



**April  
2026**

## WHAT IS SIR?

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

## Branch 8 Website:

<https://www.sirbr8.com>

**"MAKE NEW FRIENDS FOR LIFE"**

**Editor: David Glazer**

## BIG SIR COLUMN

When I started this year as Big Sir, I was looking forward to a year looking to better the luncheon, making it more fun for members. Buffets would be something different with respect to food and the service. Then came the directives from State SIR.

State SIR has mandated that we obtain California Photo Release Forms for all pictures used in our website and in the Hotline. This means for everyone, including members, spouses, guests, visitors, and so forth. It is envisioned that this program will be very similar to how we dealt with COVID, including collection of releases and creation of rosters so this can be controlled. You will be receiving requests to read and sign the release. Meanwhile, pictures will be removed from both the Hotline and the website. We have a roster of all member photos on the website that will remain and become password protected. Going forward, if someone does not provide or declines submitting the release, we cannot use their picture in either the Hotline or the website. Hopefully, this process will be relatively painless. We like posting photos of the Activity Chairmen so that you know who they are. Photos taken of groups will be more of a challenge. We will want to know the names of people pictured and will require releases for everyone shown in these photos. That will be more work for the Activity Chairmen, and we think that we can help them with reports tailored for their activities. The real challenge will be the Holiday Gala and the picnic.

The other challenge that I had was with the March speaker, or more accurately set of speakers. This group brought in a speaker whom they did not tell us about. They had some good information for those of us considering end-of-life issues. However, the presentation became lengthy and slipped into being more commercial. We, Steve Schramm and I, let them know that we were not pleased with this. We, too, have a wealth of information on "End of Life Planning" (ELP). If you have questions about this, you can visit the Branch 8 website and look for ELP. That will take you to a page that describes this program and provides access to seven short, well identified videos from the program. This information, and any of the senior centers in our area, should help you navigate what are essentially many choices and their relative costs.

Now can we get back to having fun? The April 13<sup>th</sup> luncheon will be our second buffet service. The lunch will be BBQ chicken, macaroni and cheese, coleslaw, and a rocky road brownie. I did request that the service be set up to allow two lines.

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.Ins02@astound.net](mailto:dns.Ins02@astound.net), 925-588-6792

## LITTLE SIR SEZ

You know the sound of two hands typing. But do you know the sound of one hand typing? To spare you from that sound, Little Sir has asked the "Mrs. Little Sir" to type this article.

### Speaker Committee Activities

During the first quarter of this year, most conversations centered around speakers, particularly their quality. We have listened to your feedback and are actively working to bring in better speakers. The Speakers Committee has convened and established new guidelines for selecting speakers.

### Speaker Calendar Progress

The speaker calendar for 2026 is nearly complete, and we genuinely hope that the speakers chosen will be well received by the majority of our members. Additionally, we have started compiling a "speakers consideration list" for 2027. If you have a suggestion for a speaker who may appeal to most members, please contact me or a member of the speakers committee—Steve Schramm, Leo Dominguez, Tom Doll, or Ken Main. Your recommendations will be brought to the committee for consideration.

### Looking Ahead

Our hope is that in the future, discussions about speakers will focus solely on how exceptional they have been.

### Upcoming Speaker

The speaker for April will be Andy Danver, who will present "The Past, Present, and Future of SIR." The Board of Directors is now using his presentation as a foundation to develop a long-term business plan for the organization's success. Andy has delivered this presentation at several luncheons, and it has received very positive reviews.

Thom Watkins, Little Sir, [thomwat831@gmail.com](mailto: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
Activities Calendar		Folk Music Jam	
Br 8 Officers, Directors and Committees		Golf-9 Hole	
Activity Coordination Committee		Golf-18 Hole	
Anniversaries		Heads Up Walkers	
Astronomy - Online		Hikers	
SIR Biography		Internet Games ONLINE	
Birthdays		Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange	
Bocce Ball-League		Holiday Gala (was Ladies Day Luncheon)	
Bocce Ball-Open		Happy Fall Y'All (was Octoberfest)	
Books-Exchange		Local Classical Music (was Opera in the theater)	
Books-Group		Luncheon Sign-Up	
Books-Recently Read		Mixer	
Bowling		Model Railroad	
Car Enthusiasts		Photo Gallery (on hold)	
Card Games-Contract Bridge		Pickleball	
Card Games-Duplicate Bridge		Podcasts Zoom	
Card Games-Partners Bridge		Second Chance Magazine Exchange	
Card Games-Cribbage		Shared Activities	
Card Games-Pinochle		SIR Science-Online	
Card Games-Poker		SIR Store	
SIR Chess		SIRs at the Games	
Community Outreach-SIR Giving Back		\$ums in Retirement Zoom	
Digital Photography		Sunshine Report	
Dining-Bargain Bites		Traveling SIRs	
Dining-Dine In #1		Wines-Bargain	
Dining-Dine Out Single SIRs		Wines-Cellar Fillers	
Distinguished Service Award (Ed Benson)		Wines-Finders 1	
Doctor's Office		Wines-Finders 2	
Dominoes-Mexican Train		Wines-Finders 3	
End of Life Planning		Woodpeckers	
Film Buffs		Writing Your Life Story	
Fishing			

