip to my home town Brookings, on the southern Oregon Coast, I got curious why there is a railroad street, despite the nearest railroad being a hundred miles away. A little research revealed that not only was there a railroad a hundred years ago, but it was sold to Japan for scrap iron just before WWII! Looking at other town histories was equally fascinating. Who knew that the first town on Coos Bay was Camp Castaway, established by a troop of dragoons when their military supply schooner was beached to keep it from sinking?

Over the next four years I investigated other local histories, both of the early settlers and of the local oceanography, geology, trees, and local bird life, and wrote short accounts on each. For instance, how the blue jay helped the Russian Bering expedition realize they had found North America because it was dissimilar to the European jays. These dozens of accounts formed chapters in a book that was published just last month.

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Next SIR Luncheon:
May 12, 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
Greeters: Bill Guthreau
George Vogt

MENU
Spring Mix Salad
Teriyaki Chicken or
Salmon Teriyaki or
Vegetarian-Vegetable Stir Fry
Pineapple Upside Down Cake

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.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 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

If 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

Join your fellow SIR Branch 8 members in the Community Outreach-SIR Giving Back 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 do. The Community Outreach volunteers had 3 different activities in the month of April Activities included 15 members and spouses sorting incoming donated food, along with another activity having 16 volunteers sleeving apples and onions. For a change of pace, 5 adventurous volunteers went into the field and assisted in a Mobile Pantry, "handing out" fruits and vegetables, at a local food distribution activity.

WE MADE A BIGGER DIFFERENCE!

Upcoming Activities:

Monthly Food Bank Activity

Wednesday, 5/14/2025

Scheduled from 1 to 3pm

Minimum 20 volunteers needed

We have arranged a Warehouse Tour which will show how the incoming food is held for inspection/sorting and how sorted food

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

is stored for community needs.

Scheduled for 12:30pm!! - if you are a new volunteer or have never had the opportunity to visit the "whole operation", join Willie from the Food Bank for this informative tour - it will be well worth your time! Meet in the Volunteer Center.

Future Monthly Food Bank Activity

Wednesday, 6/11/2025

Scheduled from 1 to 3pm

Minimum 20 volunteers needed

Food Bank "Fast Paced" Boxing Activity

Friday, 6/20/2025

Scheduled from 9am to noon

Minimum 12 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 needed donations, at our upcoming scheduled May 12 & June luncheons.

Great Job in filling the barrels- Keep it Coming - THANK YOU!

Look for the SIR "Greeters", the barrels which will be nearby.

Your contributions are 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

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 Voelkel

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

LADIES DAY LUNCHEON

Stay tuned for news about the **Christmas Ladies Day Luncheon** as we get closer to Christmas time.

Buck Cheshire, bjcheshire@comcast.net, 925-787-6149
Chair Ladies Day Luncheon with the assistance of Ms. Paula Murphy

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



Sunshine is saddened to inform the membership that Helen Davis, wife of SIR Raleigh Davis, passed away on April 9th. Services are planned for June 1 in Walnut Creek at St Matthews Lutheran Church.

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



Rich Knowles
Chairman

Membership began sending birthday emails to members during the Covid-19 shut down and has continued daily since. The SIRs below have a birthday this month. Those in yellow are 90+



Be sure to open your birthday greeting.

Dave Allen Bill Barber Jerry Benson Eric Benson Bruce Cousins John Crooks	Dave Dawson Stephen Deness Glenn Gilman Pat Hoy Scott Kirkpatrick Chick Lowry	Jan Persson Ralph Schweinfurth Bob Wheaton Kevin Winkler Leary Wong Larry Yarberry
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ACTIVITY COORDINATION COMMITTEE



Mike Frey



Ken Main



Chick Lowry



Dennis Mierzwa

ACC April 24 Meeting Notes Summary

Mike will ask Meng Horng to present his Photography activity @ the May luncheon.

It is our understanding the AMS system will be augmented to provide notification of new member interests to the AC's and the ACC team.

Chick will forward the latest (i.e. May) Activity List to the orientation team for their use.

The ACC recommends that all the AC's receive business cards before distribution to the general membership.

**Come out and enjoy an Oakland Ballers Baseball Game
with your fellow Sir's**

The Oakland Ballers is a semi pro baseball team that is about to start their second season with a home game at Raimondi Park in Oakland. The Ballers ended its first season in the Pioneer League in second place in a field of twelve teams with a record of 58 wins and 38 losses.

Visit their website at: oaklandballers.com

Branch 171 has several members who are investors in the Ballers and Rich Carmel's son Bryan is Co-Founder and CEO of the team.

The Ballers have extended an offer to the East Bay Sir Branches to enjoy a game at the ball park on Saturday, May 31. First pitch is at 4:30 pm. Sir members and their guests will enjoy a 25% discount on tickets and will be recognized at the game by the public address announcer.

Here's a GREAT opportunity to enjoy a game close-up with family and friends!

