



WHAT IS SIR?

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

Branch 8 Website:

<https://www.sirbr8.com>

August 2025

"MAKE NEW FRIENDS FOR LIFE"

Editor: Steve Moore

BIG SIR COLUMN



Tom DiGrande

Is the year half empty or half full? July is the middle of the year. Half of the year is gone; half of the year is still to be. SIR Branch 8 can flip back through the pages of the year, and they may feel wasted. But look forward, and we still have plenty of opportunity to make a difference. This should be the outlook for SIR Branch 8. We have taken on challenges, addressed issues, and made changes. The membership roster has been updated correctly and stabilized. The

Website and Hotline have been cleaned up, along with the information updated. There has been greater member participation in filling open BEC and Chairman positions. Activities have always been at the forefront and are a strong leg of SIR Branch 8, with additional activities continuing to be added. All Activity Chairmen should be extremely proud of their leadership! Recognition awards have been reviewed and updated, with a committee in place to help guide the process. Scheduled "special" activities: LDL activity has been modified based on the membership - let's see how it works out! I am sure there are other items as well. So, has the first half of the year been productive? That remains to be seen 🤔. Everyone will have their own opinion.

"Onwards." Let's give it a try!

Thanks for your continued support and participation.

Tom DiGrande, Big Sir Branch 8, tomdigrande@comcast.net, 925-876-7851

LITTLE SIR SEZ



**Dan Smith
Little SIR**

Those of us that attended the July luncheon listened to Debora Allen explain BART's fiscal cliff issues. Ridership has recovered to a maximum 47% of what it was pre-pandemic. Costs have risen without regard to the decline in ridership. The difference in the budget has been covered by Federal emergency funding sources. Now that these sources will end and any inclination to obtain fiscal relief through a proposition or the like, will be challenging.

Debora stated that early polls indicated that this would fail. So, what is BART doing about this? There are no easy answers. I searched online and found their website, <https://www.bart.gov/about/financials/crisis>. Basically, I saw what Debora described. They recognize the issues. But they are far apart in seeing a resolution; I see the impasse. Including, what is being done to mitigate labor costs? BART makes the case that their cost per vehicle revenue hour, a standard shared by this industry, compares very favorably with all agencies throughout the country. The model (business plan) that they require needs to be restructured to the present day. Going forward, it is great not to be wanting, but so many public sectors are not good at saving for a rainy day – like a pandemic – a really, rainy day.

We did not get to see Debora's supporting material. We had a problem with our new laptop; in fact, it failed for the second time. I did what damage control I could do with our guest speaker. Debora knew what she wanted to say and moved on. I will suggest that Debora was drawing upon the material that is in BART's website, see above.

In the meantime, our powers to be behind our laptop (Tom DeGrande, Derek Southern, Garland Bell) made the very rational decision to return it to Costco and obtain a laptop from Best Buy. We should not be having issues with the laptop in the future. Can we move on, now?

I saw the pictures that Dan Crowley took of the Bargain Bites at Maguey Mexican Restaurant. That was a great turnout, and I thank Ken Main, Ron Maciak, and Linda Gawura for arranging this event. This was Ken's first offering as activity Chairman. Hopefully, its success will induce Ken and all to plan more of these events.

In August we welcome Dawn Manley and Willie Mendoza of the Food Bank of Contra Costa and Solano. Many of you already know the organization very well. Of interest, the Food Bank is experiencing their own rainy day in the form of reduced Federal aid. They may also be seeing in reduction in demand because of the Trump Administration's aggressive immigration policies. I hope that they explain this to us.

Dan Smith, Little SIR, dns.lns02@astound.net, 925-588-6792



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Next SIR Luncheon:
August 11, 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: Ron Luttringer and
Chris Wehling

MENU

Spinach Blue Cheese Salad

Pesto Chicken
or
Pesto Sole Roulade

Vegetarian-Asiago Stuffed
Gnocchi

Strawberry dessert

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

NOTE: The monthly activities calendar is now accessed from the SIR Branch 8 website at [Calendar | SIR Branch 8](#). If this link does not work for you, please enter <https://www.sirbr8.com/calendar/> into your web browser. The reason for this change in the Hotline is that the calendar did not show all activities and was not interactive. When you click the link to the calendar on the website, you will see the entire month. To get more details of an activity on any given day, click on activity and a pop-up will show more details.



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.

SIR STORE



**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 & COMMUNITY OUTREACH



Public Relations Chair: Greg Konsavage

COMMUNITY OUTREACH-SIR GIVING BACK

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. Sign up for any of the activities.

Let's get more of the spouses involved this year!! 🙌

Have you asked your spouse or partner to join us??

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



Tom Di Grande

participate

The Community Outreach volunteers participated in 2 activities for the Food Bank in the month of July.

At our regularly scheduled monthly activity, we had 14 volunteers and 3 spouses sleeving apples 🍏, oranges 🍊 and onions 🧅, over 3600 lbs. Outstanding Effort! 🙌

Our 2nd activity in July, was participating in a Food Bank Mobile Pantry Distribution in Walnut Creek. A smaller group of 10 volunteers (8 members & 2 spouses), assisted in distributing apple juice, pasta & sauce, beans, a sleeve containing potatoes, onions, apples, a bag of nectarines, a bag of peaches and frozen catfish filets to over 115 appreciative families. Quite a Day! 🙌

WE MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE!

Upcoming Activities:

Monthly Food Bank Activity

Wednesday, 8/13/25

Scheduled from 1 to 3pm

Minimum 15 volunteers needed.

