



WHAT IS SIR?

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

Branch 8 Website:

<https://www.sirbr8.com>

"MAKE NEW FRIENDS FOR LIFE"

**January
2026**

Editor: David Glazer

BIG SIR COLUMN



**Dan Smith
Big SIR**

First, I want to thank Tom Di Grande for mentoring me throughout 2025. Tom has been an effective Big Sir and has accomplished much for the Branch during his term. This, I will address at the luncheon. Working with Tom during this process taught me much. Tom led by example. Mentoring works well that way. When handed over, you have faith the next person will carry on well using their own head. That is my goal. You can do this, too. You guys are smart and any of you can do this.

We have initiated change. And a new year gets to celebrate the changes, especially when they work well. The Branch needed change. We need to offer good reason to take part in our luncheons, to take part in our activities. We must be diligent in doing the best that we can.

Ending 2025, we had a Holiday Gala. The Ladies Day Luncheons needed new life. We opted to have this one gala in lieu of the two luncheons. We were concerned that the change would turn the membership off. Our goal of having 100 participants was well exceeded by the 128 guests who attended. And we had fun! Once we could identify with the music, the dance floor came to life! Especially for the gals. At one point, later, after the gals appeared to have worn the guys out, the dance floor was occupied by all gals and one member. Brave soul!

Consider that having that dance floor with the music made the party fun. Note that we almost filled the room. We will learn what Boundary Oak can accommodate, whether it is 150 guests or whatever. The point is, in 2026, as the membership learns how fun this gala was, I suggest you sign up early, else you may end up on a wait list. And our single guys are welcome, too. I don't think that our members who have sat down will mind if you want to dance. Just ask them.

There will be other changes in 2026. I wrote about changing the menu last month. Boundary Oak has listened. They have shared a preliminary menu for the first six months that includes buffets in February and April. I look forward to this and hope you do, too. Our much beleaguered-by-the weather BBQ and Oktoberfest are being reviewed by its committee. We do not know what they will propose; it will differ. My suggestion has been to find a venue where we can be both inside and out. That way we can have the best of both worlds. Watch for what comes.

The booth that we manned at Clayton's Oktoberfest encouraged us. It was a lot of work, especially for our Chairman, Greg Konsavage. What makes it all worthwhile is the support provided by the members. Mixing and mingling with strangers can be fun, especially if you like what you are doing. We don't want to ask this of you for anything that is continuous like a farmer's market. But if Greg finds a worthwhile venue in the spring, that is important to us. We want the area to be aware of who we are and what we do.

Finally, we are paying attention to the vitality of our activities. Some are inactive but could be resurrected. We use your experiences with the activities in both the Hotline and on our website. It is important that these stay current, especially for the website. Someone who might become a member will probably visit our website. If they might have interest in your activity, we want your article to reach out and grab them. We are always looking for new ideas. We also want to know if we have an issue. If you have something you want to say, please email me. No promises, but I am usually pretty good at steering this to the right person. As with any suggestion, we will endeavor to do what is best for the Branch.

Dan Smith, Big Sir, dns.lns02@astound.net, 925-588-6792

LITTLE SIR SEZ



**Thom Watkins
Little SIR**

First of all, I thank you, the membership, for having confidence in me to be part of your leadership team. I feel honored and humbled. I promise to do my best for you individually and for Branch 8.

One of the goals for 2026 is to bring you interesting and entertaining speakers. I invite anyone who has an idea for speakers who may have interesting or entertaining stories to tell to please contact me: thomwat831@gmail.com or 925.330.3780. Also, if you are interested in being a member of our Speakers Committee, we'd love to have you join us.

We ended the year with a hugely successful Holiday Gala event. The success of the Gala was due to a massive effort by not only the Committee of Buck Cheshire, Ray de Wit, and Paula Murphy, but also by the many, many others who contributed the gift baskets, wine, and various gift certificates for wine tastings, rounds of golf, and restaurants.

Octoberfest was cancelled due to the prospect of inclement weather, and that was not the only event cancelled due to weather. The June BBQ was cancelled due to extreme heat. Octoberfest was created to take the place of the June event to stay away from the summer heat. So, how about having an event between the June heat and a rainy October? In consideration of that, I propose holding an event in September. It would have the menu of the June BBQ and the spirit of Oktoberfest. If approved by the BEC, I am asking anyone interested in helping to please contact me, and we can begin planning for "Happy Fall Y'All."

