



SIR HAPPENINGS

FEBRUARY 2009

VOLUME 6 ISSUE 1

A Nonprofit Public Benefit Organization for Retired Men Devoted to the Promotion of Independence and Dignity of Retirement

President Dave's Column

Thank you for allowing me to serve as your 2009 president and please accept my best wishes for a happy and a healthy new year. Our slogan for this year is "let's have a good time in 2009"

I find that watching a game show on TV can be relaxing after a busy day. One show that comes to mind is "Deal or No Deal," hosted by Howie Mandel. He often reminds contestants about their lifelines. The more lifelines, the more chances they have of being successful.

If having lifelines determines whether a contestant is successful, it can also be applied to lifelines in our organization. Our lifelines are our members. They are also our officers and committee members both at the state and local level. We are very fortunate that so many members volunteer their services. We cannot thank them enough for what they contribute, not only to our branches, but also to our state organization.

Volunteers continue to be the backbone of SIR. They are the movers and shakers and they make things happen.

We are a unique organization dedicated to making our lives

fun filled and we can always use more lifelines. Please keep in mind that unlike a game show, we have no time limits. It is never too late to become a volunteer. As Howie Mandel would say, "Deal or No Deal"?

Sin-SIR-ly,

Dave



Past President Sir Arthur Pufford (left) presenting the gavel to incoming 2009 President Sir Dave Reiser.

Leadership Action Plan

Buck Kendrick, SIR Vice President

The State Board, meeting in Vallejo on January 20, approved a voluntary Leadership Action Plan (LAP) to address the membership loss crisis. The LAP was approved as a result of extensive research on "branch aging" and its devastating impact on membership within most of our SIR branches.

Branch aging is now recognized to be the root cause of the long-term decline in SIR membership and is a situation which must be addressed at the branch level for survival of SIR, as we have known it. These findings were summarized in the last issue of the "SIR Happenings" and were presented at the training sessions for 2009 Area Governors.

The primary purpose of the LAP effort is to assure that branch leaders understand the membership crisis, recognize the unique effect on their own branch's long term health, and then take the necessary steps to stop or reduce branch aging. Most branches have failed to offset the natural ageing of its members through induction of sufficient numbers of younger members annually. As the mature branch memberships age, the branches begin losing their former energy and vitality. If these attributes diminish over time, the change directly affects many other reasons why the branches become less attractive to potential and existing members.

This "top down" Leadership Action Plan will enhance the long-term survival of currently successful branches and any other branches that are still capable of survival. It will emphasize responsibility and accountability for membership-related issues through all SIR leadership levels – Branch Executive Committees, Big Sirs, Area Governors, Regional Directors, President, and Board of Directors. It also will offer leadership oversight, training and positive suggestions to the branch leaders on how to recruit and retain new, younger members.

A new Leadership Action Committee (LAC), headed by Vice President Buck Kendrick and reporting to the Executive Committee, will implement this plan in the coming weeks. The LAC will be staffed with participating Regional Directors and others who have shown strong

Continued on Page 12

Membership News and Great Ideas that Work

Gary Pelton, Chairman of the Growth & Management Committee, decided to solicit recruiting ideas that work, as originally proposed by Vice President Buck Kendrick. SIR Happenings will publish Branch recruiting ideas in a series of articles called "Great Ideas that Work." We look forward to some fresh ideas ...any and all positive ideas are welcome!

Windsor Branch 176, Santa Rosa

Recruiting With Golf

Phil Anderson, Secretary

In recent months, our major success in recruiting has been through our golf program, which offers weekly tournaments at home and exciting activities away. Members are inviting their friends to join the party and reap the benefits. This has also been true of our bowling, bridge, and travel members. We use all the tools we have to interest our friends and neighbors.

In our golf activity, the pro shop at Windsor has SIR entry forms, and the staff there advises newly arrived, retired golfers, that Sons In Retirement is one of the clubs they can join to get an NCGA handicap. As a result, our club is growing slowly and the average age of our membership is beginning to decline.