The Pioneer League

Since 1939, the Pioneer Baseball League has operated in the Mountain West region as an MLB affiliate league. Beginning in 2021, the Pioneer League became an MLB Partner League with clubs in Montana, Idaho, Utah, and Colorado and has now expanded its geographic reach to California with teams in

Oakland and Davis. The Pioneer League is a true player development league, with players having less than 3 years of professional experience. The PBL is focused on innovation and experimental rules, having initiated the shootout style "Knockout Round" to replace extra innings, designated pinch hitters and pinch runners, and other cutting-edge rules and fan enhancements. The PBL has a 96-game slate from

mid-May through mid-September. For more information, visit: <https://www.pioneerleague.com/landing/index>

Tickets

Single game tickets go on sale beginning Tuesday March 25

Raimondi Park has only 4000 seats - and all of them are good!

Premium Reserve tickets have seat backs; all others are bleacher seats.

Premium tickets sell out quickly, so buy your tickets asap. If you have a group and wish to sit together, one group member should purchase tickets for their group and collect from the individual members.

Buy tickets: <https://tickets.oaklandballers.com/>

Get a 25% discount by using the Sir Promo Code: MAY31SIR

MAY ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

<div> Today < > May 2025 <div> <div></div> <div></div> <div></div> </div> Month </div>						
SUN 27 1pm Intern	MON 28 10am 18 H 12pm Poke 1pm Intern	TUE 29 10am Hike 1pm Intern 3pm Mixer	WED 30 9am 9 Hol 10am Bow 1pm Intern 1pm Oper	THU May 1 8:30am Pic 9:30am He 11am Conti 1pm Intern	FRI 2 8:30am Op 1pm Poker 1pm Intern 1pm Intern	SAT 3 10am Woo 1pm Intern
4 1pm Intern	5 10am 18 H 1pm Intern	6 Car Enthu 10:30am B 1pm Poker 1pm Intern 5pm Dine	7 9am 9 Hol 10am Bow 11am LIVE- 1pm Cribb 1pm Intern	8 8:30am Pic 9:30am He 1pm Intern 1pm Recer 6pm Dine	9 8:30am Op 10am Digit 12pm Ches 12:30pm L 1pm Intern	10 1pm Intern
11 1pm Intern	12 9am BEC r 10am Bool 11:30am SI 1pm Intern	13 10am 18 H 10am Easy 1pm Intern 4pm Podc	14 9am 9 Hol 10am Bow 1pm Comn 1pm Intern 1pm Pinoc	15 HOTLINE i 8:30am Pic 9:30am He 1pm Intern 6pm Dine 6pm Wine	16 8:30am Op 1pm Intern 1pm Intern 6pm Dine	17 1pm Intern
18 1pm Intern	19 HOTLINE i 10am 18 H 1pm Bridge 1pm Intern	20 1pm Cribb 1pm Intern	21 9am 9 Hol 10am Bow 1pm Poker 1pm Intern	22 8:30am Pic 8:30am Fis 9:30am He 1pm Poker 1pm Intern	23 8:30am Op 9am Comr 11:30am D 12pm Ches 12:30pm L 1pm Intern	24 1pm Intern
25 1pm Intern	26 10am 18 H 12pm Poke 1pm Intern	27 10am Hike 1pm Poker 1pm Intern 1pm Writin 3pm Mixer 4pm Podc 6pm Barga	28 9am 9 Hol 10am Bow 1pm Pinoc 1pm Intern 1:30pm \$U	29 8:30am Pic 9:30am He 1pm Intern	30 8:30am Op 1pm Intern	31 1pm Intern

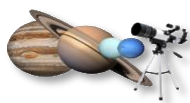
ASTRONOMY



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 "down edited" to language we can all understand.

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



Asst. Chair: Bob Barnes - Bob_Barnes@msn.com

BOCCE BALL - OPEN PLAY



Martin Hawco
Chairman

Open Play Bocce will start Friday May 2nd. 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

OPERA IN THE THEATERS



David Bushnell
Chairman

On May 17, 10:00 AM, we get to see a live transmission of the Saturday matinee of the Strauss opera Salome. This is a new production, with an updating of the Biblical story, but only to Victorian times. As usual, the recorded follow-up performances will be the following Wednesday at 1:00pm and 6:30pm, all at our Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill Century theaters. No reviews available yet, but the Met's summary is below.



Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts his first Met performances of Strauss's white-hot one-act tragedy, which receives its first new production at the company in 20 years. Claus Guth, one of Europe's leading opera directors, gives the biblical story- already filtered through the beautiful and strange imagination of Oscar Wilde's play-a psychologically perceptive Victorian-era setting rich in symbolism and subtle shades of darkness and light. Headlining the new staging is soprano Elza van den Heever as the abused and unhinged heroine, who demands the head of Jochanaan, sung by celebrated baritone Peter Mattei. Tenor Gerhard Siegel is Salome's lecherous stepfather, King Herod, with mezzo-soprano Michelle DeYoung as his wife, Herodias, and tenor Piotr Buszewski as Narraboth.

Chairman: David Bushnell, dbushn@swbell.net, 925-838-3914
Ast. Chairman: position is still open but doesn't pay well.

BOCCE BALL - LEAGUE PLAY



Chick Lowry
Chairman

The Sir Bocce Team has been assembled, and our 1st games will be played on Tuesday evening, April 29th at 6:30 PM. The ten members of the team are Chick and Elaine Lowry, Bob and Laurie Barnes, Bob and Susan Weiss, Dennis Mierzwa, Peter Shapiro, Ray Pixton and Jim Sowell. We all look forward to some fun and a winning season.