 Activity Open to Spouse and Partners

### Next SIR Luncheon:

**Monday April 13, 2026**, Boundary Oak Golf Club, 3800 Valley Vista Rd., Walnut Creek

Social Hour at 10:30 am, Lunch at 11:30 am.

#### April Menu (Buffet)

Backyard Cole Slaw Red and Green Cabbage, Carrots, with Creamy Slaw Dressing, BBQ Chicken, Gouda Mac and Cheese, Corn bread with honey butter, Seasonal Vegetable, and Fruit display

Desert: Rocky Road Brownie

**Greeters:** To be determined and present at luncheon

## 2026 Officers, Directors and Committees

Dan Smith	Big Sir
Thom Watkins	Little Sir
Carl Ludwig	Secretary
Peter Jordan	Asst Scrtry
Leo Dominguez	Asst Scrtry
John Vallor	Attendance
Manuel Dominguez	Asst Attdnc
Rich Knowles	Membership
Arte Chan	Asst Mmbrshp
Peter Shapiro	Treasurer
Terry Baldwin	Asst Trsr
Mike Frey	Director
Terry Mason	Director
Thomas Draeger	Director
Greg Konsavage	Director

Steve Schramm	Recruitment
Ken Main	Activity
Dennis Mierzwa	Activity
Stan Johnson	Orientation
Buddy May	Constant Contact
Dave Perkins	Orientation
Ray de Wit	Nominating
Ron Cassano	Nominating
Dan Weller	Systems
Derek Southern	Website
Steve Monksfield	Website
Chris Wehling	Newsletter

RAMP (4 chairs, 3 currently filled by BEC members)  
Member Relations Committee currently 4 members, chaired by  
Membership Secty

Fred Serena State Pres  
Carl Mason Rep Area 16

## 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, 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](mailto: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 [tomdigrande@comcast.net](mailto:tomdigrande@comcast.net) or call at 925-876-7851 by the first of the month.

In addition, we have arranged to have a golf cart available for transporting limited-mobility members to and from the upper parking lot to the luncheon entrance. Please email Tom Di Grande at least 3 days before the monthly luncheon if you need that service.

## NEW MEMBER BADGES



These badges belong to our newest members. Don't forget to say "Hi" and introduce yourself. Let's make them feel at home. Talk about your SIR activities and ask them to join you.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH- SIR GIVING BACK 🧑🏻‍🦺

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 the month of March. At this monthly activity, we had 15 volunteers: 11 members and 4 spouses, working as a team, to sleeve over 5,000 lbs. of apples,

"ready for distribution" to the community! 🍏 👍

THANK YOU, SIR BRANCH 8 MAKES A DIFFERENCE!

### Upcoming Activities:

Monthly Food Bank Activity: **Wednesday, 4/8/2026**, scheduled from 1 to 3 p.m., Minimum 20 volunteers needed

Monthly Food Bank Activity: **Wednesday, 5/13/2026**, scheduled from 1 to 3 p.m., Minimum 20 volunteers needed

### DON'T FORGET:

Starting in April 2026, SIR Branch 8 has made arrangements with the Food Bank for us to volunteer EVERY MONTH at the Mobile Pantry Distribution, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Walnut Creek. This activity is organized and scheduled by the Food Bank for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month: 🤗

9 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. (rain or shine)

4/16/2026 (8 signed up so far! Only 2 spots left!)

5/21/2026 (4 signed up so far!)

6/18/2026 (3 signed up so far!)

This activity was arranged following the popular response of the SIR Branch 8 membership to volunteering in the past and reaching out to the community.

We need a MAXIMUM of 10 volunteers for this activity monthly.