Sierra Branch 175, Fresno

Send out News Releases

Bill Winslow, Branch Member

I have had an idea bouncing around in my head for a while now. Many newspapers welcome news releases from almost anywhere ...about almost anything. I suggest we provide news releases to as many newspapers in California as possible ...to include the off-beat – small, wide places in the road – where we have branches ...or near by.

When I worked for an airline years ago, we sent out many news bulletins about practically anything and the papers printed them. I remember one that went out about my transfer from Atlantic City to Philadelphia – who cares – but they printed it anyway and it got Allegheny Airlines in the paper for the world to see. Another time I sent a small story about our computer learning lab here in Fresno and the phone rang for most of the next two days and we filled up the classes, with even a waiting list ...papers welcome these things on a slow news day.

We could talk about such things as "Joe the Plumber's" hole-in-one at a SIR golfing event at Firebaugh, that included wives and mistresses ...or the 300-game that Robert Fine almost got during a SIR bowling tournament at "Bumblescrew, California" ...so what if it's printed on page 23 ...someone will see it and it's good, free advertising!

It would take a little research to find the correct email address for each newspaper. We might have the branches send their news items to a central place in our organization and they would send the news items on to the proper newspapers.

Might be worth a try!

Livermore Branch 101

Green Dot Program

Dick Duffus, Big Sir

Our branch in Livermore does a couple of things to encourage new members:

- Any member that brings in two guests, who then become members, receives a free lunch.
- We have a "green dot" program. Before each meeting, our membership chairman puts a green dot sticker on the badges of two, relatively new members. When the tables are called for lunch, the tables with the green dots are served first. This encourages the older members to meet and greet the new members.

I have received some feedback that our new members still have difficulty meeting and being greeted by the established membership. The "green dot" program is not the entire answer, but we feel it is a small step in the right direction.

The most important item is booking interesting, timely speakers, and in this regard, we have been quite fortunate.

Our membership has remained stable for many years, but we are always looking at other strategies to maintain membership.

Rocklin Branch 98, Rocklin

Here is my Card

Doug Hinchey, Big Sir

Branch 98 in Rocklin, has designed and printed up cards that are easy for our members to carry in such places as the glove box, wallet, or even in their golf bags, ready to be handed out to prospective new members.

The picture shows an example of the card, which we print a thousand at a time and then we give them to our members 2 or 3 at a time.



Reading SIR Happenings over these past few years has prodded our Branch to become more proactive in recruiting new members.

Membership News and Great Ideas that Work

Mission Trail Branch 35, Mountain View

Membership Programs that Work

Stan Barkey, Big Sir (2008)

Bringing in new members should be one of the top priorities of every branch of SIR. In our branch we have several practices that help with this.

We constantly encourage our members to bring guests. Our practice is that when a Sir brings a guest, the sponsor calls in to let us know the name of the guest and pays for the guest's lunch ...when the guest joins the branch, the sponsor receives reimbursement for that lunch. When the guest and sponsor arrive, the guest receives a computer printed name badge similar to the badges of members. We have special tables set aside in the front of the hall for guests and sponsors, so they receive preferred seating. During the meeting, guests are given a special welcome after they have been introduced by the Big Sir. This helps others in the branch, who may already know a guest, to come up after the meeting to welcome him.

Application forms are placed at the guest tables, so it is convenient for them to complete the application following the meeting if they are ready to join. They can also take the application with them and send it to our Membership Director.

The Membership Director has an important role since he is the one who does the follow-up with each guest and keeps him on his "Hot List," until he joins the branch or tells us that he has decided not to join.

New Members and their sponsors are invited to an orientation meeting about an hour prior to the regular luncheon. During this orientation, new members receive their Branch Roster along with a briefing on branch activities. Assistant Membership Director **Arden Anderson** is shown using his laptop and a PowerPoint presentation that helps make this orientation more interesting and enables us to be consistent and thorough. We include a brief history of SIR, along with information about all of our activities. We make this interactive rather than making it a boring lecture.