Monthly Food Bank Activity

Wednesday, 9/10/25

Scheduled from 1 to 3pm

Minimum 15 volunteers needed.

"Fast Paced" Boxing Activity

Food Bank of Contra Costa & Solano

Friday, 9/19/25

Scheduled 9am to noon

Minimum 12 volunteers needed

ALL ACTIVITIES- PLEASE:

No open toe shoes, masks are optional and wear your SIR Red Volunteer T Shirt. Please arrive 15 min prior to scheduled shift starting time 🙌

PLEASE WEAR YOUR RED VOLUNTEER "T" SHIRT TO THE AUGUST LUNCHEON!! 🙌

We will continue to provide Food Barrels 🗑 for needed donations, at our upcoming scheduled August 2025 luncheon. Great Job in filling the barrels. We now have the 3 SIR Branches having lunch at Boundary Oaks participating in this program. Keep it Coming - THANK YOU! Look for the SIR "Greeters", the barrels 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.

Speakers for the August Luncheon Will Be From the Food Bank (Dawn Manley & Willie Mendoza) -

"Uniform of the Day" - Red Volunteer "T" Shirt!

"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 griethkek@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



Christmas Wonderland Gala
The planning committee has met and planned a delightfully fun, early evening Christmas Gala for you and yours on Monday December 8, 2025, from 4:00 to 8:00 p.m. at the Boundary Oak Golf Course. **Note: For Monday night NFL watchers, the 49ers are on a bye that night.**

This year there will be a social hour with hors d'oeuvres and a dinner that will include pear and walnut salad and your choice of filet mignon, baked salmon, or lasagna. There will be copious amounts of door prizes, dancing, and a DJ providing music and taking requests for seasonal or popular music of your choice. The cost this year is \$75.00 per person. Given today's economy, this is a very reasonable cost for a dinner, entertainment, and prizes.

We're halfway to Christmas 2025. It's not too early to make your reservations for the Christmas Wonderland Gala! Mark your calendar for December 8th and reserve a place at the table for you and your guest! More information to follow.

Cheers, LDL Planning Committee
LDL Chair: Buck Cheshire, bjcheshire@comcast.net

OKTOBERFEST



Leo Dominguez



Ron Maciak



Thom Watkins

OKTOBERFEST 10/16/2025 CONCORD COMMUNITY PARK (COWELL PARK) 12-4 PM

October will be here before you know it...and you know what that means: OKTOBERFEST!

You will be able to sign up at the Luncheons. Just visit the "Oktoberfest Table." The process is quite simple: write your name and the names those that will be attending with you the way that you would like them to be printed on the name tags. As an alternate way to sign up, each member will be receiving a series of Constant Contact emails that will allow you sign up online, akin to the way you sign up for the monthly Luncheons.

The cost will be \$35 per person. Make checks payable to Leo Dominguez (not Branch 8). Mail your checks to Leo Dominguez, 51 Briarwood Ct., Walnut Creek, CA 94597. Note: checks will not be deposited until October 14, thereby allowing for last-minute situations that may require you to cancel. If you have signed up and subsequently find that you will not be able to attend, notify us and we will shred your check or return it to you at your request.

The menu will consist of typical Oktoberfest fair: Oktoberfest beers (including non-alcoholic), German food stuffs, plus wine, soda, and water. Keep in mind, Oktoberfest is primarily a beer celebration!

No event can be successful without volunteer help. Likewise, Oktoberfest will not be successful without your help. The Committee is asking you to volunteer to help make it successful. There are plenty of jobs to go around, and we invite not just members, but spouses, partners, and friends as well. This is a way for new members to get involved in the Branch and to make new friends (...for life).

There will be a Volunteers' Meeting shortly before the Event. We will announce the date, time, and place later. At the end, you will be able to look around, pat yourself on the back, and say to yourself (or out loud), "I made this a success!"

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

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 highlighted in yellow are 90+.

Be sure to open your birthday greeting.



Dick Hixson	Paul Lederer	Bill Adler
Dan Weller	Dave Perkins	Rick Lasky
Zebi Kerkes	Allan Tobias	Jim Smrha
Bob Samson	Jack Schweitzer	Ed Myrtle
Derek Southern	Thom Watkins	Randy Nelson
Bob Hislop	Darryl Henry	Leo Dominguez

ACTIVITY COORDINATION COMMITTEE



Mike Frey



Ken Main



Chick Lowry



Dennis Mierzwa

ACC July 28 Meeting Notes Summary

Mike agreed to send out new member information to ALL AC's, instead of each ACC member handling this task.

We plan to announce that SIR Business Cards for the AC's are available to pick up at our luncheon(s). We hope the AC's

will use these cards to promote their activity and recruit new members.

The ACC will begin the BR8 wellness check at the end of August. First step is to ask all AC's to verify their participant list by the end of August. Then we will ask Dan Weller to compare AMS participation to the Luncheon participation list and provide a report for BEC by the end of October.

Mike to remind Tom DiGrande to get a table set up prior to the BEC meeting for David Bushnell's new magazine activity.

August AC presentation is on Community Outreach. September will be Chick Lowry's Car Show.

SIR BIOGRAPHIES: No Biography this month.

SIR BRANCH 8 AUTHOR'S CORNER (where a Branch 8 author can describe their book and why it was written). This month there is a Drabble from Bob Poirier. See below.

A drabble is a flash fiction story of 100 words (not including the title). Even though the form is short, it still should have the basics of a good story. It should have a beginning, middle, and end, and include conflict and resolution.

Below is a science fiction drabble, "The Visitor," written by Bob Poirier.