Here's hoping that the New Year, 2026, brings out more humanity and understanding for all of us. I hope that each of you enjoy family and friends, good health, and good times in the year to come.

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

HOTLINE INDEX

(Click on an activity and you will be taken to that article or website)

ACTIVITY	COED	ACTIVITY	COED
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Bocce Ball-League	♂♀	Ladies Day Luncheon	♀♂
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Fishing		Writing Your Life Story	
Folk Music Jam	♂♀		

♂♀Activity Open to Spouse and Partners

Next SIR Luncheon:

Monday January 12, 2026

Boundary Oak Golf Club, 3800 Valley Vista Rd., Walnut Creek

Menu:

Salad: Arugula Salad with Cranberries, Almonds, Goat Cheese and Herb Vinaigrette

Entree: Chicken Piccata-Herb Marinated Chicken Breast, Garlic and Herb Rice Pilaf, Seasonal Vegetable, White Wine Lemon Caper Sauce

Or

Cod Piccata: Herb Marinated Cod Filet, Garlic and Herb Rice Pilaf, Seasonal Vegetable, White Wine Lemon Caper Sauce

Or

Creamy Tomato Tortellini: Five Cheese Tortellini in a Creamy Tomato Sauce, Seasonal Vegetable

Dessert: Tiramisu

Greeters: George Vogt, Carl Sand

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

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 tomdi grande@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.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH- SIR GIVING BACK



Tom Di Grande

Join your fellow SIR Branch 8 members in the Community Outreach/SIR Giving Back program and activities. Participate when you can, while supporting our communities. SIR Giving Back gives you that opportunity! The Community Outreach/SIR Giving Back activities are co-ed. Spouses, partners & significant others are encouraged to participate in and sign up for any of the activities. Let's get more spouses involved in 2026! 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 participate in.

The Community Outreach volunteers participated in a regularly scheduled Food Bank activity in December. At our monthly activity, we had a total of 15 volunteers, 11 members and 4 spouses, assisting the Food Bank to get ready for the Holiday push, while getting into the holiday spirit. 🎄 Thank You! SIR BRANCH 8 MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

Upcoming Activities:

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

The monthly activities calendar is 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. When you click the link to the calendar on the website,

Monthly Food Bank Activity
Wednesday, 1/14/2026
Scheduled from 1 to 3pm
Minimum 20 volunteers needed

Monthly Food Bank Activity
Wednesday, 2/11/2026
Scheduled from 1 to 3pm
Minimum 20 volunteers needed

ALL ACTIVITIES, PLEASE:

No open toe shoes; masks are optional; wear your SIR Red Volunteer T-Shirt. Arrive 15 minutes prior to scheduled shift starting time 

We will continue to provide Food Barrels  for needed donations at the monthly membership luncheons. Here's your opportunity to really help the Food Bank for the upcoming year. 

Does your spouse, partner or significant other know about the food barrels at the luncheons? I would bet if you looked in your pantries at home, you could come up with a bag of food for the barrel: extra cans of beans, tuna, chicken soup, tomato sauce, jars of peanut butter and jelly, boxes of pasta, cereal, crackers, etc. 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 our volunteers' support for the community. "Giving Back" doesn't require inordinate commitments of time or talent, you can do what you want, when you can, and still reap the rewards of volunteering.

To sign up contact
Tom DiGrande, tomdigrande@comcast.net, 925-876-7851, or
Phil Scimonelli, rosescim@aol.com, 661-917-8060

LADIES DAY LUNCHEON

 **December 8, 2025:** The Holiday Gala was a lively, fun occasion, with a total of 130 attendees, their wives, and guests. We had hors d'oeuvres, delicious entrees, free drink tickets, center-piece floral arrangements that lit up, and copious lovely door prizes. The music, decorations, and lightning created a holiday atmosphere and enticed the attendees to dance with great exuberance. Overall, it was a wonderful, delightful night of shared holiday spirit, brotherhood, and love. A special SIR thank you to all our door prize donors.

Our December 7, 2026 Holiday Gala will be just as exciting and may even surpass the 2025 event in food, beverage, and door prizes. So, mark your 2026 Calendar accordingly and look forward all year to the next Holiday Gala.