Sponsors are encouraged to include their new members in their table group and help them build new friendships within the branch. We have learned that getting new members involved in at least one activity, in addition to the monthly luncheon, is the key to retention of members, so we strongly encourage sponsors to help make this happen.

Editors Note: The Branch 35 membership program closely matches the Membership Program Implementation document that is available on the SIRinc website, which was developed by members of Branch 35.

Mount Diablo Branch 8, Walnut Creek

Happy Members and Recruiting

Glenn Cheetham, Big Sir

Here are some of the ways that we recruit and keep our current members happy that have been quite successful for our Branch:

Hand out a copy of the Newsletter to all the luncheon guests so they can read about the Branch and its activities. We also provide extra copies at luncheons for members to give to friends. Its great inexpensive advertising... written by the people involved.

Identify Activity Chairmen. We all wear nametags at lunch. We added the titles of Activity Chairmen under their names ... i.e. Golf Chairman, Fishing Chairman, etc. This gives recognition to the Chairmen and it identifies the person who, guests and members alike, should talk to about the activities our Branch offers ...in a casual luncheon and social hour setting.

Identify Birthday Boys. We have a drawing each month for a free lunch for one or two of our Birthday Boys. Then we ask all of them to stand and we sing happy birthday. To identify birthdays during the social hour, we put a small, temporary smiling face sticker saying Birthday Boy on the nametag. Other members congratulate them ahead of time...they love it!

Give special certificates of appreciation from the Branch for "behind the scenes" volunteers. We have fellows who work for years without recognition in such things as finding weekly golf marshals. When they "step down" we give a framed certificate in front of the membership or at the Ladies Day Luncheon.

Constantly encourage members to become involved in activities. Remind them to just try it. If they don't like it -- no obligation -- no harm done. .

Encourage new activities and try them out. Tell members to talk to friends about non-offered interests and start their own activities. For example, we have a wine tasters group ...some members then started an "inexpensive" wine group to share and compare bargain wines.

Encourage "couples" activities -- besides travel -- with ladies as guests. We have monthly activities such as our recent "A Day at the Races" (ladies loved the turf club atmosphere) and local tours of historical landmarks followed by lunch at a local restaurant. The ladies love to socialize and to get to know each other as well as feeling involved with their husband's social activities, when they are doing things with their husbands and meeting friends.

You might want to give some of these ideas a try.

Sirs in the News

Aptos-Rio Del Mar Branch 104, Aptos

Exceptional Achievement Award

Jack Kemerling, Area 10 Governor

Aptos Branch 104 was privileged to have Vice President **Dave Reiser** and his wife, Esther, attend the Ladies' Day Holiday Luncheon at the Seascapes Golf Course.



Reiser was there to honor **Gary Nickel** with two awards: The first was for his 2008 leadership as Governor of Area 10, which includes the branches in Aptos, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville. The

other was the "President's Exceptional SIR Award," which was presented to Gary in appreciation of his dedication and contribution as Area Governor for a total of five years and for serving as the Big Sir and Bulletin Editor of the Aptos Branch. Pictured is Gary Nickel (left) with Dave Reiser.

De Anza Branch 153, Sunnyvale

Hole-in-One

Aare Onton, Secretary

Tuesday – November 4th, 2008 – was Election Day. For **Tony Ridolfo** it was a winner day as he sank a hole-in-one the week after his 90th birthday. It was his second lifetime hole-in-one.

The occasion was the regular weekly golf tournament of Branch 153 ...this time at the Deep Cliff Golf Course in Cupertino. It was a sunny, crisp, fall day as the members of his foursome at the par 3 – 8th hole watched Tony's ball land on the green, proceed to roll in the direction of the flag, and then disappear.

Dr. Tony (pictured) is a medical doctor who retired from a career as a senior physician at the Lilly Labs for Clinical Research. He was also a professor of medicine at Indiana University Medical School.