Bob is happy to provide an opinion on questions you might have about writing or self-publishing.

The Visitor

The Anunnaki's first mistake was punching in New Guinea instead of New York. His second was transposing the year from 1960 to 1690. Too many glasses of Sumerian wine, he thought. His spaceship shimmered away before he could correct the error. He ended up in western New Guinea dressed in a crisp blue suit, with a satellite laser remote control, ready to conquer the world. Unfortunately, the Asmat tribe he encountered conked him on the head, roasted him on a spit, and ate him. The disappointed partakers groused he tasted like chicken, and his shrunken head looked weird.

SIR BRANCH 8 Distinguished Service Award

NOTE: The Branch 8 award is made in the memory and spirit of Ed Benson, the late SIR State President and Big Sir of Branch 8.

The Distinguished Service Award (DSA) is an award for significant and extraordinary contribution by a member at the Branch level. This award provides a high level of recognition to members second only to the Honorary Life Member (HLM) Award for their service to SIR. As indicated in this document, the DSA is initiated by a Sponsor's nomination, reviewed by the Branch Awards Committee (BAC), recommended by the Branch Executive Committee (BEC), and approved by the Big Sir.

Criteria for Selection

This award is the second highest award in SIR after the Honorary Life Member (HLM) award. It is to be earned and bestowed upon a member who has significantly contributed to the success of the branch through a major singular contribution or multiple contributions over a period of years. As demonstrated by Ed Benson, the member's contribution(s) should show willingness to volunteer, an effort to make positive change, and creation of a sustainable result.

The following factors should be considered, with most met, for the nomination and approval of the DSA award:

- Been a Sir member in good standing for 3 or more years
- Demonstrated contributor to the Branch Executive Committee (BEC)
- Chaired one or more activities and participated in several Branch activities
- Initiated and established a new branch activity
- Offered new ideas or approaches for the management and/or operation of the Branch
- Demonstrated a history of volunteering or contributing to Branch objectives
- Acknowledged by peers as a positive and constructive contributor to the Branch
- Ensured that his contribution(s) is lasting and sustainable over time

NOTE: A DSA award may be authorized for a Honorary Life Member (HLM) when justified by exceptional contributions made after the HLM award. Additionally, the recipient of a DSA award may earn an HLM award.

Procedure for Approval

Sponsor – Any member of Branch 8 can sponsor another member for a Distinguished Service Award (DSA). The Sponsor must complete the DSA application (Form 45A) that describes the nominee's branch history and significant contribution(s). The DSA application is given to the Big Sir to begin review, processing of the award application.

Big Sir – Requests that the Branch Awards Committee reviews the DSA application and the nominee's contribution against the DSA criteria shown above. The Big Sir will also ensure that the award nomination process is communicated to branch members at least twice per year, and posted on the Branch 8 website.

Branch Awards Committee (BAC) – Annually, the Big Sir appoints this Standing Committee. It is comprised of 5 current members (3 BEC members including 2 directors and either the Membership Secretary or the Asst. Membership Secretary), 1 branch member with at least 5 years with the branch, and 1 long serving member with at least 10 years with the branch. This "experienced" member will be the Chairperson of the BAC.

The Committee will consult with the Sponsor as needed, and approve or reject the application. At least 3 BAC members must support the Award application for its preliminary approval, and submission to the full BEC. If not approved by the BAC, the application goes back to the Big Sir for communication of this result to the Sponsor.

Branch Executive Committee (BEC) – The BEC reviews the DSA Award application (Form 45A) in closed session (i.e. only BEC members present). At least 2/3 of the BEC members present must vote by secret ballot to approve the nomination and recommend it to the Big Sir. The Branch Secretary records the vote, and reports the results to the BEC.

Big Sir – Provides the final review and approval of the DSA application. If the DSA Award application is not approved, the Big Sir will notify the Sponsor. If the Award application is approved, the Big Sir will notify the Sponsor and Awardee, ask the Branch Awards Committee to obtain the DSA lapel pin and certificate, and organize the Award presentation to be made at a future SIR luncheon meeting.

The Membership Secretary will ensure that the DSA Award will also be noted in the Hotline and on the front page of the SirBr8 website. The Membership Secretary will ensure that DSAs are recorded on the SIRBr8 website via a drop down menu. Form 21 will be used to request the appropriate DSA award materials.

Award Format

The award presentation will be made by the Big Sir at an upcoming monthly luncheon. The DSA lapel pin and DSA certificate will be given to the new DSA recipient.

NOTE: A branch is only allowed to have a specific number of DSA recipient based upon the size of the branch. A chart regarding DSA Award availability is provided in the SIR Policy Manual under Policy 10 – Sir Awards and Certificates. After 5 years, the recipient becomes a Senior DSA Awardee and does not count against the branch DSA total.

BRANCH APPLICATION

SIR, INCORPORATED

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

For Branch Use in nominating a member of the Branch to receive this prestigious recognition

Date: _____

MM/DD/YYYY

The Branch Executive Committee of Branch No. _____ has received this application to have the SIR, Incorporated Distinguished Service Award conferred upon Sir *- _____.

The member proposed to receive this award has been a member for three or more years and has performed outstanding and exceptional service in the execution of his duties and responsibilities.

The specific facts concerning his duties and responsibilities which the BEC shall consider that warrants the granting of this honor are:

There are now _____ Members in this Branch. Of these, there are now _____ DSA awardees. Before approving this form, confirm from the table in Policy 10 that the resultant total number of Active Branch DSAs conforms with the revised rules. This is exclusive of the DSA the Branch Big Sirs have been awarded for their leadership role of the Branch. and the DSA awarded to the Area Representatives. These DSA awards do not count towards the Branch limit.