Buck Cheshire, Holiday Gala Chairman, along with team members Ms. Paula Murphy, Tom Di Grande, Ray de Wit, and Thom Watkins

SEE PHOTOS OF THE SIR CHRISTMAS DINNER HELD ON DECEMBER 8. Link is
<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/xh5is4xuv8jwaltdmk38/AAnsngQwXHM5gfJ5UOwdsc0M?rlkey=gf4ugeo1nck4p1aqgdxyx4e0l&st=7mdbxwez&dl=0>

SUNSHINE REPORT



Art Fabsits passed away on December 4. At this time, we have no further information. Dale Ann, wife of Peter Jordan, also passed away.

Please contact Membership: sb8msec@hotmail.com, to report illnesses, surgery, or passing of members. Membership will send electronic "Get well" cards via email and will continue to mail condolence cards to the families via mail. Membership will report member deaths to the Branch via email and, as it becomes known, information about obituaries and services. In addition, Membership continues to maintain a current obituary file on the website.

Membership Secretary: Rich Knowles, gritchek@gmail.com, (925) 681-9191

BIRTHDAYS



Rich
Knowles

Membership began sending birthday emails to members during the Covid-19 shutdown 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.

Garland Bell	Meng Horng	Terry Mason
Jerry Butterfield	Peter Jordan	Buddy May
Ian Dunn	Jackie Kaneshiro	Hans Pable
Jamshed Gandi	Anton Klemens	Martin Simmons
Stephen Greene	Robert Laaback	Rod Spicer
Edgar Hawkyard	Michael Levine	David Sutton
Stephen Hilberg	Carl Ludwig	

ACTIVITY COORDINATION COMMITTEE



Mike Frey



Ken Main



Chick Lowry



Dennis
Mierzwa

ACC Status Meeting – December 2025

- AC speaker for Monday 1/12/26: Mike to talk to Chick about finding a replacement AC for Dominos. If needed, we will ask Chick to make an announcement at the next luncheon. Also, Mike will look in AMS for a list of dominos players who may be interested in stepping up as chairman.
- How to start a new activity: Mike to send his proposal to the BEC for review and approval.
- AC breakfast meeting: Mike to talk to Dan Smith about setting up a day and buffet for the AC breakfast meeting in February
- Connecting new members with AC's: Membership is sending the new member orientation report to Mike. We will wait for the new member to be approved by BEC before sending this information out to all AC's.

- Updating activity content in the Website & the Hotline: Mike is currently handling the updates to the activity pages on our website.
- Next ACC zoom meeting is 2pm Monday 1/26/26 (4th Monday of month in 2026).

SIR BIOGRAPHY

Terry Baldwin, Assistant Treasurer



Terry Baldwin

I became a realtor in 2002 and have dedicated my career to helping clients navigate the home-buying and selling process with confidence. Outside of real estate, I have stayed active by playing racquetball for 10 years and have started playing golf consistently for three years.

In 2015, I joined the Civil Air Patrol, where I serve as the Safety Officer for my squadron and act as a Mission Observer during missions—roles that allow me to support aviation safety and emergency services in our community.

I've been married to my wife, Cathy, for 33 years, and family is at the heart of my life. I'm the proud parent of two kids and the grandparent of three wonderful grandkids.

Arte Chan, Assistant Membership Secretary



Arte Chan

I was born and raised in Sacramento. I attended Junior College before getting into Architecture School at Cal Poly Pomona. My degree was interrupted by the Draft (lottery number 7) where they sent me to Missile School to maintain the Nike Hercules missiles in Germany. After the Army, I continued and completed my degree in Architecture at the University of Texas in Austin.

Upon graduation, I moved to Boston, Massachusetts, where I practiced Healthcare Architecture for 21 years. I met my wife at the firm where we both worked. I was a partner in a firm until I moved back to California in 2000. My brother and sisters live between Sacramento and San Francisco, and my mother wanted her grandkids closer to home, so we bought a house in Walnut Creek. I joined an architectural practice in San Francisco and worked full time until December 2020. I now work part time, providing project management training for the staff.

I started playing golf around 1998 but didn't play regularly until I got to California. I took up golf so I could attend my clients' golf tournaments. I'm not very good but I try to get better. I signed up for and am active in the 18-hole golf group. I also participate in the 9-hole group and try to volunteer with the Food Bank when I can.

We have 2 kids: a son in Chicago and a daughter in Portland, Oregon. Both are very happy in their respective careers. We are still waiting for grandchildren.