We had an 8th place finish in last year's win/loss efforts resulting in an improved seeding this year. As experience increases, so will our win/loss record. Go Sir Bocce!

Chairman: Chick Lowry - Clowry2845@gmail.com

BOOK EXCHANGE



Alan Curtis
Chairman

The book exchange is in the luncheon dining area. We have several new titles that have been donated by our fellow SIRS. Stop by and pick up a book at the next luncheon.



Chairman: Alan Curtis,
alancurtis@sbcglobal.net
Assistant Chairman: Ron Rizzo,
ronbrizzo@gmail.com

Assistant Chairman: Rob Laaback, rlaabak@yahoo.com
Assistant Chairman: Tom Keehn, tom242g@gmail.com

BOOK GROUP



Ron Rizzo
Chairman

For our April meeting, we discussed "*The Eastern Front: The Great War 1914-1918*" by Nick Lloyd, a professor of modern warfare at Kings College, London. The book covers the forgotten part of World War I—the Eastern Front. The author provides a vivid description of the fighting in the various sectors, the use of new weapons like gas, the destruction, the suffering and the dying.



The situation was different here than on the Western Front, with longer front lines, wide open spaces, and terrible weather. At first, the German and Austro-Hungarian armies were fighting the Serbs and the Russians, but things got more complicated when other nations joined in. The book describes in detail how the Germans made a peace treaty with the Russian communists, which in turn led to the formation of the Soviet Union and unprecedented terror. After a lively discussion, our group rated the book 3.4 on a scale of 1 to 5. Most thought the author did an excellent job of research, but many felt the book was a slog to get through.

Our next book is a work of fiction: "*The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*" by James McBride. We meet at 10:30 AM the first Tuesday of each month at the Concord Round Table Pizza on Treat Boulevard.

If you like to read and have lively discussions on 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.

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 2024 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 2025 will be added to the website within a month of each meeting.

BOWLING



Dan Weller
Chairman

The 2024–2025 "winter" league will end on May 15. The summer league starts on May 22. The summer league has three bowler teams and will finish August 27. Low average bowlers, spouses, and friends are welcome. Please contact Dan Weller if you are interested in league or tournament

bowling.

2025 Tournaments: The March tournament was in the local Clayton Valley Bowl. We had 93 bowlers from several different Branches.

SIR State-Wide Tournament Schedules, Applications, and Results Are On-Line: To access the SIR State bowling information, open the state bowling web site at SIRBowling.org. You can find tournament schedules, applications and results on the site.

Upcoming SIR Bowling Tournaments:

DATE	LOCATION	COMMENTS
May 12- 13	Sacramento	The only "SIRS Only" Tournament.
June 5-6	Placerville	Inside a new casino

ACTIVITY CHAIRMAN: Dan Weller, 925-935-5510,

dweller@asound.net

ASSISTANT CHAIRMAN: Rob Norris, 925-788-6958,

robert.norris@natca.net

CAR ENTHUSIASTS



Chick Lowry
Chairman

Car Enthusiasts are ramping up the fun as our event schedule delivery improves. The group participated in the **Sonoma Speed Tour** on **Saturday, April 26th** and went even with threatening showers. The Car Show, racing events and specialty vendor displays promised an excellent opportunity to enjoy "all things Car." Special thanks go to Sir Ray Pixton for taking the leadership role for the event as I was unable to attend this one.

Our planned **Driving Simulation** event scheduled for May 6th will be rescheduled as CE member schedules changed enough to prevent us from reserving a private party session with unlimited access to the simulator machines. An alternate date in May will be selected and we will go have some fun.

We have 12 members and partners signed up for the **May 24th "Rail Explorer"** event in Amador County, where we will travel the countryside in an electrically powered rail cart (you need to pedal to activate the battery powered motor) on rails used during the gold rush era. We will stay overnight in accommodations available in the Jackson, Sutter Creek, Lone Triangle, and Angels Camp. Lodging was a bit difficult to acquire as the holiday weekend was highly booked. The 2-hour ride should be an exciting adventure. A group dinner will be scheduled as part of the event. My hope is we will see a few more members join the event.

June was going to Include participation in the LDL festivities but, it has been modified to be only a December Holiday activity. We do; however, have a **CE Rally Drive Event** scheduled for **Saturday, June 21st**. A drive though the Livermore Valley on Mines Road which will include a luncheon stop at the drive's completion. These events have proven to be a truly enjoyable adventure for CE members and guests. Come join us for the fun. Contact Tom Hodgson or myself to be included.

The next CE meeting will be **Tuesday, May 6th, 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 12:30pm 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 three 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. Cribbage is a coed activity with spouses and partners welcomed. In addition, if you are introducing a potential new member to Sir bring them as a guest to a game you enjoy!

April 2025 RESULTS

Our first April games, April 2nd, had eleven players. The winners were:

1 st	Bob Beitler	226 points
2 nd	Dan Smith	141 points
3 ^d	Bud Grisanti	132 points
4 th	Dennis Mierzwa	121 points

The second session of the month was Tuesday, April 15th, with a very nice turnout of 14 players giving us three tables of four for partner play and a table of two. The scores were good with seven players in three digits. Our top four finishers were:

1 st	Dave Dawson	238 points
2 nd	Dennis Mierzwa	166 points
3 rd	Stan Johnson	140 points
4 th	Greg Ryan	125 points

Stan Johnson had a 24 hand and Dan Smith a 21 hand during the April 15th session.