Proposed Date for the presentation of the award: _____

Respectfully submitted, _____

Printed Name
Date

Signature

Attested by _____ Big Sir



Main points to consider when completing the Branch Distinguished Service Award Application

- Applicant needs to have clearly earned this award over at least a three-year period.
- Clearly earned it through exceptional and extraordinary service Steps forward whenever the need arises
- Would be recognized by his peers to have earned it
- Applicant should have made improvements for the betterment of the Branch.
- A table has been added to make it easier for you to list the dates of the important work your applicant has accomplished. This will augment your cover letter. Remember accomplishments in his personal life and with other organizations should not be included.
- Note: The authority to approve the DSA award is granted by the SIR State Board to the Big Sir and his BEC and its purpose is to recognize outstanding performance and exceptional service by a member of the Branch.

Other Data that Supports this Application	Dates
Other Contributions to the Branch:	



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



BOOK GROUP



**Ron Rizzo
Chairman**

In July the Book Group discussed "James" by Percival Everett, a Pulitzer-Prize-winning novel that reimagines Mark Twain's "Adventures of Huckleberry Finn" from the viewpoint of the slave Jim. Our members unanimously found the book to be very well written, but opinions differed after that. Some felt that the character of Jim was unbelievable in his erudition and knowledge, others felt the author was pushing a particular agenda too hard, and some just felt that even though it had some flaws they didn't detract from their enjoyment of the book at all, particularly with the author's vivid characters and frequent humor. Overall, the group rated the book a 3.6 out of a possible score of 5.

Our next book is a work of non-fiction—"The Hank Show: How a House-Painting, Drug-Running DEA Informant Built the Machine That Rules Our Lives" by McKenzie Funk. The Book Group meets 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 good discussions about the books you have read, you should think about joining our group. If you are interested, please contact our Chairman, Ron Rizzo, at ronbrizzo@gmail.com. The full list of book to be read during the year is on the SIRs website, along with a list of books read during the prior year.

BOCCE BALL - LEAGUE PLAY



**Chick Lowry
Chairman**

Our League Bocce Team play has improved following our latest BYE week and we won all 3 games played. The team effort provided 3 wins for the evening with scores of 12-5, 12-2 and 12-6 making the 3-win evening a positive reinforcement for team members. If this represents a momentum change for the Sir Bocce Team we will continue with high spirits. We are a little over half way

through this year's season. Our winning percentage has improved to 33.3% and with continuing wins we can still make the playoff threshold.

Looking forward to more positive results. 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 started 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

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,

rjaabak@yahoo.com
Assistant Chairman: Tom Keehn, tom242g@gmail.com



**Ron Rizzo
Chairman**

RECENTLY READ BOOKS

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 winter league starts September 3. This league has about 14 four-bowler teams and will be done early in 2026. Please contact Dan Weller if you are interested in league or tournament bowling.



2025 Tournaments: The Clayton Bowling Tournament was held July 22 and 23. About 80 SIRs and guests had a great time. Our Branch 8 hosted the tournament

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

To access the SIR State bowling information, open the state bowling website at SIRBowling.org. You can find tournament schedules, applications, and results on the site.

Upcoming SIR Bowling Tournaments:

DATE	LOCATION	COMMENTS
August 11-13	Reno, NV	This SIR tournament is in the USA Bowling Stadium. Expect at least 150 SIR and guest bowlers
August 27-28	Grass Valley	

Activity Chair: Dan Weller, 925-935-5510, dweller@astound.net

Assistant Chair: Rob Norris, 925-788-6958, robert.norris@natca.net

CAR ENTHUSIASTS



Chick Lowry
Chairman

Eighteen Car Enthusiasts participated in this year's Annual Poker Run on July 19th. The route took players through Concord, Walnut Creek, Lafayette, and a stop in Port Costa, finally ending up at Sourced BBQ, in Walnut Creek, for a lunch and awards ceremony.

New CE member Joe Karg and had the most correct answers to the Quiz posted at the start point in the Sun Valley Mall parking lot with 7 out of 9 questions correct. His share of the pot was \$33. He also held a full house poker hand at the end of the run, but it wasn't enough to beat another new comer to the CE group, Greg Konsavage, who also held a full house of Aces and 10's, winning the \$98 balance of this year's pot. Nice going guys. Fun to participate and profitable too.

Lunch was great and the group had a really good time for a \$10 entry fee and 4-1/2 hours of their Saturday gathering with good friends.

The next CE adventure will be in early August to check out a possible K-1 Kart Racing event in Dublin. We had selected this idea earlier in the year, but it hasn't gotten full group approval as yet. If it doesn't materialize, we will find something else to do.

The next CE meeting will be **Tuesday, August 5th, 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

Assist Chair: Tom Hodgson, TomEhodgson1945@gmail.com

BRIDGE



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.

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 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!

July 2025 RESULTS

Our first July games, July 2nd, had fourteen players as we welcomed a new Sir and new player, Dino Papatthemetrios, which gave us three tables of four and a table of two. The winners were:

1 st	Stan Johnson	192 points
2 nd	Greg Ryan	162 points
3 rd	Dennis Mierzwa	147 points
4 th	Don Atwater	142 points

The second session of the month was Tuesday, July 15th, with 12 players giving us three tables of four. Winners then were:

1 st	Don Atwater	207 points
2 nd	Bob Beitler	181 points
3 rd	Bud Grisanti	125 points
4 th	Steve Monksfield	104 points

2025 High Score, Don Atwater 312 points

2024- High Score, Bob Beitler 261 points

Our next scheduled games are on Wednesday August 6th- see you then!