I look forward to playing golf with you guys.



Ron Rizzo

Our book for December was *Nothing Like it in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad 1863-1869*, written by Stephen Ambrose. The book, published in 2002, tells the story of the construction of America's first transcontinental railroad, built during the latter half of the nineteenth century. The engineering, construction, logistics and coordination of the project in spite of significant inclement weather in the winter months was an unprecedented accomplishment at that time. Ambrose, in the opening line of his very readable book, claims, "Next to the Civil War and abolishing slavery, building the first transcontinental railroad, from Omaha, Nebraska, to Sacramento, California, was the greatest achievement of the American people in the 19th century." The Union Pacific railroad was building in a westward direction, trying to outpace the eastward-bound Central Pacific, with the goal of uniting the two branches, which was achieved at Promontory Summit in Utah in May 1869. There was significant pressure to speed up the schedule, which led in many cases to sacrificed safety, and many of the workers (Chinese, Irish, and Mormons) were constantly overworked and many were lost. Acquisition of financing (and its often related opportunity for greed) was also an important factor in the project. In addition to giving extensive time to the backers of each railroad, the author also gives credit to Abraham Lincoln, who was responsible for ordering the building of the transcontinental railroad. In addition to his many books on history, Ambrose also co-founded the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans. Our ranking for the book was 4.5 stars out of a possible 5, one of the highest this year.

Our book for January is a work of fiction, the classic *Catch-22*, by Joseph Heller. The Book Group meets at 10:30 a.m. on the first Tuesday of the month at the Concord Round Table Pizza on Treat Boulevard. If you like to read and have lively discussions about the books you have read, you should think about joining our group. If you are interested, please contact our Chairman, Ron Rizzo, at ronrizzo@gmail.com. The list of books to be read during the year is on the SIR Branch 8 website, along with a list of books read the prior year.

BOWLING



Dan Weller
Chairman

The Winter league started September 3. This league has 12 four-bowler teams and will be done in May, 2026. Please contact Dan Weller if you are interested in league or tournament bowling.



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
Jan 20-21, 2026	Nabo	First 2026 Tournament Chairman: Dan Weller, 925-935-5510, dweller@astound.net Ass't Chairman: Rob Norris, 925-788-6958, robert.norris@natca.net

BOOK GROUP

CAR ENTHUSIASTS



Chick
Lowry
Chairman

Fourteen Car Enthusiasts and guests attended the Branch 8 "Winter Gala" Holiday celebration. This was the 1st year we required two tables to seat our members. The event was special this year as the Branch changed the format, making it a dinner rather than a mid-day luncheon. One of our two tables managed to win a couple of raffle items. Our folks had a really good time.

Planning is underway for 2026 events. A note has gone out asking members to save Friday, January 9, to attend the Silicon Valley Auto Show at the Santa Clara Convention Center. The event runs from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., but we will be visiting from roughly 11 a.m. to about 3 p.m., including a late lunch at a local restaurant. Full details will be provided at our 1st monthly meeting. Plug the date into your calendars now. Entry cost is \$14 per person. Carpooling will be available.

Our January meeting will also be the planning meeting for the remainder of 2026, so please plan to attend.

The next CE meeting will be Tuesday, January 6, at 1 p.m. We will meet in at Round Table Clubhouse Pizza, 2960 Treat Blvd. Concord (corner of Treat and Oak Grove). Arrive a little early to get your food and drink ordered prior to the meeting. Meetings last about an hour. Come join us and see what Car Enthusiasts is all about. If interested in joining the Car Enthusiasts Activity, please contact Chick or Tom as noted below.

Chairman: Chick Lowry, Clowry2845@gmail.com
Ass't Chairman: 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 hour/lunch is at 11:30 a.m. and play is from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. Please join us if you have played or wish to learn. Depending on attendance, we play two-, three-, or four-person games. We normally get in five games in the two and a 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!