2025 High Score, Don Atwater 312 points
2024- High Score, Bob Beitler 261 points

Chairmen, Dennis Mierzwa: dennis.mierzwa@att.net
Assistant Chairmen, Dan Smith: dns.lns02@astound.net

BRIDGE



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, 925-586-4863, dawsonfam03@gmail.com

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

To all Partners/Contract Bridge players or single bridge players without a partner. Want to play some bridge?

Perhaps it's been a while and you're a little "rusty"? Partner/contract bridge is now combined into one group. If you don't have a partner, show up and we'll attempt to match you with someone. Already have a partner? Bring him or her as well.

We play at the Round Table Pizza Clubhouse on Oak Grove and Treat. Lunch is from 12 to 1, and the games start about 1 pm. We are usually done by 3:30/4:00. We play on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

Chairman Dave Dawson just needs to know who is coming (partners: either partner can please respond for both partners). Singles, please let me know if you are bringing someone else. Please everyone let me know you are coming by the Saturday before our game.

Questions: Call Dave Dawson at 925-586-4863. Email at dawsonfam03@gmail.com. Thanks. Remember, if you signup, please show up.

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 March 26, we had a great turnout of 13 participants. At one table of four, Art Fabsits and Terry Mason won the first game,



but Dennis Mierzwa and Tom Amann came back to win the second. At the second table of four, Stan Johnson and Pet McNeill (Branch 146) won both games over Jerry Ward and Joel Friedman. At the table of five, Jeff Morrow of Branch 146 won both games.

On April 9, we had 10 participants. At one table of five, Dennis Mierzwa won the first game, and Stan Johnson won the second. At the other table of five, Roy Hodgkinson of Branch 146 won the first game, with Bob Weiss and Charlie Kahsen tying for the second game.

Chairman: Stan Johnson, 925-938-7016,
stan.johnson88@gmail.com

Asst. Chairman: Pete McNeill (Branch 146), 925-858-9666,
petemcgolf@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 May. **We will continue our Chess events on Fridays, May 9 and 23, at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center, 233 Gregory Lane in 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 in 2025, 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 [a 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
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 Chairmen Don or Dan know of your interest to join existing games or to start new games.

Mexican Train – Currently, we play Mexican Train on the 1st and 3rd Fridays of each month.

Thanks to Danny Rinaldi, our connection is via Zoom on a site reserved just for us. Last two games were won by Stan Johnson and Don Atwater. We also play in person on the 2nd and 4th Fridays, with Dan Rinaldi the winner of the last two games.

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 the cards and counts the points.

Greg Ryan and Don Atwater tied for first with 14 wins, followed by Dan Weller & Stan Johnson with 11 wins and Dennis Mierszwa with 10. Others had some good games, but did not reach double figures. Highlights included: every member had a game where they skunked their opponent at least once, with Dan Weller, Greg Ryan, and Don Atwater each having 3 skunks. Also, several "Best Scores" for the year were reported during the month.

Come join us for these games. Or perhaps suggest a new game for this internet connection. SIR members and their partners & guests are welcome.

Chairman: Don Atwater, 925-673-1669, datwater@pacbell.net
Asst. Chair: Dan Rinaldi, 925-825-0519, dmrinaldi944@astound.net

DOMINOES



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

Dan Rinaldi
Chairman

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 12:30 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 danirinaldi944@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



Hello Bargain Bites!!
Bargain Bites is starting a new chapter. As of May 1 Ron Smith is relocating to Henderson, NV., and Ken Main has graciously agreed to take over as Activity Chairman.
He will be assisted by: Ron Maciak, Asst. Chair- Finances and and Bill Barber, Asst. Chair- Restaurant Locations

Please give the new people your support and I sincerely hope you continue your involvement in this great activity. Watch for news about the next event in coming months.

Best wishes to you all and thanks for your support over the past 10 years.

Ron Smith

DINE IN #1



Ron Cassano
Chairman

No new report for May.

Ron Cassano, Head Eater,
roncassano@gmail.com

DINE OUT - SINGLE SIRs



Glenn Gilman
Chairman

Last month, 13 of us dined at the Buttercup restaurant thanks to our host Bill Barber. Our conversations and dinners were wide and varied, with good times for all.

Branch 8 Sirs, available to be single at dinnertime on the first Tuesday of the month, are invited to join our friendly group of guys at a local restaurant. In May, we will be enjoying the Italian cuisine at Mangia Bene, 1170 Arnold Drive, #116, Martinez. We gather at 5 p.m. with dinner shortly after on Tuesday, May 6th, and to retain the friendly atmosphere we arrange for separate checks. Our host will be Rich Knowles and if you plan to attend, let him know in advance. Rich Knowles 681-9191 griethek@gmail.com

Chairman: Glenn Gilman, 925-798-5155, glennfam@sbcglobal.net
Asst. Chairman: Don Atwater, 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



MIXER



Ray de Wit
Chairman

On a warm spring day with the open patio, 11 of us enjoyed our March get-together and the wonderful weather, great conversations and good eats for all. Our event will be on the usual last Tuesday of the month (**April 29th**) at 3:00 pm at Jack's in Pleasant Hill. It was great to see Norm Cox rejoin the group and we welcome a new member, Lynn Oakleaf to the Mixers.