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

Assistant Chairman: Dan Smith, dns.lns02@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, chairman.



On June 25, we had 10 participants. At one table of five, Tom Amann won the first game with Dennis Mierzwa winning the second. At the second table of five, Pete McNeill of Branch 146 won the first game, and Roy Hopkinson won the second.

On July 9, we had 9 participants. At the table of five, Jim Barry won. At the table of four, Tom Amann and Jerry Ward easily won the first game while Dennis Mierzwa and Stan Johnson won the second and third games. Note that in the second game, the winners scored 476 points in two hands to easily win that game.

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

POKER

Letting you know what is happening with poker in Branch 8.

Right now we play on 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Tuesday every month. The time is 12:00 pm to 3:00 at Rossmoor. We need 2-3 subs to back up the regular players.

We are trying to set up the first Monday of every month to play on a rotation at poker members home. We need 3-4 subs to fill in the game for a total of 7 players.



We play all different types of poker hands. Anyone can come to the game to watch and learn the poker games,

For more information email Ron Maciak, 925-357-8005,
ronald41mac@gmail.com

SIR CHESS



Steve Schram
Chairman

SIR Brach 8 Chess

Players, please join us for Chess at the Pleasant Hill Senior Center in August.

We will continue our Chess events on Fridays, August 8 and 22, 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. sschramm01@gmail.com.

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

Regards, Steve.

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

BARGAIN BITES



On Tuesday July 22, 2025, 38 SIRs, wives and friends enjoyed a night out at one of our favorite restaurants, Maguey Mexican Restaurant. The food and service were excellent! Stay tuned for our next Bargain Bites event. We are

always on the lookout for new restaurants to try, so please send us your recommendations!

Ken Main, Linda Gawura and Ron Maciak

DINE IN #1



Ron Cassano
Chairman

We will be dining on July 26. Stephen Deness to host. We will be enjoying a prime rib roast and all great side dishes. Also, great wine and a nice social time.

Ron Cassano, Head Eater,
roncassano@gmail.com

DINE OUT - SINGLE SIRs



Glenn Gilman
Chairman

Our host, Dick Hixson, has selected Peony Gardens, located at 1425 S. Main St., Walnut Creek, for our monthly dinner. We will gather at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 5th.

Members of our Single Sirs Dine Out group and current Branch 8 members who wish to join us, let Dick know, and a seat at the table will be reserved for you. Contact Dick Hixson, 925-367-7033, dick@hixsonphoto.com

Last month 12 of us dined at Wences Restaurant in Pleasant Hill where we enjoyed a good seafood meal. Dan Crowley was our host for that dinner.

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

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 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 danrinaldi944@gmail.com
Asst. Chairman: Terry Norton, 925- 798-6023,
nortont@sbcglobal.net
Asst. Chairman: Stan Johnson, 925- 938-7016,
stan.johnson88@gmail.com

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, August 28th at 8:30am. Come early.



We have been busy locally and internationally! Matt Richards boated a 130-pound blue fin tuna in Mexican waters. Lee Clark, Brion Beetz, Pete Gates, and Tom Chapman caught limits of salmon from British Columbia, Canada. Dave Havlik on a separate trip got some salmon from B.C.

In other locations: Dave Paulson landed some fine salmon in from the Talkeetna River in Alaska. Pedro Contreras, Dennis Lee, Steve Paulick, and Ben La Sala worked Pyramid Lake in Nevada for special Lahontan Trout. Ken Bellinder found black bass in Lake of the Four Seasons near Crown Point, Indiana. Matt Richards flew north to Alaska for halibut, flounder and rock cod. Bob Weede trapped crabs from Whidbey Island in Washington state. Finally, we talk about California fishing. Pete Gates fished for trout in the Feather River and Los Vaqueros where fishing was slow. WIND! Ross Abbott, Ken Bellinder, Brion Beetz, and Gordon Linebaugh fought the wind at Lake Almanor for a few trout. Tom Kostik had much better luck for trout at Pincrest Lake. Dave Paulson netted trout from the Yuba River. Matt Richards, Dennis Lee, and Carl Moyer caught rockfish from the ocean. Almost everybody hooked stripers from the bay and delta. And Ron Lew battled halibut and sharks in San Francisco Bay.

Chairman: Carl Moyer, carlmarc@astound.net

FOLK MUSIC JAM

Next meetings are Friday August 1 and 15 from 1:30 pm to 3 pm. Meets twice monthly on the First and Third Friday of the month.

Civic Park Community Center, 1375 Civic Drive, Walnut Creek
Location is the Assembly Hall.

Must be a member of the Walnut Creek Seniors Club to participate; non-members have their first meeting free. You can join the Seniors Club at the front desk of the Civic Park Community Center.

The Friday Folk Jam has had three successful sessions so far, meeting the First and Third Fridays of each month. We have had about 15 participants, some with guitars and banjo. We currently have a song list of about 25 tunes, from the works of Bob Dylan, Peter Paul and Mary, John Prine, Gordon Lightfoot, and others. The list of songs and lyrics with chords are provided to participants.

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:

July 16th, 2025

Ten golfers teed off starting at 9:00 AM at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a beautiful morning for golf. Mike Frey shot the low rounds of the day with nice scores of "42"; just nudging out Ken Castleman who shot "43". Ray de Wit won the event of the day, closest to the pin after the 2nd shot on the 7th hole with a nice pitch to within 12" of the cup; Ray then went on to one putt for a par. The group had 19 pars and no birdies for the round. Nice going Mike, Ken and Ray.