December 2025 RESULTS

December player numbers remained strong for our first session on December 3rd, with 15 players. Winners on the 3rd were

1 st	Bob Beitler	264 points
2 nd	Rod Spicer	189 points
3 rd	Jerry Ward	169 points
4 th	Steve Monksfield	127 points

The second session of the month was Tuesday December 16th, and we had fourteen players. Tuesday's winners were

1 st	Don Atwater	222 points
2 nd	Jerry Ward	189 points
3 rd	Stan Johnson	179 points
4 th	Dave Dawson	150 points

There are currently 21 active players on the Cribbage Activity roster. Final average session scores for the top four players with four or more sessions in 2025 are

Greg Ryan	145.1
Don Atwater	136.7
Stan Johnson	131.7
Bob Beitler	123.7

2025 High Score, Don Atwater 327 points

2024 High Score, Bob Beitler 261 points

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

Assistant Chairman, Dan Smith: dns.lns02@astound.net

PINOCHLE

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 between Branch 146 and Branch 8. Contact Stan Johnson, chairman.

On October 22, we had 7 players plus a guest at two tables. At one table of four, Bob Weiss and Jim Barry (Branch 146) won the first two games with a couple double runs along the way. The other table of 3 or 4 was treated as a training day.

On November 12, we had three tables of four with 12 people. Dennis Mierzwa and Butch Dellio won one game with Steve Monksfield and Jeff Morrow (Branch 146) won the other game. At the second table, Jerry Ward and Pete McNeill (146) won all three games. At the third table Tom Amann (146) and Will Stratton (146) won the first game while Stan Johnson and Cleo Bolen (146) won the second game. One team had a double run while the second had a triple Pinochle along the way.

On November 26, we had 10 players at two tables. At one table of five, Butch Dellio won the first game with Steve Monksfield winning the second. At the second table of five, Alex Bordens of Branch 146 won both games.

On December 10, we had two tables of six with 12 people. Terry Mason, Stan Johnson, and Alex Bordens narrowly won the first game while Dennis Mierzwa, Butch Dellio, and Tom Amann (Branch 146) easily won the second with a triple Pinochle and a double run along the way. At the second table of six, Jerry Ward, Cleo Bolen, and Pete McNeill (146) won their only game.

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

DINE OUT - SINGLE SIRS



Glenn
Gilman
glenngfam@sbcglobal.net

We start the new year (2026) by returning to an old favorite, The Old Spaghetti Factory, 1955 Mount Diablo St., Concord, on Tuesday, January 6th. We gather at 5:00 p.m., and our host will be Chairman Glenn Gilman. Let Glenn know whether you will be attending or not, 925-798-5155,

glenngfam@sbcglobal.net.

Last month we dined at Fiore's and enjoyed good food and good conversation with 11 members. Sirs, single at dinnertime on the first Tuesday of the month, are welcome to join us. Just let Chairman Glenn know.

Chairman: Glenn Gilman, 925-798-5155,
glenngfam@sbcglobal.net

Asst. Chairman: Don Atwater, 925-673-1669,
datwater@pacbell.net

FISHING - AREA 16



Carl Moyer
Chairman



SIR members and guests are welcome, and indeed encouraged, to participate in fishing trips as well as attend our monthly meetings. Contacts are Phil Scimonelli, 661-917-8060, and Carl Moyer, 925-685-5243. Next meeting will be at the Legends restaurant at the Diablo Creek golf course at Port Chicago Highway and Highway 4, on Thursday, January 23rd at 8:30 a.m. Come early.

2025 was not a good year for we fisherfolk: big and constant winds, big ocean swells, very constricting regulations, and closures of our favorite ponds. There was a lot of pouting. But still we sallied out. Many of us got big crabs and tasty rockfish from the ocean. On those trips the wind brought us home, and the sun turned the small white caps into diamonds. Fishing is so much more than just catching fish. Others of us got striped bass from the Delta. A keeper is any fish over 18 inches. A big fish is 24 inches. Certainly not what it was, but still fun, and they do pull hard on our string. Next year our favorite rock-fishing is closed until at least March if not later. Our favorite trout and catfish ponds are restricted for boating because of the golden mussel invasion. Still we will find water and venture out upon it. It is not a sport for the faint hearted.

GOLF - 9 HOLE



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

December 10, 2025

Five golfers teed off starting at 9:00 a.m. at Diablo Hills Golf Course on an extremely chilly morning for golf. Pat Dodson shot the low rounds of the day with a nice score of "41," just nudging out Gary Grice, who shot a "42" and Ray de Wit who shot a "43." Pat also won the event of the day, closest to the pin on the 3rd hole, with a 20' shot. Pat then went on to two-putt for a par. The group had 9 pars and two birdies: one each by Gary Grice and Pat Dodson. Nice round, Pat.