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.

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 at Port Chicago Highway and Highway 4 on Thursday, May 29th at 8:30am.



Come early.

Fishing has been slow for us so far this year. Regulations are the problem. We are optimistic about an opening of areas we can fish in May. Meanwhile, the delta has been slow, but Tom Kostik, Stan Wong, and Harry Sherinian caught stripers and black bass. Tom had to release a 5-foot sturgeon he caught as we cannot keep any sturgeon this year. Ken Bellinder went to Mexico to catch 2 nice sized sierra. Carl Moyer fished for deep water rockfish twice and caught limits of big fish. David Paulson caught a nice trout at Lafayette Reservoir. See PHOTO section for pictures. The only trout for a month at a time when we catch many. So many regulations. AND we now have a salmon season but not much. A few days in June and July. A few more days in August, September and October. Alas, most of us fishermen are too old for Pickleball !!!

Chairman: Carl Moyer, carlmarc@astound.net

GOLF - 9 HOLE

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



April 16th, 2025: Ten golfers teed off starting at 9:00 AM at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a chilly but nice morning for golf. Gary Grice shot the low round of the day with a score of 38. Stan Johnson won the event of the day (as set by Starter Rich Knowles), closest to the pin after the second shot on the 7th hole with a 26 1/2" shot. Stan then went on to two putts for a bogey Stan!!!. The group had 15 pars and two birdies for the round: one each by Gary and Ken Castleman. Welcome to Sam Oommen

who joined us for his initial round of the year!! Nice job Gary, Stan and Ken.

April 9th, 2025: Scheduled trips and "honey-dos" kept several of our regulars away and only 7 golfers teed off starting at 9:00 AM at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a beautiful morning for golf. Will St Clair shot the low round of the day with a "40". The group had 9 pars and no birdies for the round.

April 2nd, 2025: Eleven golfers teed off starting at 9:00 AM at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a beautiful morning for golf. Terry Baldwin shot the low round of the day with a score of 41 just nudging out Will St Clair who recorded a 43. Mike Frey won the event of the day (closest to the pin on the 3rd hole) with a 12' 7" shot. The group had 16 pars and a birdie by George Vogt. Way to go Terry, George and Mike!

Mar 26th, 2025: Thirteen golfers teed off starting at 9:00 AM at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a nice morning for golf. Ken Castleman shot the low round of the day with a score of 38. Gary Grice won the event of the day, closest to the pin with the second shot on the 7th hole with a 32" shot. The group had 15 and one by Mike Frey. Way to go Ken and Mike!

Join us for a round of golf followed by a bite while we rehash the round. To sign up Go to the Branch 8 website and under Nine Hole Golf link, click on the Signup link. Call or email Mike 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

GOLF - 18 HOLE



David Platter
Chairman

Lyme Disease decided to revisit California. Though found in every state but Hawaii, the quantity of ticks in our area has dramatically increased. Now these demons find the western brush a great place to hide. Being bitten by a nasty tick can cause problems. It will also result in long-term complications. Sir golfers sometimes venture into the woods innocently looking for a wayward golf ball, not realizing a dangerous critter is lurking nearby. If bitten, there is a 50% chance the tick will inject poison. If this nip can be discovered in time [about 72 hours] then antibodies have had excellent results. However, a doctor call is necessary, and much can be learned from the internet, [Lyme disease. com]



Branch #19 has moved its monthly meeting to Pittsburgh. Most of their players live in the Brentwood-Pittsburg area and prefer less highway #4 traffic.

Governor Newsom wants to eliminate all RV parks. Franklin Canyon has put their project on hold until this law has been resolved. A wise man once said, "A golf course will remain open until it is closed." [Yes, he is paid for sharing such wisdom.]

The #146 branch golf chairman believes the most important item on their docket is to show others just how well they are organized. Yet, when asked how many players are on their golf roster, he was uncertain. However, he is certain that they will play 85% to 95% of their games at Boundary Oak, but quickly adds he is unsure about the percentage.

Great news! Mark Evanoff is back after a long fairway absence. Garland Bell returns after enjoying several weeks of physical pain. Our Dan Crowley will revisit us with vigor after his winter in Scottsdale, Arizona. Genius Frank Bosworth will use a game structured around a match-play format. This sport pits each player against every other golfer in their foursome. Individual indexes will be used to level competition. This idea came to Frank while on the operating table just before being blurred out by anesthesia gas. True, the shoulder operation was successful. However, while in the recovery room, the nurses had to keep Frank sedated because of the lack of interest in a match-play format.

David Platter

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

At its first meeting in April the podcast activity discussed three podcasts from TED. One was a discussion of the relationships between most popular TV programs and current affairs – basically attempting to show that TV programs reflected what was going on in the US at the time. Another was a look at AI from the perspective of an advocate – a person that is creating as life-like of a copy of a person with personality using AI. He is a strong AI advocate, and we pretty much found the future he sees as scary. And the third podcast was basically advocating people look at themselves and changes themselves for the better - the podcaster believes we can all do that.

At our second meeting we will be discussing three podcasts – two short ones about personal actions and one about where the podcaster sees our society going as linked to our kids and what they are growing up in.