Good going, Doc!



Port Stockton Branch 46

Honorary Life Memberships

David McCulloch, Bulletin Editor

Shown in the picture receiving their certificates from President **Art Pufford**, are our two new Honorary Life members ...**Roger Davy** (on the left) and **Arden Riess**.

Roger joined our Branch in 1984, and has been extremely active ever since becoming a member and he has always looked for ways to improve the Branch. In two years he was a Director and then served as Secretary, Little Sir, Big Sir, Auditor and chairman of the Nominating Committee.

Soon after joining our Branch in 1996, Arden began bowling and golfing with his fellow members and went on to become the Branch and Area 14 Golf Chairman. He has also served as Treasurer, Little Sir, Big Sir and a Director. Looking for additional ways to help SIR, Arden served as Area 14 Governor and on the State Rules Committee.



Stanilaus Branch 103, Modesto

Hole-In-One

Don Reed, Bulletin Editor

Jerry Henderson, after many years of golfing, finally achieved his golfing ideal – his first hole-in-one. Playing at the Muni Golf Course in Modesto, during the weekly 9 holer in October it was on the 126 yard, 8th hole, using a driver.

Jerry is over 80 years old and is a 33.2 handicap golfer. The other three in the foursome were **Augie Capulong, George Heiser and Ben Adriano...** all from Stanislaus Branch 103. This was the first hole-in-one for the Muni Group in several years and Jerry received all the money in the 9-hole insurance fund, which now needs to be replenished.

Every Thursday morning – year around, except for holidays – members from Branches 103, 143 and 144 congregate and hold a mini golf tournament. Some days during the winter, there are as few as 16 golfers... other weeks during warmer weather, we have as many as 52 golfers participating.

The format used is for low score using one-half of a player's 18-hole handicap. On the eighth hole we have a contest for players closest to the hole. Some days we have had as few as one player and as high as 10 being on the green, depending on how many golfers participate, determines how many places are paid.



Sirs in the News

Alvarado Branch 73, San Pablo

Honoring an Active Member

Robert Perry, Bulletin Editor

Branch 73 wants to honor one of its very active members who has made a big contribution to our Branch over the years ... his name is **Robert Brown**.

Robert joined our Branch in 1995 and has been Secretary, Big Sir and currently is a Director. As Big Sir, Robert concentrated on recruiting new members introducing new activities to the Branch to entice new members. He has also filled in as Speaker Chairman and has often performed other jobs in the Branch when the key person was temporarily unavailable.



A quasi-workaholic, Robert Brown's plate is full of activities both within SIR and in other organizations – much of which involves bowling – a sport he has enjoyed since 1972. He has been quite active in the Pinole State SIR Bowling Tournament for some twelve years as Co-Chairman and treasurer for the games. Robert is involved in a number of bowling organizations and is also a contributing writer to several bowling publications. The California State Senior Bowling Association honored Robert by placing him in their Hall of Fame.

Pony Express Branch 69, Sacramento

What it's like to be Active & 90

Frank Franzago, Bulletin Editor

Noble Zumwalt is the epitome of an active senior. Although he celebrated his 90th birthday last fall, his age hasn't slowed him down one bit. Blessed with great genes, Noble says that he hasn't been sick a day in his life. The only prescription drug that he takes is a daily dose of high blood pressure medicine. He drives all over the place and continues his great love of bowling ... as an active member of our SIR League, he competes every week and still maintains an average in the high 140's.



Besides bowling, he tends to all the chores around the house. He cuts his own grass and spends a lot of time tending his garden and plants. Luckily wife Frances is an equal match for him in the health department. Noble has his own greenhouse where he grows seeds for both his vegetables and flowers.

The picture shows Noble being presented the Senior Certificate by Regional Director **George Christman**.

Good going Noble! You are truly an inspiration to us "young" dudes. We hope to be around to see you get the "Super Senior" award in a few years.