December 3rd, 2025

Seven golfers teed off starting at 9:00 a.m. at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a very brisk morning for golf. Ken Castleman shot the low rounds of the day with a very nice score of "38." Gary Grice won the event of the day, closest to the pin on the 4th hole, with a 9' 4" shot. Gary then went on to two-putt for a par. The group had 10 pars and no birdies. Congrats, Ken and Gary.

November 26th, 2025

Nine golfers teed off starting at 9:00 a.m. at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a chilly morning for golf. The course had dried out, and the cart restrictions were upgraded to "90 degrees only." Ken Castleman shot the low rounds of the day with a very nice score of "39." Mike Frey won the event of the day, closest to the pin on the 3rd hole, with an 11' 4" shot. Mike then went on to lip out the birdie putt and settled for a par. The group had 8 pars and no birdies. Nice round, Ken.

November 19th, 2025

Ten golfers teed off starting at 9:00 a.m. at Diablo Hills Golf Course on an overcast but reasonably nice morning for golf. The course was wet from the past few days of rain, and the cart restrictions were "cart path only." Jack Schweitzer shot the low rounds of the day with a nice score of "42," just nudging out Pat Dodson, who shot "43". Gary Grice won the event of the day, closest to the pin on the 4th hole with a 6' 6" shot. Gary then went on to one-putt for a birdie. The group had 17 pars and the one birdie. Nice round, Jack, Pat, 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 the Nine Hole Golf link, click on the Signup link. Call or email Mike or Ray with any questions.

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

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

GOLF - 18 HOLE



We are fortunate to have Buddy May with us. He insures that all of our golfing statics are inscribed into the NCGA data base. This gives each of us a verifiable index. Sometimes it is required at distant courses. It also is necessary for our match play in order to keep each team competitive.



David Platter
Chairman

In 2025 we had many achievements. Only a few are mentioned below:

- In the raw tally posting, Steve Burrows had four different tournaments where his scores were in the seventies.
- Carl Sand won six net tournaments and also during one outing his scoring performance was 40% lower than his handicap.
- Stan Johnson won five net tournaments.
- On hole #2 at Boundary, Buddy May, five times won the closes to the flag contest.

The influential Ed Lichtig who joined us in late 2025, has been at work. Since his arrival Ed has encouraged many golfers to reside at our club: So far this includes: David Kutzman, Guy Fischer, Greg Johnson, James Freeman, Howard Nep, and Terry Thomas. They are now roster members. These skillful golfers play every week in different golf groups.

What Ed likes about our set-up is the Dennler contract arrangement that assures our Branch acceptable tee times, locations, as well as cost for each match. The signup sheet also allows our players to select their starting times and foursomes. Except for at Boundary, David Green makes one payment for all of us which eliminates long lines. It also kept us from paying for reported no-show and their cancellation penalty.

David Platter

HEADS-UP WALKERS



Dan Weller
Chairman

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

1/1/2026 — Holiday — No Walk

1/8/2026: Lafayette: Lafayette-Moraga Trail.
Lafayette Community Center. Meet at the

Lafayette Community Center at 500 St. Mary's Road. Parking is near the sports arena. Cafe: Peet's Coffee. Leader: Dan Smith. Difficulty: M

1/15/2026: 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: Dan Weller. Difficulty: E

1/22/2026: Walnut Creek: YV canal Walnut Ave. Take Ygnacio Valley Rd. Turn south on Walnut Ave. (do not turn on Walnut Blvd.). 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 at Oak Grove and Ygnacio Valley Rd. Leader: Dave Allen. Difficulty: E

1/29/2026: Clayton: Clayton Library. Meet at the library parking lot, 6125 Clayton Rd. Cafe: Sweet Bakery. Leader: Dave Davis. Difficulty: M

Chairman: Dan Weller, 925-939-5510, dweller@astound.net
Ass't Chairman: Phil Trapp, 925-963-1819, ptrapp@sbcglobal.net
Ass't Chairman: Jim Sowell, 925-457-7746, sowell4Jim@aol.com

HIKERS



Carl
Ludwig

We have two hikes lined up for the month of January. In anticipation of potential wet weather, the easy hike is an outing largely on an old, fully paved trail. The second hike is a close-to-home outing overlooking the Walnut Creek/Lafayette border. Detailed information for interested hikers will appear by the end of December on the Hikers' webpage of the Branch 8 website at

<https://www.sirbr8.com/hikers/>.