SIGN UP EARLY! 🙌

### 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. ☺

Manuel Dominguez Guy Fischer David Glazer Romano Gnusti <b>Les Hopkins</b> Torsten Jacobsen George Kapus	Greg Konsavage Jeff Martin Mike O'Dorney <b>David Platter</b> Greg Ryan Carl Sand Steve Schramm	Mike Spink Will St Clair Vic Unsinn <b>Jerry Ward</b>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------

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](mailto:tomdigrande@comcast.net), 925-876-7851, or Phil Scimonelli, [rosescim@aol.com](mailto:rosescim@aol.com), 661-917-8060

## HOLIDAY GALA



The committee continues their ongoing planning and preparations for making this year's December 14, 2026 Gala a spectacular fun event.

Holiday Gala Contacts: Chair: Buck Cheshire  
Committee Members: Ray Dewitt, Tom DiGrande, Paula Murphy and Thom Watkins

## SUNSHINE REPORT



The Sunshine Committee is saddened to inform the Membership of the passing of 96-year-old Sir Norm Cox. He has been a member of Branch 8 for 15 years. A celebration of his life will be held at Oakmont Memorial Park in Lafayette on Friday, March 27 at 11 am.

Please contact Membership: [sb8msec@hotmail.com](mailto:sb8msec@hotmail.com), to report illnesses, surgery, or passing of members. Membership will send electronic "Get well" cards via email and 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, [grichthek@gmail.com](mailto:grichthek@gmail.com), 925-681-9191

## ANNIVERSARIES

**Sir Branch 8 member anniversaries for April are:**

Don Atwater-30 years  
Ian Dunn-10 years  
Thom Watkins-10 years

## BIRTHDAYS



Membership sends birthday emails to members for their birthday. The Sirs below have a birthday this month. Those highlighted in yellow are 90+.

Be sure to open your birthday greeting.

## ACTIVITY COORDINATION COMMITTEE

### Notes from ACC monthly zoom meeting on March 23, 2026

David Bushnell's new activity, called "Local Classical Music," is approved and is included with the "Opera in the Theater" activity. Website is updated accordingly.

Chick to verify if the shared "stamp and coin" activity (from Br171) is still active.

Mike to reach out to Tom Hodgson to confirm he will present his "Writing Your Life Story" activity at the April luncheon

Mike, Ken (& Dennis?) to check on the location of the activity tables at our luncheons to ensure they meet AC needs. These locations may change depending on buffet or non-buffet food service.

Mike and Dennis are members of the new Photo Committee, which is in progress.

## SIR BIOGRAPHY

**NO NEW BIOGRAPHIES FOR THIS MONTH.**

## BOOK GROUP

This month we read the 2013 Pulitzer Prize winner, *The Orphan Master's Son*, by Adam Johnson, a Stanford English Professor. Johnson spent two years researching North Korea and the story, after which he visited the country, where he witnessed how Kim Jong Il and his father devised a diabolically effective system of complete isolation and control.

Johnson delivers a literary tour-de-force, with myriad examples of the brutal realities of the most mind-controlling state on the planet. It is a wildly inventive mash-up thriller, gulag memoir, love story, and mythical heroic journey. Packed with details of life in North Korea, the intricate plot follows the main character as he rises and falls several times, experiences the cruelty of survival in a prison camp, scales the life of the pampered elite, and endures the atrocities of the interrogation chambers. The tale hits the ground running and fast. There was a spirited discussion among the group's attendees. The book got a 3.6 out 5 rating by the group, with an unusually wide spread of ratings from 5 to 2.

Our next book is a work of non-fiction, *The Wide Wide Sea: Imperial Ambition, First Contact, and the Fateful Final Voyage of Captain James Cook*, by Hampton Sides. The Book Group meets at 10:30 a.m. on 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 books you have read, you should think about joining our group. If you are interested, please contact our Chairman, Ron Rizzo, at [ronbrizzo@gmail.com](mailto:ronbrizzo@gmail.com). The list of books to be read during the year is on the SIR website, along with the list of books from the prior year.

---

## BOWLING

The Winter League started September 3. This league has 12 four-bowler teams and will be finished in May 2026. There is some bowler availability.

Please contact Dan Weller if you are interested in league or tournament bowling.

### SIR State-Wide Tournament Schedules, Applications, and Results Are Online:

To access the SIR State bowling information, open the state bowling website at [SIRBowling.org](http://SIRBowling.org). You can find tournament schedules, applications, and results on the site.