July 9th, 2025

Fourteen golfers teed off starting at 9:00 AM at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a pleasant morning for golf. Dan Crowley and Ken Castleman shot the low rounds of the day with scores of "44"; just nudging out Gary Grice and Mike Frey who shot "45". Carl Ludwig won the event of the day, closest to the pin on the 4th hole with a 12' 7" shot; Carl then went on to two putt for a par. The group had 16 pars and no birdies for the round. Nice going Dan, Ken and Carl.



Left to right: Will St. Clair, George Vogt, Dan Crowley, Carl Ludwig, Terry Baldwin, Glenn Gilman, Gary Grice, Ray de Wit, Doug Barber

July 2nd, 2025

Fourteen golfers teed off starting at 9:00 AM at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a beautiful morning for golf. Mike Frey and Ray de Wit shot the low rounds of the day with nice scores of "40". Sam Oommen (a beginner player and playing only his 2nd round with us) won the event of the day, closest to the pin on the 3rd hole with a 5' 9" shot; Sam then went on to two putt for a par. The group had 16 pars and two birdies; one each by Terry Baldwin and Ray. Nice going Sam, Ray, Terry and Mike.

June 25th, 2025

Twelve golfers teed off starting at 9:00 AM at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a super morning for golf. Will St. Clair shot the low round of the day with nice scores of "42". Gary Grice won the event of the day, closest to the pin on the 4th hole with a 11' 9" shot; Gary then went on to two putt for a par. The group had 11 pars and two birdies; one each by Will and Gary. Nice going Will and Gary.

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 Mike or Ray with any questions.

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

Arte Chan is on a roll. Somehow, he has reached back and obtained that extra power needed to win the Bosworth Stableford Open. Mr. Chan also took first place with a net 63 at the Tilden Park invitational in an early July tournament



Steve Burrows scored a low gross 81 at Blue Rock East. It is a course that challenges even the most skilled golfer with its tough hills and testy greens.

Every golf course covets their practice range. It has become a symbol of management. Yet, not all is well at the Buchanan Golf Course range. They have hired a non-golfer-stone-deaf disc jockey who enjoys playing 4000+ decibels recordings while normal people are out swinging at golf balls. Some say this deranged Goofy enjoys pushing vibrating music into groups so he can giggle and smirk with pride at his annoyances. Then he hides in the walled-in office. At the same time, outside crowds murmur 'shameful'. Others just sit down and cry. The result is an ear-piercing tremor that makes verbal communication impossible.

However, it should be noted that the Buchanan clubhouse will offer good, homemade brand hearing aids at a sale price. As expected, all proceeds will go to the disc Jockey.

Discovered in the library, the namesake President James Buchanan [#15], who has evolved into a club hero. However, he is considered by historians as the worst American president ever to take office. Yet, his image has become an inspiration to the Buchanan golf club owner.

Finishing on a happy note. The great Buddy May has had his eyes fixed. Now competitors will face Mister May, who will be able to see the golf ball as he swings. So, watch out!

David Platter

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/>

7/31/2025: Martinez: Martinez Regional Shoreline. On I-680 N, take Exit 56, the last offramp to Martinez. Turn left on Marina Vista. Turn right on Ferry St. And cross the RR tracks. Meet at the first

parking lot on the left. Cafe: Starbucks Martinez . Leader: Manuel Dominguez. Difficulty: E

8/7/2025: Lafayette: Lafayette / Moraga Trail. Laf. Community Center. Meet at the Lafayette Community Center at 500 St. Mary's Road. Parking is near the sport arena. Cafe: Peet's Coffee. Leader: Phil Trapp. Difficulty: M

8/14/2025: Danville: Railroad Museum Iron Horse. Exit I-680 at Diablo Rd., west to Hartz Ave., left to Prospect Ave., right to Railroad Ave Meet in Railroad Museum parking lot, corner of Prospect & Railroad Ave. Cafe: Lunardi's Market. Leader: Rich Burke. Difficulty: E

8/21/2025: 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: Rich Rosin. Difficulty: E

8/28/2025: Concord: C.C.C. Regional Trail, Via Montanas. Take Treat Blvd east. Go 3/4 mile past Oak Grove and turn left on San Miguel. Turn right on Via Montanas. Turn left into the Parking Lot just past the bridge over the canal. Cafe: Peet's Coffee. Leader: Rob Laaback. Difficulty: E

9/4/2025: Clayton: Clayton Library. Meet at the library parking lot, 6125 Clayton Road. Cafe: Sweet Bakery. Leader: Ron Woods. Difficulty: M

Chairman: Dan Weller, 925-939-5510, dweller@astound.net
Assistant Chairman: Phil Trapp, 925-963-1819, ptrapp@sbcglobal.net

SIR HIKERS



Carl Ludwig
Chairman

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

August 12, 2025 Easy Hike: Alhambra Creek, Briones Regional Park, Martinez.

Hike Description: The hike will start at 10:00 a.m. This is a truly easy hike, going out and back along the Alhambra Creek in the north part of Briones. We will hike a total of about three miles with approximately 250 feet of elevation gain. The trail is broad and even with good footing. The ascent is a continuous, even climb along the creek which is likely just a trickle this time of year. In the past, some hike participants have opted to stretch this hike to a moderate hike outing, looping up and around Alhambra Creek and meeting up with the Diablo View Trail before returning to the parking lot and the easy hike trekkers. We can decide at the 1-1/2 mile mark.

What to Bring: Water, Hat, Sunblock, Trekking poles if you use them.