January 13, 2026 Easy Hike — Redwood Regional Park, Oakland — 10:00 a.m.

Hike Description: The January easy hike will take place in the Redwood Regional Park along the Stream Trail, which is a fully paved road appropriate for wet weather. Our hike will be an out-and-back outing turning around just beyond the 1.7-mile mark (3.4 total miles) with at most 100 feet of elevation gain.

The Hike starts at the **Canyon Meadow Staging Area** (the furthest parking lot beyond the entrance kiosk, which is at 7867 Redwood Rd., Oakland). The trailhead is about 20 miles (30-minute drive) from downtown Walnut Creek.

From the trailhead, the hike will start at **10:00 a.m.** We will be on the Stream Trail for about 1.7 miles, which hopefully will be gurgling with winter storm runoff. We could see clusters of ladybug beetles, which over-winter on downed redwood trees.

Directions to Trailhead: From Walnut Creek take Hwy. 24 West through the Caldecott Tunnel. Use the right-hand tunnel and stay in the right lane and prepare to exit onto Hwy. 13 South. Take Highway 13 to the Redwood Rd. exit and follow Redwood Road

for about 5 miles, past Skyline Blvd. and over the hill, to the Canyon Meadow Staging Area at 7867 Redwood Road. Total distance from WC is approx. 19 miles and takes about 30 minutes.

Bring: Water, hat, boots, appropriate winter gear, and hiking poles if you use them.

Optional Lunch: in downtown Orinda at the Europa Hofbrau, 64 Moraga Way, Orinda.

Hike Leader & Coordinator: Carl Ludwig, 415.350.7372, cludwig171@gmail.com

January 27, 2026 Hard Hike — Acalanes Ridge Loop, Walnut Creek — 10:00 a.m.

Hike Description: This is a short, moderately rated hike **starting at 10:00 a.m.** from the Acalanes Ridge trailhead located on the northeast side of the Open Space Park. Although the route is short (under 3 miles) it is moderate in difficulty (492 feet elevation gain). The climb to the ridge top via the Camino Verde Trail is quick, and we will make several stops to enjoy the vista of greening hills filling the open space. After visiting the Gary Bogue memorial trail plaque for a great 360-degree view of our local area, we traverse the park on the Ridgetop Trail before looping back to our starting point.

Directions to the Trailhead: Depending on your location, find your way to the intersection of Geary Road and Pleasant Hill Road, near the Palos Verdes Mall in Walnut Creek. At the intersection, turn south on Camino Verde, continuing for about one mile until it becomes Camino Verde Circle. The address for the trailhead is approximately 1063 Camino Verde Circle (parking is on one side of the street only). There are no facilities at the trailhead.

What to bring: Water, hat, hiking boots, appropriate winter weather gear, and poles.

Optional lunch: Mona's Burgers, 1574 Palos Verdes Mall, across from Lunardi's Market

Hike Leader: David Glazer, dbglazer@comcast.net, 415.847.5046

Hike Chairman: Carl Ludwig, cludwig171@gmail.com, 415.350.7372

Acalanes Ridge and Gary Bogue Summit Loop on AllTrails:
<https://www.alltrails.com/explore/map/acalanes-ridge-and-gary-bogue-summit-loop-2633735?p=-1>

INTERNET GAMES



Don
Atwater
Chairman

For December, Don Atwater was the winner with 15 wins, followed by Greg Ryan and Dan Weller.

For the year 2025, Don Atwater had the most winning months with 4, Greg Ryan had 3 1/2, Stan Johnson 1 1/2, Dennis Mierzwa, Dan Weller, and Ray de Wit 1 month each.

The most games won during the year had Greg Ryan with 138 and Don Atwater with 136.

All-time highs were tied by Danny Rinaldi with a 28-point hand; Dennis Mierzwa, and Danny Rinaldi with a 24-point crib, and Dan Weller had 4 skunks in a month.

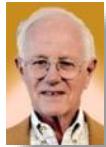
If you are interested in joining the 2026 Internet Cribbage group, let Don or Danny know.

Mexican Train: We play online twice a month, the first and third Fridays. Terry Norton and Don Atwater were winners of the last games. In person games were won by Stan Johnson and Don Atwater.