#### Upcoming SIR Bowling Tournaments:

DATE	LOCATION	COMMENTS
April 13-15	Carson City NV	
May 12-13	Sacramento	Only SIR members

Chair: Dan Weller, 925-935-5510, [dweller@astound.net](mailto:dweller@astound.net)  
Ass't Chair: Rob Norris, 925-788-6958, [robert.norris@natca.net](mailto:robert.norris@natca.net)

---

## CAR ENTHUSIASTS

Car Enthusiasts have had some disappointing results in trying to execute our CE outings this year. Personal scheduling in January, the bad weather conditions for a drive to Sacramento in February, and the unavailability of a venue to allow us to visit a great car collection in March have made getting started difficult.

Well, it's time to have some FUN. The **2026 CE Poker Run** will take place on **Saturday, April 11th**. We will start at **NOON** this year from the south end of the **Sun Valley parking lot in Concord**. An automotive theme quiz will provide some interest as we gather to begin the event.

Fourteen CE members have shown interest in participating in this year's event. Most participants will be bringing spouses or friends along to help with navigation. Singles can also play the game, but you will need to behave safely with your phone.

A \$5 entry fee will create the **POT**, and awards will be made for the most correct **QUIZ ANSWERS** and the **BEST 5-Card Poker Hand** during a lunch following your checkpoint visits. You will be provided a clue to find the first of eight checkpoint locations, and after locating it and answering an automotive-based question, you will draw a card from the deck to create your 5-card poker hand. You will then receive the clue for the next checkpoint. You must obtain all 8 cards to be eligible to win the poker hand. Quiz awards are open to all attendees who play that game. The clue received at the 7<sup>th</sup> stop will direct you to the luncheon location to collect your 8<sup>th</sup> card, awards, and some social time with fellow CE members, significant others, and guests. Definitely a Co-Ed event.

The event should **conclude by about 4:30 p.m.** The route this year utilizes local parks as you decipher clues to find the checkpoints. Not a difficult task, as Google is always there to help you have some fun. Come have a good time with your fellow CE members and friends. If you get lost, there will be a phone number to call for help. Please respond quickly so reservations can be made for lunch and to allow me to create all the materials required to make it happen.

The next CE meeting will be **Tuesday, April 7th, 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.

Happy Motoring

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

---

## CRIBBAGE

The Cribbage Activity meets on the first Wednesday and third Tuesday of each month. We play at Rocco's Pizzeria at 2909 Ygnacio Valley Rd. in Walnut Creek. Social time and lunch commence at 11:30 a.m., followed by play from 12:30 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. Please join us if you have played or wish to learn. Depending on attendance we play two-, three-, or four-person games. We normally get in five games in the two and half hours we play. Our members prefer to play four-person games, which consist of 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 welcome. In addition, if you are introducing potential new members to SIR, bring them as guests to a game you enjoy!

#### March 2026 RESULTS

Participation for the first games of March was down, with only a dozen players, but gave us three tables of four, which allowed for smooth games, with each table finishing at about the same time. As always, winners moved to the next table. The individuals below are recognized as winners for the first March session.

1<sup>st</sup> Terry Mason 212 points  
2<sup>nd</sup> Stan Johnson 183 points  
3<sup>rd</sup> Bob Beidler 161points

Dino Papathemetriou reported a 22 hand.

Our second session of the month was Tuesday, March 17. A nice turnout of sixteen players gave us four tables of four. Games went quickly, with multiple skunks allowing us to finish almost 30 minutes early. A new participant, Gary Jones, joined our group and achieved a respectable score of 129 points, surpassing ten of our long-term members, including me.

Listed below are the winners from the second session.

1<sup>st</sup> Greg Ryan 221 points  
2<sup>nd</sup> Stan Johnson 183 points (Note: Stan placed 2<sup>nd</sup> for both March games with identical scores of 183)  
3<sup>rd</sup> Terry Mason 164 points

Our first quarter leaders are  
Greg Ryan — average 171.7 points  
Terry Mason — average 150.4 points  
Stan Johnson — average 143.3 points  
2026 High score — Steve Monksfield 251 points  
2025 High Score — Don Atwater 327 points

**Next Games April 1<sup>st</sup> — same time same place!**

Chair: Dennis Mierzwa, [dennis.mierzwa@att.net](mailto:dennis.mierzwa@att.net)  
Assistant Chair: Dan Smith, [dns.lns02@astound.net](mailto: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 11:30 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, with training as requested. We share this activity with Branch 146. Contact Stan Johnson, Chairman.

On February 11, we had 13 players and played three tables. At one table of four, Dennis Mierzwa and Terry Mason won both games over Stan Johnson and Jerry Ward. At the other table of four, Steve Monksfield and Cleo Bolen (Branch 146) won their only game, over Chris Wehling and Alex Bolen (146). At the final table of five, Butch Dellio won one game, while Pete McNeill (146) won the other, over Jim Barry (146), Bob Weiss, and Roy Hodgkinson (146).