Honorary Life Members Awarded in 2008

<u>Name</u>	<u>Branch</u>
Howard T. Bassett	BR134
Russel H. Biltoft	BR039
Lowell S. Clark	BR141
Dean Clarke	BR175
Richard S. Cobb	BR081
Cameron Cramer	BR040
Daniel A. D'Amico	BR075
Roger A. Davey	BR046
Nick DiMuccio	BR023
Donald Egan	BR081
Roy M. Estep	BR049
Frank Franzago	BR069
Jon Greenwalt	BR098
Herman L. Johnson	BR132
John A. Krishna	BR123
John Merrill	BR129
Thomas R. Newton	BR075
Jim Pierce	BR079
Arthur E. Pufford	PP027
Harvey B. Rhodes	BR136
Carlo J. Ricci	BR100
F. Arden Riess	BR046
Bill Rodman	BR038
Frank Ruddy	BR110
Warren C. Senegal	SB069
Robert W. Simon	BR035
Ben J. Smith	BR116
Jay R. Sorensen	BR087
Leonard R. Stohler	BR139

Bayshore Silver Anniversary Branch 118, San Mateo

Senior Certificate

Jim Mahon, Past Big Sir

Area 1 Governor **John Damonte** (on the left) is shown presenting a Senior Certificate to **Paul Yost**.



State Golf

Gene Drennan, Chairman State Golf Committee

We are in the process of finalizing our golf tournaments for 2009. Leading off will be our first tournament of the year in Las Vegas at the Suncoast Hotel and Casino, with three days of golf at Angel Park's Mountain, Palm courses, and Aliente. This will be our first time staying at the Suncoast and we are looking for a full-field turnout, the dates will be April 27th through May 1st.

Following this, we will be holding our Annual Reno tournaments at the Circus-Circus Hotel. These Tournaments will be held during the first 3 weeks of June. Golf will be played at two new courses – Arrow Creek and Wolf run, with our final day being at our landmark Lakeside Course. This event has grown to be so popular that we have extended it from two weeks to three.

Our next event will be our yearly Team Scramble Championship at Poppy Ridge Golf Course on August 10th in Livermore. During the months of June and July, we will be holding qualifying tournaments at local golf courses to determine the final 32 four-man teams that will be vying for the championship at Poppy Hills.

Our Fall Classic will be held at the Santa Ynez Marriott in Buellton on September 13th through the 16th and we will be golfing again at Ranch San Marcos Golf Course and the River Course at Alisal – the format will be a 4 man, 2 best-ball.

Our next tournament, will be a new event that we are calling the "Fall Classic-Northwest" and will be held at The Kah-Nee-Ta High Desert Resort and Casino in Warm Springs, Oregon. We will be playing Golf at the Kah-Nee-Ta's Championship Golf Course for three consecutive days, using 3 different formats. This will be our first trip to Oregon and we are looking forward to a full-house turn out.

The Area and Division Qualifiers for the Individual Championship will be conducted in May and August respectively and the Championship will be held on November 3rd – 70 golfers will be competing in 7 flights, with the winners to receive a Championship, "Blue Jacket." In addition we will have open play for 70 golfers on Nov. 3rd and 144 golfers on Nov. 4th.

Our final Trip will be our ever-popular Mexico trip...this year's destination will be Puerto Vallarta, in November and December. Dates will be finalized soon. We will be staying at the world famous Paradise Village and we will be playing at the well-known El Tigre Golf Course. Entry forms will be available soon and will be found on our website: www.sirstategolf.com.

It is the intention of the Golf Committee to try and put together a comprehensive, and fun filled agenda, of the most popular tournaments to try to rebuild the golfing membership of the SIR organization.

State Bowling

Carl Elvik, State Bowling Chairman

Happy New Year to all!... I would like to remind everyone that SIR is a volunteer organization and so, I would like to thank all of you who have made SIR Bowling so much fun to be a part of.