Directions to the hike: The hike begins at the Alhambra Creek Staging Area, Brookwood Dr, Martinez. From Walnut Creek take CA-24 west to exit 14 for Pleasant Hill Rd. Go north on Pleasant Hill Rd. Keep left to continue on Taylor Blvd. Turn left onto Grayson Rd. – 0.5 mi. Turn right onto Reliez Valley Rd – 1.6 mi. Turn left onto Brookwood Dr – 0.8 mi. to Alhambra Creek Staging Area. There potentially is a \$3 fee per vehicle.

Optional Lunch: Mona's Burgers, The Palos Verde Mall, corner of Pleasant Hill Road and Geary Road in Pleasant Hill right next to Lunardi's Market.

Hike leader: Manuel Dominguez (925) 938-5380, dominguezx@comcast.net

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

August 26, 2025 Hard Hike – San Francisco Northeast Tour – Special Start Time

Hike Description: This hike incorporates an up-and-down tour of the northeast section of San Francisco, including Coit Tower, China Town, North Beach, Nob Hill, and the Financial District. We hike about five miles with 550 feet of elevation gain, gathering in the social vibe of some of the most iconic cultural areas of the city. We ride BART to the Embarcadero Station following the special start times and instruction below. A stroll up the Embarcadero to the base of the steps leading to Coit Tower completes the first easy leg. The 400-step climb to the tower offers great views of the bay as glimpsed from the well-tended gardens along the way. Then a drop down into North Beach, across Broadway into China Town gives us a taste of these two historic SF locations. We proceed up Sacramento Steet, paralleling the street cars for the mile up to the top of Nob Hill where we can view the famous SF hotels and Grace Cathedral. A final meander down into the Financial District will bring us to an eating place where we can refuel before heading back to the east bay on BART. There are restrooms and water at the Ferry Building before the start, and restaurant.

Special Directions and Start Time for the Hike:

- Meet at the Walnut Creek BART south bound platform 2 at 9:03 AM. (LAST CAR). We exit at Embarcadero Station at 9:39 AM to begin our hike.
- FYI, a link to the morning BART schedule: [MARCH 24 2025 WDAY Service for Antioch_SFO \(Yellow\) Line \(1\).pdf](#)

What to Bring: Hats, water, sturdy hiking boots, trekking poles. Optional Lunch: Per Diem - Financial District, 43 Sutter St. (or similar).

AllTrails Map (for the first ¾ of hike):

https://www.alltrails.com/explore/recording/afternoon-hike-at-del-amigo-trail-to-madrone-and-virgil-williams-trail-54baf7f?sh=carl-ludwig&utm_campaign=memory&unfurl=false&showMemory=true

INTERNET GAMES



Don
Atwater
Chairman

Internet Games are activities you can enjoy wherever you have an Internet connection. But instead of playing against the computer, here you get to play against Sirs and partners. Let Chairman Don or Dan know of your interest in joining existing games or starting new games.

Internet Cribbage

In July, Greg Ryan took an early lead with 13 wins, and then Dennis Mierzwa and Dan Weller put chase but came up short with 11 wins, and Ray de Wit with 10 wins. The rest of us had wins only in single digits. Danny Rinaldi had the best hand for the year with a 28. Each month we have a new tournament. Anyone want to join us?

Internet Mexican Train

Because of the Fourth of July holiday, our Internet competition was limited to a single event which was won by Dan Rinaldi. Our In-Person game resulted in Jerry Ward and Don Atwater being winners for the first time this year.

These games are played on the first and third Friday of the month, and we start at 12:30. Let the Chairman know if you are interested in joining us.

Chairman: Don Atwater, 925-673-1669, datwater@pacbell.net
Asst. Chair: Dan Rinaldi, 925-825-0519, danrinaldi944@gmail.com

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



MIXERS



Ray de Wit
Chairman

Another record turnout for our July get-together, with 22 Sirs and significant others enjoying a great day. We had so many that we took up two complete tables. Our August get-together is on Tuesday August 26th (always the last Tuesday of the month) at Jack's in Pleasant Hill at 3:00. Hope for even a bigger crowd in July and once again, fun times. Everyone is welcome and we hope to see some more 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.

MODEL TRAINS



Rich Knowles
Chairman

The Model Train activity had a display at the July luncheon for all of the attending SIRs to view.

Anyone in the branch interested in model trains, please contact me.

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

OPERA IN THE THEATERS



David Bushnell
Chairman

Fathom Entertainment is bringing us three more NY Met encores this summer, all on Wednesdays at 1:00pm and 6:30pm in our downtown Century theaters. On July 30 Gounod's *Romeo and Juliette*, on August 6 Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and on August 13 Verdi's *Rigoletto*. All are great operas from the Saturday matinee transmissions of the last few years, and the ticket price is only \$13!

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



PICKLE BALL



Nick Maufe
Chairman

Pickleball is a great activity for keeping you fit, enjoying a social get together and having fun. It will bring back those long dormant bat and ball skills from an earlier life and remind you how much of that life is still left in the old bones!



Come out and give it a try. Free introductory lessons (from yours truly) guaranteed to get you to the level of a few laughs. We meet every Thursday at 8:30 AM at the Willow Pass Community Park and play for a couple of hours.

Email Nickmaufe@gmail.com 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

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

SIRS AT THE GAMES



Steve Schramm
Chairman

A strong group of 20 Sir and their guests watched the San Francisco Giants play the Philadelphia Phillies in a matinee game at Oracle Park in San Francisco on July 9. While the outcome was not what we wanted (Phillies 13, Giants 0), we enjoyed great company, great food, and great weather. There is always next year!