First two are from the ZOE podcast site

1. Cardio exercise: how much do you really need from Sep 28 2023

2. Why eating nuts makes you healthier 20th April 2023

Third one is from a site we have listened to before (but I wasn't able to download this one and listened to it straight from the internet).

3. Ezra Klein show 'Our kids are the least flourishing generation we know of' April 1st 2025

If you want to join us, contact the activity chair (you need the zoom meeting info):

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

SIRS AT THE GAMES



Steve Schramm
Chairman

TIME FOR SF GIANTS BASEBALL!

The San Francisco Giants will play the Philadelphia Phillies in a matinee game at Oracle Park in San Francisco. The Phillies are one of the best teams in the East and recently split a 4-game series with the Giants in Philadelphia.

Our SIR group will see an afternoon game on **Wednesday, July 9**, beginning at 12:45 pm. We will have seats in the shade along the third base line in Section 225. The cost is \$75 per ticket. Your family and friends are encouraged to attend with us.

We need to purchase our tickets soon to avoid the dynamic pricing that increases ticket prices during the summer. So, please contact me soon with your **firm commitment** to purchase tickets and attend the game.

Please send an email to Steve Schramm, "sschramm01@gmail.com" to reserve your seats. This game promises to be a fun and exciting SIR outing.

MODEL TRAINS



Rich Knowles
Chairman

The Model Train activity has a treat coming to a future lunch. One of our current members is in the final stages of arranging for a four-foot square operating model train layout to come to our luncheon and be running on one of the tables. The earliest this will happen is June (or maybe later). Anyone in the branch interested will be able to come by, see the layout, and talk with us

about model trains.

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



HEADS-UP WALKERS



Dan Weller
Chairman

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/>

4/24/2025: Walnut Creek: YV canal Walnut Ave. Take Ygnacio Valley Rd. Turn South on Walnut Ave (do not turn on Walnut Boulevard). Go 0.4 miles past the second traffic light (Wiget) and turn left on Naranja Drive. Park there and walk back to Walnut Ave. The trail starts a few feet from Naranja. Cafe: Whole Foods - Oak Grove / Ygnacio Valley Road. Leader: Jim Sowell. Difficulty: E

5/1/2025: Clayton: Clayton Library. Meet at the library parking lot, 6125 Clayton Road. Cafe: Sweet Bakery. Leader: Manuel Dominguez. Difficulty: M

5/8/2025: Concord: Iron Horse, Willows Shopping Center. Willows Shopping Center, meet at the south corner near the new Lazy Dog Restaurant. Cafe: Panera Bread Cafe. Leader: Phil Trapp. Difficulty: E

5/15/2025: 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: Rich Burke. Difficulty: E

5/22/2025: Moraga: Lafayette / Moraga Trail SMC staging area. Meet at the staging area on St. Mary's Road approx. 1/10th mile north of the entrance to St. Mary's College. Cafe: Peet's Coffee. Leader: Rich Rosin. Difficulty: M

5/29/2025: 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: Rob Laaback. Difficulty: M

6/5/2025: 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: Ron Woods. Difficulty: E

CHAIRMAN: Dan Weller, 925-939-5510, dweller@astound.net
ASSISTANT CHAIR: Phil Trapp, 925-963-1819, ptrapp@sbcglobal.net

SIR HIKERS



Carl Ludwig
Chairman

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

May 13th, 2025, Easy Hike: Pine Canyon to Castle Rock, Walnut Creek – 10:00 a.m.

Hike Description - An easy, mostly flat, out and back hike along the route of the old stage road up Mount Diablo. The hike is on pavement through the Castle Rock Recreation Area, gravel to the dam, then sandstone most of the rest of the way, so not a problem if wet. The hike is woodsy with views of the hills surrounding the valley. These build to the sandstone crags of Castle Rock.

We will go 1.4 miles to the State Park boundary with a couple of fairly dry stream crossings toward the end (so 2.8 miles round trip). Elevation gain is 200 feet, mostly in the climb around the dam. There are restrooms ¼ mile into the hike.

Directions: Take Ygnacio Valley Road east to Oak Grove Road. Turn right (south) and go 1 mile to the roundabout. Continue straight which becomes Castle Rock Road and follow it 1.7 miles to the end.

Hike leaves from the trailhead at **10:00 a.m.**

Optional lunch will be at the Burger Lounge, Orchards Shopping Center, 2920 Ygnacio Valley Rd, Walnut Creek, CA 94598.

Hike Leader: Martin Simmons 925-586-2704
martin@infinitylane.com

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

May 27, 2025 Hard Hike – Shell Ridge Loop via Hanna Grove Trail, 10:00 a.m.

Hike Description: This is a moderate hike of approximately 5 miles, and it includes 900 feet of elevation gain. Starting at the Hannah Grove Trail (which is a private road at that point), we continue past Borges Ranch to the Briones-Mt. Diablo Trail, heading west, which we then take to the Ginder Gap Trail. We return on the Sulphur Creek and Costanoan trails, back to Hannah Grove. Shell Ridge in the springtime is a riot of fresh green colors and wild flowers. There are no restrooms or water at the trail head.