We have a new Secretary, **Del Locke** – Assistant Secretary, **Jerry Sabo** – and Operations Subcommittee Chairman **Robert York**. Thank you all for filling these positions. The updated Bowling Committee can be found on the SIRinc website.

We had our first State Bowling Committee Meeting on January 5th. Thanks go out to Vice President Buck Kendrick and President Dave Reiser, for attending the meeting.

In our meeting, we submitted the 2009 bowling schedule. Our first tournament is January 23rd and 30th at Sutter Creek. The new schedule can be found on the SIRinc website.

Congratulations to our Paradise Branch – they have been awarded this year's SIR State Bowling Tournament and we want to welcome all SIR bowlers. Please join us at the State Tournament and have some fun, because you are all very competitive.

Thanks again to Region 1 for hosting this year's State Tournament and good luck bowlers!

State Sports

SIR Day at the Golden State Warriors vs. the Phoenix Suns

Price will be \$25/Ticket (regular \$65)
Includes coupon for hot dog - chips -soda
March 15 (Sunday) at 6:00pm
for info call **Mel Augustine** (510) 524-4952

SIR Day at the Sacramento River Cats vs. the Round Rock Express

May 19 (Tuesday) at 11:35am
for info call **Neil Mayo** (916) 965-8316

SIR Day at the SF Giants
vs. the **Pittsburgh Pirates**
July 29 (Wednesday) at 12:45pm
for info call **Chuck Roberts** (408) 243-6717

SIR Day at the Oakland Athletics
vs. the ???
Sometime in August
for more info call **Mel Augustine** (510) 524-4952

News from the Branches

Pleasant Hill Branch 146, Walnut Creek

SongSirs

Harry Tutton, Branch Member

Old guys singing old songs ...that's the motto of the SongSirs of Branch 146, who have been singing for over ten years to groups such as the Walnut Creek Senior Club, Mt. Diablo Retired Teachers, Meals on Wheels Christmas show, Martinez Veterans Hospital and many retirement homes. The picture shows the SongSirs dressed up in green to sing some Irish songs for the Walnut Creek Presbyterian Church VIP luncheon.

Led by director **Don Nunn** – with **Dave Obera** playing piano and **Barney Meade** on drums – the SongSirs sing good old fashioned songs for each show, as well as closing our Branch luncheons, singing God Bless America.



Remember the old Bob Hope song, "Thanks for the Memories?" SongSirs, Don Nunn, wrote new lyrics that comment on all our SIR activities. The SongSirs sing the following version of "Thanks for the Memories" at the close of every show:

Thanks for the memories, our meetings with guys, it's always a surprise,

We drink our wine and dine so fine and tell each other lies.

Thanks for the memories of speakers and a guest, with singers in a vest,

We've seen them all both short and tall and we've seen all the best.

Big Sir starts off with his gavel, sometimes our best plans do unravel,

We do the race track in our travels, we cruise and such and still do much. ...so...

Thanks for the memories, we garden in the yard, we internet quite hard,

With cribbage and our bridge, we hope we never are off guard.

Thanks for the memories, we've been around awhile, we are the rank and file,

We hope and pray for one more day and end it with a smile.

We play some golf and go hiking, we bowl and we sing to our liking,

We dance and we bocce most striking, as we invest and all the rest. ...so...

Thanks for the memories, of being here today, but now we're on our way,

Our songs are done, we've had some fun and now we want to say,

Awfully glad we met you, you really made our day, we thank you so much.

Las Trampas Branch 116, Walnut Creek

Danube River Cruise

Phil Goff, Branch Member

Branch 116 members joined the Danube River Cruise, which was sponsored by **Bob Hagler** of Branch 8. Bob was able to fill the 104-passenger, MS Switzerland Riverboat, with Area 2 couples and friends. We spent 12 days traveling from Budapest to Prague in mid-October and had surprisingly good weather. All along the Danube, we stopped at small and large cities and walked through Museums, Cathedrals, Abbeys, and more. The chef on the river-boat was outstanding and everyone raved about the meals.