On February 25, we had a record number of 15 players, so played three 5-man tables. At one table, Stan Johnson won the only game, over Chris Wehling, Will Stratton (146), Steve Monksfield, and Jerry Ward. At another table, Dennis Mierzwa won one game, while Alex Bordens won the other, over Cleo Bolen (146), Terry Mason, and Butch Dellio. At the final table, Jeff Morrow (146) won the first game, and Jim Barry (146) won the second, over Bob Weiss, Pet McNeill (146), and Roy Hodgkinson (146).

On March 11, we had 14 players and played one 6-handed game and two 4-handed games. At one of the 4-handed tables, Butch Dellio and Stan Johnson won both games, over Jerry Ward and Chris Wehling. The winners had two double runs of 150 points along the way. At the other 4-handed table, Terry Mason and Steve Monksfield won two of their games, over Will Stratton and Cleo Bolen, both of Branch 146. At the 6-handed table, Bob Weiss, Jim Barry (146), and Roy Hodgkinson (146) won the first game, while Jeff Morrow (146), Pete McNeill (146), and Alex Bordens (146) won the last two games.

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

---

## DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Digital Photography meets every second Friday at 10 a.m. at the Ygnacio Valley Library. This month's meeting is on April 10, 2026. The special photo-topic is about "Removing Distractions." Select five sets of photos from your work, with "Before" and "After" editing, and save them in a flash drive in jpg format. We will discuss what you do with the images, and why and how you do it. The next meeting will be on Friday, May 8, 2026, with topic of "Lights in Photography." If you are interested in joining our group, please contact Meng Hornig, 309-287-5654, or send an email to [meng40@hotmail.com](mailto:meng40@hotmail.com).

---

## DINE IN #1

It was Spanish Night. Paella was the star. Good friends and conversation. Keeping the team, dessert was Mona Dominguez's Basque cake. A great night. Anyone want to start a Dine In? Will help get you started. Contact Ron Cassano at [roncassan@gmail.com](mailto:roncassan@gmail.com).

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

## DINE OUT - SINGLE SIRs

Tuesday, April 7, we will dine at Peony Gardens, 1448 S. Main Street, Walnut Creek. We will gather at 5 p.m., and our host will be Bill Barber. Branch 8 members are welcome to join us at this "men's only" gathering. Just let our host, Bill, know you will be attending: Bill Barber 222-0095, [billhiker4411@gmail.com](mailto:billhiker4411@gmail.com).

Last month, 12 of us dined at Mangia Bene in Martinez.

Chair: Glenn Gilman, 925-798-5155, [glennfam@sbcglobal.net](mailto:glennfam@sbcglobal.net)  
Asst Chair: Don Atwater, 925-673-1669, [datwater@pacbell.net](mailto:datwater@pacbell.net)

---

## FILM BUFFS

In March, the group watched *Being There*, about a man who goes through life being cared for by others, with no self-awareness or interests other than watching television, and yet through unforeseen circumstances comes to be seen as a political genius. It stars Peter Sellers, Shirley MacLaine, and Melvyn Douglas (the latter getting the Best Supporting Actor Oscar for his role). The members all liked the film, the acting, the music, and the underlying currents. It was a great film to discuss in terms of its meaning and cultural references.

Chair: Ron Rizzo, [ronbrizzo@gmail.com](mailto:ronbrizzo@gmail.com)

---

## FISHING - AREA 16

SIR members and guests are welcome, and indeed encouraged, to participate in fishing trips as well as attend our monthly meetings. Contacts are Pedro Contreras, 925-837-4847, 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, April 23 at 8:30 a.m. Come early.

Trout are our winter target, and Matt Richards, Dennis Lee, Stan Wong, Phil Scimonelli, and Bob Lively have caught rainbow and lightning trout from San Pablo Reservoir. Stan Wong, Tom Kostik, Ray Pixton, Dennis Lee, and Phil Scimonelli fished for stripers in the Delta. Shawn Kelly caught a big striper and a keeper halibut in the Bay. Halibut fishing in the Bay is picking up, but a lot of small shakers are keeping us busy. We had our semi-annual lunch with the Coastside fishing club. Twenty of us feasted on tasty rockfish. Many of us went to San Diego for the sport show there, making plans for tuna trips both here and in Mexico. As of yet, the salmon season has not been published.