Directions to Hike: From 680, take the Ygnacio Valley Rd. exit and head east. Turn right on Walnut Avenue (NOT Walnut Blvd., which you'll pass by earlier). When you come to the traffic circle, take the first exit onto Castle Rock Road. Go past Northgate High School and then turn right on Comistas Drive. Continue west on Comistas past Hannah Lane (aka Hanna Grove Trail on some maps) and find a place to park on the street. **Note:** Parking on school days is restricted to areas west of Comistas Ct. (on the left) and 2910 Comistas Dr. (on the right). After parking on Comistas, we will meet at the head of Hannah Grove Trail (aka Hanna Lane on some maps) where it meets Comistas Dr. and we will walk together uphill to the Hannah Grove Trailhead. (See black arrow on map below.)

Bring: Hats, water, sturdy hiking boots, trekking poles.

Optional Lunch: Burger Lounge, 2920 Ygnacio Valley Road, Walnut Creek, in the Orchards Shopping Center, at the corner of Ygnacio Valley and Oak Grove roads. (Head back on Castle Rock Rd., which becomes Oak Grove Rd. at the traffic roundabout. Take Oak Grove to Ygnacio, turn left on Ygnacio, and then turn right into the shopping center. Continue heading right until you come to Burger Lounge.)

Hike Leader: Carl Ludwig, 415-350-7372.
cludwig171@gmail.com

AllTrails Map:

https://www.alltrails.com/explore/recording/afternoon-hike-7f3fcfe-778?p=1&sh=ls05uy&utm_medium=map_share&utm_source=alltrails_virality

Hike Coordinator: 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

Romance of the Rhine & Mosel River Cruise July 6-21, 2025. From Basel Switzerland to Antwerp Belgium. Castles, towns and sights such as Lorelei Rock. Stops in Strasbourg, Speyer, Boppard, Bernkastel and Trier, Cochem, Bonn, Nijmegen, Willemstad, and Antwerp. Prices start at \$6,345pp including round trip air from SFO. Possible single supplement at +\$895. Pre-trip 4day to Lucerne for \$1,295pp. 3day Post-trip to Burges \$995pp. Contact Jim Hohenshelt, 408-394-7226 or Roy 408-735-8765 Branch 62

29 Day Northern Lights Grand Adventure South Hampton (London) to Ft. Lauderdale Sept. 27 – Oct. 26 2025. Prices range from \$3797 - \$8264 pp. depending on cabin. Is seeing the Northern Lights and visiting Norway on your bucket list? This is the trip for you join us on the Emerald Princess for a 29-day cruise. Five stops in Norway, additional stops in France and Spain. Additional costs, airfare, trip insurance & \$285 port taxes. Contact kathig@shipsandtrips.com

Inside Vietnam Hanoi, Halong Bay, Hué, Hoi An, Dalat, Nha Trang, Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) Small SIR group of 16. **Oct. 19, thru November 7, 2025. Starting at \$3,795 including air. Pre-trip to Hill Tribes of Vietnam 6 nights from \$1,095 and post trip to Cambodia Angkor Wat 5 nights from \$1,1695.** Make your reservation by calling OAT Travel and be sure to use the **SIR Group Code is G5-30339** 1-800-955-1925. There is still room on this great trip. For more information **from a SIR contact** Milt Smith Branch 146, 925-285-2897 miltsmith549@gmail.com LINK <https://www.oattravel.com/trips/land-adventures/asia/inside-vietnam/2021/itineraries> [Vietnam Tour | Hanoi to Saigon | Overseas Adventure Travel](#)

Australia/New Zealand Jan 7, - Jan 25, 2026. Australia: Cairns, Great Barrier Reef, Sydney Arrowtown, Queenstown, Rotorua, Auckland. **New Zealand:** Te Anau. **Starting from \$6,495 including air. Free Single Supplement. Pre-trip 5 nights to Melbourne & the Outback from \$2,395. Post trip 4 nights to Fiji from \$1,995. SIR Group Code is G5-30339. Contact Glenn Breslin glennbreslin@gmail.com Branch 146 for more information. Or call direct 1-800-955-1925 Be sure to use the SIR Group Code. LINK [New Zealand Tour | Australia & New Zealand | Grand Circle Travel](#)**

South Korea & Japan: Temples, Shrines & Seaside Treasures. Korea: Seoul, **Japan:** Tokyo, Toba, Kyoto. **April 1-April 26, '2026. Starting from \$7,495 including air. Pre-trip Mongolia:** Ulaanbaater & the Gobi Desert. **9 nights from \$1495. OR...Vietnam:** Hanoi & Halong Bay Cruise 5 nights from \$1,495. **SIR Group Code G5-30339** For more information contact Glenn Breslin glennbreslin@gmail.com Branch 146. LINK [South Korea and Japan | Travel to East Asia | Overseas Adventure Travel](#)

BARGAIN WINES



No new report for May.

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

Dennis Mierzwa
Chairman

WINE CELLAR FILLERS



No new report for May.

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, Asst Chair, scottkgraff@gmail.com, 925-552-6097

WINE FINDERS 1



Ken Stehr

We had a grand time at our April Tasting with our gracious hosts David Glazer and Helen Choi. David had the pizza oven fired up and Helen arranged for delightful weather and a nearly full moon rise. The appetizers were plentiful and delicious. We were happy to

welcome two new members, Roger and Eveline Lamm, and saddened to bid farewell to Ron and Judy Smith for their impending relocation to Henderson, NV.