It was a wonderful trip and all aboard brought back pictures of their friends and the beautiful scenery. Shown is a picture of the 5 couples from Branch 116 as we cruised through Austria. For many this was their first experience with river

cruising and everyone wanted to do it again. Many thanks to Hagler and Branch 8, for sponsoring such a successful trip.



Pathfinder Branch 59, Newark

Annual Installation

John Skarpelos, Bulletin Editor

Branch 59 once again installed its new officers for 2009. From left to right, Area 8 Governor **Tom Sherba** administers the oath to Assistant Secretary **Pete Angelides**, Director **Rob Ingebretson**, Director **Bill Anderson**, Treasurer **Ben Fernandez**, Little Sir **Frank R. Thomas**, Secretary **Jim Ferez**, and Director **Richard Holley**.



News from the Branches

Amador Branch 96, Jackson

Grand Tour of Germany

Paul Murphy, Publicity & Program Chairman

Eighteen members and guests, from Branches 96 and 15, spent 14 days on a grand tour of Germany. **Lee Suess** – the Tours and Membership Director of Branch 96 – organized and led the trip. The picture of the group was taken while on a cruise of the Rhine River ...Suess is in the front row – far right.

The group visited many interesting cities and locations and one of the highlights of the tour was a visit to the world famous annual celebration of the Oktoberfest in Munich.



Bidwell Branch 110, Chico

Salute to Veterans

Jim Kirks, Big Sir

Last fall the Bidwell Branch honored Veterans in a very memorable ceremony led by Big Sir Jim Kirks.

The Chico Armed Forces Career Center posted the colors (see picture), as **Bill Shrum** laid down a cadence. Members of the Branch then displayed the flags of the Branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. **Larry Hildenbrand** presented the National Guard flag, **Hank Miller** represented the Army, **Les Vander**



Velden posted the Navy Flag, the Marine Corps flag was unfurled by **KR Robertson**, **Owen Petersen** stood by the Coast Guard flag, waving the American colors was **Dale Larrabee** and **Bob Ponath** displayed the Air Force colors.

A Veterans "Roll of Honor," was compiled by Big Sir **Jim Kirks**, and **Ray Rolls** designed a page with the names of over 200 Branch members who served in the U. S. Armed Forces. A poem by Connie Petersen entitled "Every Day is Veterans' Day" was printed on the back of the Honor Roll.

This was quite a special event for the Bidwell Branch.

Brentwood Branch 108

Fun Dining

Hoyt Huggins, Bulletin Editor

Past Big Sir **Don Palmer** and his wife Ann started the Dining Out Club in 2005 and we meet several times a year at various local restaurants for great fun and fellowship. Don is the livewire behind the movement, including rounding up prizes, and Ann does all the real work organizing each event. Together this couple insures that everyone has a memorable evening, often including music and other entertainment. Their love of fun is infectious and we always know there's going to be a good time at these events.



Those attending pay their own way and singles and couples alike join in these events. There are no dues or official memberships, the only requirement is membership in Branch 108. We meet early for a no-host social hour and then dinner. When signing up for each event, members choose among three or four entrees all at the same price of \$20 or less per person.

The Dining Out event has become increasingly popular. For example, In June of 2005, 22 people were in attendance at Mimi's. In August, 40 attended at Schooner's Pub and Eatery. Then in October at Prevot's, 55 of us enjoyed a five course dinner. Since then, we consistently have 72 to 75 people in attendance, which incidentally, represents almost half of the branch.

The door prize from a grab bag of assorted prizes accumulated by Don has become the centerpiece attraction at these events. Tickets are not merely called off with indifference, but instead are announced with wit and elegance. Also we draw for a special gift for one of the tables ...at Easter there were stuffed bunnies, and at Thanksgiving, turkeys were given out.

The Dining Out Club has become a very special Branch 108 activity for a night out, good food, a few laughs, and getting to know each other better. The dynamic couple, who lead us in this event, give life to the SIR philosophy of having fun in our retirement.