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

---

## 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:

### March 18, 2026

Eight golfers teed off starting at 9:00 a.m. at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a nice morning for golf. Rich Knowles shot the low round of the day with a nice score of "40." Mike Frey also won the event of the day (closest to the hole on the 4<sup>th</sup> hole) with a 46" shot; Mike then went on to one-putt for a birdie!! The group had 17 pars and three birdies: one each by Mike, Gary Grice, and Rich. Way to go, Mike, Rich, and Gary!!

### March 11, 2026

Ten golfers teed off starting at 9:00 a.m. at Diablo Hills Golf Course on a nice morning for golf. Ray de Wit shot the low round of the day with a very nice score of "38." Pat Dodson won the event of the day (closest to the hole on the 3<sup>rd</sup> hole) with a 21' 10" shot; Pat then went on to three-putt for a bogie. Pat!! 😊 The group had 16 pars and two birdies: one each by Pat Dodson and Stan Johnson. Way to go, Ray, Stan and Pat!!

### March 4, 2026

Eight golfers teed off starting at 9:00 a.m. at Diablo Hills Golf Course on very chilly morning for golf; it did warm up by the 4<sup>th</sup> hole. Mike Frey shot the low round of the day with a score of "43," just nudging out Rich Knowles and Ray de Wit, who both shot "44." Rich also won the event of the day (closest to the hole on the 7<sup>th</sup> hole after the second shot) with a 10' 11" shot. The group had 13 pars and no birdies. Way to go, Mike and Rich!!

### February 25, 2026

Only five golfers teed off starting at 9:00 a.m. at Diablo Hills Golf Course on very overcast and wet morning for golf. Ken Castleman shot the low round of the day with a very nice score of "36." The group had 8 pars and no birdies. Way to go Ken!!

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 9-Hole Golf link, click on the Signup link. Call or email Mike or Ray with any questions.

Chair: Mike Frey, 925-699-1784, [mike\\_frey44@comcast.net](mailto:mike_frey44@comcast.net)  
Ass't Chair: Ray de Wit, 925-948-5962, [raydewit11@gmail.com](mailto:raydewit11@gmail.com)

## GOLF - 18 HOLE

No activity report submitted for April.  
Chair: David Platter



## HEADS-UP WALKERS

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/>

**3/26/2026: Walnut Creek: C.C. Canal, Heather Farm.** Meet at the Heather Farm parking lot at the far north end of San Carlos Dr. Cafe: Sweet Affair Bakery. Leader: Dan Smith. Difficulty: E

**4/2/2026: Concord: Hester Park.** Meet at Hester Park, corner of Hookston & Bancroft, street parking on Hampton or Hookston, adjacent to the park. Cafe: Noah's New York Bagels. Leader: Dan Weller. Difficulty: E

**4/9/2026: Alamo: Stone Valley Rd., Iron Horse.** Exit I-680 on Stone Valley Rd., head west to Danville Blvd. Meet at the south end of the Alamo Plaza parking lot, on Danville Blvd. north of Stone Valley Road. NOTE: the first few rows of parking are now reserved, BUT there is parking to the west of the reserved area and to the north of the area, across from the yogurt shop and Safeway. Cafe: Peet's Coffee. Leader: Dave Allen. Difficulty: E

**4/16/2026: Walnut Creek: Arbolado Park, Ygnacio Canal.** Take Ygnacio Valley Rd. to Oak Grove Rd. Then go south past W.C. library to Arbolado Dr., turn left to Arbolado Park. Meet at the upper parking lot near the soccer field and rest rooms. Cafe: Whole Foods at Oak Grove/Ygnacio Valley Road. Leader: Dave Davis. Difficulty: E

**4/23/2026: Walnut Creek: Countrywood, C.C. Canal.** Meet at the flagpole near Safeway in the Countrywood Shopping Center,

corner of Treat & Bancroft. Cafe: Noah's New York Bagels. Leader: Jim Sowell. Difficulty: E

**4/30/2026: Lafayette: Lafayette Reservoir.** WARNING!! THIS IS OUR MOST DIFFICULT WALK WITH MANY FAIRLY STEEP HILLS. PLEASE SKIP THIS WALK IF YOU HAVE ANY PROBLEMS DOING OUR FLAT WALKS. Entrance on Mt. Diablo Blvd., about 1 mile west of Happy Valley Rd. Meet at the EAST (far left) end of metered parking lot. Bring 8 quarters or use a VISA or Master Card. Cafe: Peet's Coffee. Leader: Phil Trapp. Difficulty: H