The wine selection for the evening was *Dry Riesling* of which there were 8 entries. The tasting came down to discerning the best balance of fruit and tartness. The three winners were very close in points scored:

1. Chateau Ste. Michelle Riesling 2023
2. Arthur Metz Vin D'Alsace Riesling 2023
3. Dr. Heidemanns Riesling Dry



Our next meeting will be June 12, 2025. Until then, Cheers!

See picture of Ron and Judy Smith receiving a gift for their organizing the tastings for the last 6 years in the PHOTOS section.

Ken Stehr, Chair, Wine Finders 1, kcstehr@comcast.net
Rob Laaback, Asst. Chair, Wine Finders 1, rlaabak@yahoo.com

WINE FINDERS 2



Ron Cassano
Chairman

We had a Pinot Noir tasting on April 15, Hosted by Ron Maciak. As usual, great fellowship and food. Would you believe, Ron Maciak brought home the winner. A 2020 Thistle and Quail Fist Leaf Collection. Carl Meier brought in a close second with a 2022 Wente. Our new member Tony Klemens came in third with a 2022 Chalk Hill. All wines were good and the competition was close. Another "fun" time.

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

WINE FINDERS 3



Larry McEwen,
Chairman

No new report for May.

WOODPECKERS



Thom Watkins
Chairman

The Woodpeckers met on Saturday, April 5. Greg Konsavage brought us the project of the day. He needed to make a replacement cutting board for his kitchen. It was a slide-in/out-of-the-cabinet cutting board (unheard of in today's kitchens). We cut nine 1-inch-wide strips from a birch board that Greg purchased on sale from Rockler Woodworking and Hardware in Concord (see photos). The cutting board will be "bordered" in cherry wood.

Next month, the project will be to glue-up the strips and to get them ready for sanding. That meeting will be at Bob Wheaton's shop.

Our after-meeting brunch consisted of Greg-grilled brats, baked beans, and a yummy chocolate cake baked with love by Bob's wife, Peggy.

Thom Watkins, Chair Woodpeckers, 925-330-3780

WRITING YOUR LIFE STORY



Tom
Hodgson

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 care actually care to listen. The stories also trigger

memories for us. Someday your kids or grandkids may also find them interesting.

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.



**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.

HOTLINE EDITORS

Steve Moore
semoore9128@gmail.com



David Glazer
slwcylst@gmail.com



Chris Wehling
chriswehling@sbcglobal.net

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!



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.**



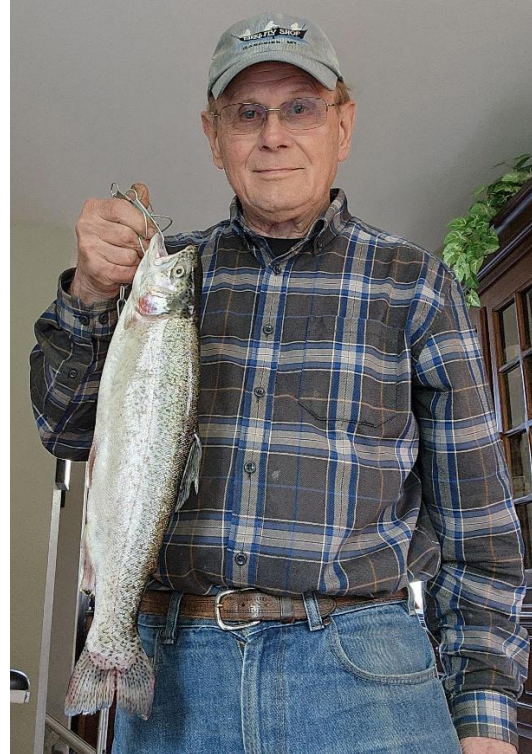
Visitors/Callers

So that No One Faces Cancer Alone
www.cancersupport.net / 925-933-0107
3276 McNutt Ave., WC

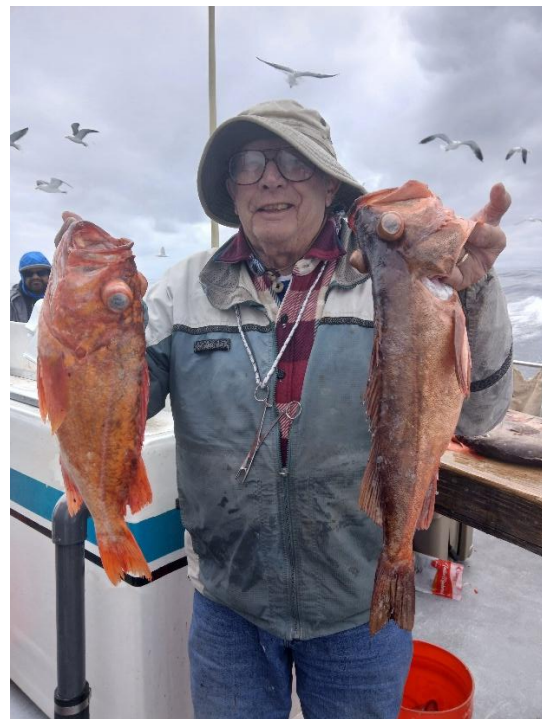




Ron and Judy Smith receiving a gift for their organizing Wine Finders 1 tastings for the last 6 years.



David Paulson caught this nice rainbow at Lafayette Reservoir.



Carl Moyer caught these nice rockfish near the Farallon Islands.