How about some new internet games for 2026? Let the Chairmen know of your interest.

Don Atwater, 925-673-1669 datwater@pacbell.net
Danny Rinaldi, 925-381-5486 danrinaldi@gmail.com

OPERA IN THE THEATERS



David
Bushnell
Chairman



January brings two Met operas in HD: first, on January 10 at 10:00 a.m., we get the live matinee of Bellini's *I Puritani*. Taped encores follow on Wednesday, January 14. On January 24 at 1:00 p.m., they are sending us a taped copy of the new opera from earlier in the season, *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay*. It doesn't look like it will be repeated.

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

SIRS AT THE GAMES



Steve Schramm

We have exciting games scheduled for enjoyment by our members and guests in 2026.

In January, **Sirs at the Games** has organized a group outing to see the St. Mary's Gaels Men's Basketball Team host the Oregon State Beavers. We have 8 Upper Reserved Seats for Wednesday, January 21, beginning at 8:00 p.m. Tickets are \$55 per person. Each year, the Gaels are one of the top teams on the West Coast. Members and guests of Branch 8 have always had a fun time on campus in Moraga.

For baseball fans, we will enjoy the SF Giants versus the Milwaukee Brewers on Wednesday afternoon, July 29, at 12:45 p.m. In July, we have great seats along the third base side in Section 222, very close to home plate. The ticket price is \$75 per person. Last year, we had a mighty group of 20, so let's top that number in 2026.

Please send an email to Steve Schramm, sschramm01@gmail.com, with your interest in the St. Mary's vs. Oregon State men's basketball game in January, and to get on the list for the SF Giants game this summer.

WINE FINDERS 1



Ken Stehr



December 11th marked the last meeting of the year for the Wine Finders 1 group. The December meeting has typically been a very relaxed affair that concentrates on savoring bubbly wine, good food, and lively conversation. The normal stresses involved in tasting and evaluating a

particular varietal are postponed to the upcoming new year, when our work will once again begin in earnest.

This year, the final meeting of 2025 was held at the residence of Ken and Linda Stehr in Walnut Creek. Attendance was good with a few members being unavailable due to travel plans and yearly migration obligations. A wide sampling of sparkling wine was available, along with an extensive menu of delightful appetizers. Everyone had a fine time enjoying the holiday spirit and leaving with a special gift and perhaps an extra slice of Linda's tasty almond cake.

The next Wine Finders 1 meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2026.

Ken Stehr, Chairman, kcstehr@comcast.net, 925-899-8531
Rob Laaback, Asst. Chairman, rlaabak@yahoo.com

WOODPECKERS



In December, in lieu of their regular "in-the-shop" meeting, the Woodpeckers held their Annual Christmas Brunch. And as usual, it was held Thom and Paula's Chateau.

The menu consisted of appetizers of spinach dip nestled in a sourdough bread loaf, and a scrumptious crab dip (contributed by Greg & Connie Konsavage). We also enjoyed the entrée of garlic prime rib, baked potatoes, and mimosas (provided by Thom & Paula), a side dish of cornbread casserole (courtesy of Jakie & Jennifer Kaneshiro), and a beautiful green garden salad (brought to us by Bob & Peggy Wheaton). There were two, yes two, desserts: a Boston cream pie (Mike O'Dorney's contribution) and a delightful French apple tart presented by Roger & Evaline Lamm.

As always, a great amount of socialization took place before, during, and after the meal was consumed.

After the meal, two major decisions were made. The guys decided to move the January meeting date to the second Saturday (January 10th) because the first Saturday will be too close to the New Year's Day weekend. The other decision was made by the Henpeckers to meet for lunch on the 10th as well.

The photos in the Photo Gallery are courtesy of Woodpecker Emeritus Roger Lamm.

Let's all have a GREAT 2026!

Thom Watkins, Chairman, Woodpeckers Activity

HOTLINE EDITORS		
		
Steve Moore semoore9128@gmail.com	David Glazer slwcy1st@gmail.com	Chris Wehling chriswehling@sbcglobal.net
COORDINATOR		WEB MASTER
		
Chris Wehling chriswehling@sbcglobal.net		Derek Southern derek.southern@gmail.com
<p>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.</p>		



December 2025 Wine Finders 1 event (next 4 photos)



Woodpeckers' Gala Luncheon (next 4 photos)