**5/7/2026: 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: Rich Burke. Difficulty: E

Chair: Dan Weller, 925-939-5510, [dweller@astound.net](mailto:dweller@astound.net)  
Ass't Chair: Phil Trapp, 925-963-1819, [prtrapp@sbcglobal.net](mailto:prtrapp@sbcglobal.net)  
Ass't Chair: Jim Sowell, 925-457-7746, [sowell4Jim@aol.com](mailto:sowell4Jim@aol.com)

## HIKERS

We have two hikes lined up for the month of April. The easy hike is in a favorite local location, while the hard hike is at a venue not visited by our group for several years, Round Valley. Detailed information for interested hikers will appear by the end of March on the Hikers' webpage of the Branch 8 website at <https://www.sirbr8.com/hikers/>.

**April 14, 2026. Easy Hike — Mitchell Canyon, Clayton — 10:00 a.m.**

**Hike Description:** This is a perennial favorite hike for our group. It is an easy 4-mile out and back trek on the fire road heading toward Deer Flat. Mitchell Canyon is a scenic area with plenty of shade and modest elevation gains, less than 200 feet in total. Trekking poles are optional, but not necessary. We will meet at **10 a.m.** at the Mitchell Canyon Rangers' Station at the end of Clayton Road in Clayton. There are restroom facilities and ample parking. There is a \$5 Park fee (seniors) per car. Arrange your own carpool if you like.

**Directions:** From downtown Walnut Creek drive east on Ygnacio Valley Rd. roughly 7 miles to Clayton Rd. Turn right, proceed exactly 1 mile to Mitchell Canyon Rd., turn right again and follow Mitchell Canyon Rd. to the end — to the Rangers' Station and parking area.

**Bring:** Water, hats, and trekking poles if desired.

**Optional Lunch:** Ed's Mudville Grill in downtown Clayton, 6200 Center Street.

**Hike Leader:** Steve Moore, 925-699-9001, [semoore9128@gmail.com](mailto:semoore9128@gmail.com)  
**Hike Coordinator:** Carl Ludwig, 415-350-7372 [cludwig171@gmail.com](mailto:cludwig171@gmail.com)

**April 28, 2026. Hard Hike — Round Valley, Hardy Canyon/Miwok Loop, Brentwood — 10:00 a.m.**

**Hike Description:** It has been several years since our group last hiked Round Valley. Our hike leader, Gary Palhegyi, has kindly offered to reintroduce us to this popular location.

Round Valley is a 2,191-acre preserve consisting mostly of grasslands, oak woodland, and riparian habitats. The area is home

to cattle, an occasional coyote, deer, squirrels, and often a Golden Eagle. The area once was home to several different tribal groups of indigenous peoples.

We meet at the trailhead **at 10:00 a.m.**, at around 140 feet elevation. We start on the Miwok Trail and head east for 1.7 miles. It's a gradual climb to 400' in a mostly shady section. From this point we turn south and begin the Hardy Canyon Trail segment. This is the hardest part of the hike. We climb just under 800' in about 1.3 miles to the highest point (1100'). In this section we will be exposed to the sun. From there we travel down a shady oak canyon for 2 miles more, following the stream back to the trailhead/parking lot.

**Directions:** Round Valley Regional Preserve, 19450 Marsh Creek Road, Brentwood. Go out Ygnacio Valley Rd., turn right onto Clayton Rd. in Concord, which becomes Marsh Creek Road. The parking lot/trailhead is 13 miles east of Clayton, on Marsh Creek Road. Water and bathrooms are available.

**Bring:** Water, hats, sunscreen, and trekking poles.

**Optional Lunch:** Ed's Mudville Grill, 6200 Center St., Clayton

**Hike Leader:** Gary Palhegyi, [garypalhegyi@gmail.com](mailto:garypalhegyi@gmail.com), 925.783.6368

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

**AllTrails Map:** [https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/california/miwok-and-hardy-canyon-loop?sh=ls05uy&utm\\_medium=trail\\_share&utm\\_source=alltrails\\_virality](https://www.alltrails.com/trail/us/california/miwok-and-hardy-canyon-loop?sh=ls05uy&utm_medium=trail_share&utm_source=alltrails_virality)

---

## INTERNET GAMES

Currently, we have two active games, Cribbage and Mexican Train. We welcome other SIRS to join us. We are also interested in offering other internet games. Please let Chairmen Don or Danny know of your interest.

Mexican Train is played on the first and third Fridays. Our March matches were exciting, with Don Atwater and Terry Norton each winning a game, although the outcome was often undecided until the last set was played.