SIRS Alan Curtis and Bill Barber at the game

Looking forward, we are considering an outing to a college football game this fall. Many of you are Cal graduates, so we will check the California Golden Bears schedule. A Friday night game at Diablo Valley College (DVC) is also a possibility, and their stadium is right in Pleasant Hill.

If you have a preference for a football game this Fall, please let me know. A St Mary's Gaels basketball game is also in the not-too-distant future. Enjoy your summer! I hope that you can join us for a SIRS at the Games outing in the Fall.

Please send an email to Steve Schramm, "sschramm01@gmail.com" with ideas.

I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.

\$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



BARGAIN WINES



No new report for August.

Dennis Mierzwa
Chairman

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

TRAVELING SIRS

GOOD NEWS!

Vietnam/Cambodia Trip Update: 13 SIRs are going. Only 1 slot is still available. No additional charge for single to travel. Please inform if you are interested, before this trip sells out. See below for details.

New Trip Announced: Many SIRs have mentioned interested in going to CUBA on 3/12/26 for a 6-day tour. Zoom call with the travel agent scheduled for Wed 8/6 at 2 PM. Please let me know if you want to learn more about this trip.

Discount Still Available: At this time, a 10% discount available on these trips: Vietnam, Australia/New Zealand and Japan/Korea. Please contact glennbreslin@gmail.com for details.

Based upon both the SIR Multi-Branch travel questionnaire results and the related member interview input, these travel destinations have been chosen for future SIR Travel. Please let Glenn Breslin know if you are interested.

Vietnam/Cambodia	Australia/New Zealand	Cuba	Japan/Korea
10/19/25 to 11/7/25 (\$3495-No Airfare /\$4695-With Economy Airfare)	1/7/26 to 1/25/26 (\$5295-No Airfare/\$7645-With Economy Airfare)	3/12/26 to 3/18/26 (\$4611 with airfare already included)	4/1/26 to 4/16/26 (\$7495-No Airfare/\$9095-With Economy Airfare)
Angor Wat Post-Trip Included available	Both Melbourne Pre-Trip and Fiji Post-Trip available	Immersion into culture and history	Hiroshima post-trip available
Click this link for details Click Here	Click this link for details Click Here	Five-star lodging	Click this link for details Click Here
Group code is G5-30339	Group code is G6-30339	All meals but one included	Group code is G6-30339
		All tours included	
		Click Here	

Travel Quotes:

"A journey well shared is a journey well enjoyed."

"A good friend listens to your adventures. Your best friend makes them with you."

"There is an unspoken bond you create with the friends you travel with."

Let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Glenn Breslin, SIR146 Travel Chair, glennbreslin@gmail.com
925-788-6520

WINE CELLAR FILLERS



I would like to hold the next meeting of CFWA on a Friday, either July 25 or August 22 or 29. Please let me know who would be able to be the host for 10 to 15 thirsty SIRS for either of these months, and your preferences for the dates. SinSIRly,

Jim Sowell, Chair, sowell4jim@aol.com, 925-457-7746 (cell)
Dennis Mierzwa, As Chair, dennis.mierzwa@att.com, 925-938-5343 (cell)

WINE FINDERS 1



Ken Stehr

Wine Finders 1 had no activity in June/July. The next scheduled meeting is August 14, 2025.

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

WINE FINDERS 2



There was no tasting in July. Next up is our "summer" event on August 14.

Ron Cassano
Chairman

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

WINE FINDERS 3



Our next meeting is scheduled for August 21, with a yet-to-be-determined wine.

Larry McEwen
Chairman

Larry McEwen, elmwoodeux@comcast.net,
925-939-3216

WOODPECKERS



Thom Watkins
Chairman

At the July meeting, we had two projects going: 1) Jackie was making a full-wall hat rack with Thom assisting. They rounded the edges using the router table. 2) Bob and Mike helped Greg with his cutting board. They used the drum sander to patiently smooth and level the board (see photos).

After the "project" part of the meeting the crew adjourned to backyard grill area. The menu for today's lunch consists of grilled hot dogs, baked beans, and the usual beverages of choice. Mike started the grill fire, Jackie grilled the hot dogs, and Thom baked the beans. And as usual, a good time was had by all. See you next month

Thom Watkins, Chairman, Woodpeckers



WRITING YOUR LIFE STORY



Tom Hodgson
Chairman

Many of us have wondered what our grandfather's life was like, the questions we never had a chance to ask. Our group meets as a fun way to document fun and interesting memories from your past or current situation. It's fun to share stories with friends, who 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.

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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.

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 3B – Advanced Care Planning

ELP Session 1B – Care Services available in your Home

ELP Session 4A – Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia

ELP Session 2 – Navigating Long Term Care

ELP Session 4B – Home Care and Assisted Living

ELP Session 3A – Palliative and Hospice Care

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).



Dan Crowley hosted SIRs Singles night out at Wence's



SIRs working at the Food Bank July 9 (top & bottom)



Bargain Bites SIRs at Maguey Mexican Restaurant
July 22 (next five pictures this page)





Dinner gathering at Rob and Gay Laaback's



Jan Pierson Hike Leader for Heather Farms Walk July
17

Next four pictures are car enthusiasts in a driving
poker run July 19



Pre-rally quiz and winner announced by Chick Lowry
at Sauced Restaurant



Tom Chapman, Pete Gates, Brion Beetz and Lee Clark went to British Columbia for these salmon.



Matt Richards caught this 130-pound bluefin tuna in Mexican waters.



Dennis Lee is proud of these rockfish