Cribbage is played tournament style, with each player playing everyone else in two-man games. Ray de Wit, the winner in February, was also the winner in March, with 14 games. Dan Weller and Don Atwater each won 12 games.

We had some of our best scores for the year. During the month, Danny Rinaldi had a game with 12 pegging points. The best crib for the year was tied when Stan Johnson and Dan Weller each scored 20. High for one-person total points was Don Atwater with 37. High for the two-person total was Dennis Mierzwa and Don at 63. Largest winning differential of 44, by Dennis, tied the previous high by Greg Ryan.

Chair: Don Atwater, 925-673-1669, [datwater@pacbell.net](mailto:datwater@pacbell.net)

Ass't. Chair: Danny Rinaldi, 925-825-0519, [danrinaldi944@gmail.com](mailto:danrinaldi944@gmail.com)

---

## LOCAL CLASSICAL MUSIC

We will have no Met opera in April, but early May brings us the only opera by Tchaikovsky that is frequently performed, *Eugene Onegin*. It is a fine opera in the Russian style, emphasizing

heartfelt melodies, based on a story by the Russian author Alexander Pushkin. It opens in New York on April 20, after which we will have some newspaper reviews, and arrives here on May 2. Fortunately, St. Paul's church has come to our rescue with the Primavera Trio, featuring a pianist, a flutist, and a soprano. That concert will be at St. Paul's Episcopal Church on Trinity Avenue, near downtown Walnut Creek, on Saturday, April 18, at 7:00 p.m. The St. Paul's concert series is a new addition to the Local Classical Music Activity at Branch 8. You can access the concert schedule for the rest of 2026 at this link:

<https://stpaulswc.org/concert-series-upcoming/>.

The Contra Costa Chamber Orchestra, a 55-member local group, is presenting a spring concert of compositions by Faure and Bizet at two venues: Sunday, April 26, at the California Theater in Pittsburg, and on Sunday, May 3 at 4:00 p.m., at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Orinda. Tickets are available online on their website: Seniors are a bargain at \$20.

Chair: David Bushnell, [dhushn@swbell.net](mailto:dhushn@swbell.net)

---

## MIXER

A small (only 10) but lively group gathered for our February get-together. It was great to see some new faces and I'm looking forward to bigger crowds as the year progresses. Please remember that everyone, including wives or significant others, is welcome and we hope to see some new faces and smiles at the Mixers. Our March meeting at Jack's in Pleasant Hill is Tuesday, March 31<sup>st</sup> at 3:00.

Our April Mixer will be on Tuesday, April 28th at 3:00.

Please contact Ray de Wit ([raydewit11@gmail.com](mailto:raydewit11@gmail.com)) or Alan Curtis ([alancurtis@sbcglobal.net](mailto:alancurtis@sbcglobal.net)) for information and to reserve a spot. All are welcome (spouses, significant others, or guests), so watch for information on upcoming events.

---

## SIRS AT THE GAMES

It is Springtime! Time for Giants baseball in San Francisco and our Branch 8 outing to see the Giants.

Our SIR group has tickets for the **SF Giants versus the Milwaukee Brewers on Wednesday afternoon, July 29, at 12:45 p.m.** Last year, the Brewers had the best regular season record in the MLB.

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](mailto:sschramm01@gmail.com), to get on the list for the SF Giants game this Summer. As always, both members and their guests are welcome to join us at the game.

---

## WINE FINDERS 1



There was no activity in March. Our next scheduled meeting is April 9, 2026.

Chair: Ken Stehr, 925-899-8531, [kcstehr@comcast.net](mailto:kcstehr@comcast.net)  
Ass't Chair: Rob Laaback, [raabak@yahoo.com](mailto:raabak@yahoo.com)

---

## WOODPECKERS

While Thomas recovered from his shoulder surgery, the WOODPECKERS March monthly meeting was held at Bob Wheaton's home, where we finished up Greg's cutting board. The results were very impressive. I'm not sure he wants to take knife to it. It is unlikely his wife Connie will share his emotional connection. She has waited for its completion and has, I'm sure, used it as intended by now.

On to our next projects.

Chair: Thom Watkins, 925-330-3780, [thomwat831@gmail.com](mailto:thomwat831@gmail.com)

---

### **2026 Hotline Editors**

Chris Wehling	Hotline Coordinator/Editor
David Glazer	Editor
Steve Moore	Editor

**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.**

---

Why do toasters always have a setting that burns the toast to a horrible crisp, which no decent human being would eat?