Branch Holiday Parties

Sonoma Valley Branch 41

Christmas In The Wine Country

Al Gunn, Bulletin Editor

Branch 41 enjoyed a wonderful Christmas party. The lunch was delicious and the wine flowed freely... courtesy of the Cohn Winery.

During lunch, **Richard Riley** -- a fine lyric tenor -- sang various pieces of Christmas music that inspired the diners to join him in singing several numbers.

Following lunch, the group was royally entertained by Scottish music and Irish dancing provided by



our Branch Chaplain – **Jim McElroy** – as well as, John and Heidi Noonan (see picture). John played several familiar Scottish selections and then accompanied his sister's Irish dancing. John, who is only 11 years old, plays like a champion piper and nine year old Heidi, has won many gold medals for her dancing. To wrap up the fun party, Jim McElroy played some nice selections on the pipes.

Las Trampas Branch 116, Walnut Creek

Christmas in Walnut Creek

Floyd Skelton, Bulletin Editor

Branch 116 held its annual Christmas Party this year at the Elks Lodge in Walnut Creek. Outgoing Big Sir **Art Donaldson** and event chairman **Bill McCord**, welcomed over 165 members and guests to this colorful and beautifully decorated holiday event where the happy crowd thoroughly enjoyed good food and drink. After dinner, dancing was provided with the music from the Diplomats.



During the evening, President **Dave Reiser** (left) presented a well-deserved Honorary Life Membership award to **Ben**

Smith (right) for his many contributions to the Las Trampas Branch and other branches as well. Standing in the center is Ben's wife, Sally.

Lake Tahoe Branch 160

Christmas in the Mountains

Larry Coffman, Bulletin Editor

It was during the first big snow storm of the year that Branch 160 held its annual Christmas Banquet and installation of officers and so, unfortunately, some members were unable to attend. As usual Tep's Villa Roma did a superb job in food preparation and presentation. Dave Fabrizio, a local musician, played all the favorites and sang them as well, for listening and dancing.

During the festivities, outgoing Big Sir **Jack Post** received his State Certificate and Past Big Sir pin from PBS **Al Bartley**.

Certificates of appreciation were also presented to **Sig and Lila Heidemann** (on the left in the picture) for their huge efforts in



putting on the golf tournaments over many years and (on the right in the picture) to **Barbara Smith** for her wonderful centerpieces at the dinner tables at our Christmas parties, along with hubby **Jim**, for his long time efforts in putting together the Branch Bowling tournaments.

A great time was had by all!

Murphys Branch 140

Christmas in Murphys

Len Piumarta, Big Sir

In December, Murphys Branch 140 held its annual Christmas dinner dance and installation of officers party. The party was held at the Camps Restaurant at the Greenhorn Creek Golf and Country Club in Angels Camp. Some seventy members, wives, and guests had a wonderful dinner, and lively time, dancing to the Renaldi band. In the picture, outgoing Big Sir **Ray Morris** (on the left) is seen handing the beautiful branch rooster to new Big Sir **Len Piumarta**.



Branch Holiday Parties

Indian Valley Branch 68, San Rafael

Christmas in Marin

Bill Gelardi, Assistant Bulletin Editor

PBS Ted Cohen and his committee, put together a wonderful, fun filled, Christmas Party at the Marin Yacht Club. The 78 members and guests attending the party enjoyed the good food, the music by a four-piece band with a vocalist, and of course, the dancing. The highlight of the evening was the installation of new officers, and the PBS champagne toast (see picture).



Camellia City Branch 3, Sacramento

Christmas in the Capital

Al Williams, Bulletin Editor

Sacramento's Camellia City Branch 3 held its Ladies Day – Christmas luncheon at the VFW Hall. We normally hold our monthly luncheons there, but had always opted to hold special events at another venue ...what a nice surprise when we got one of the best meals we have ever had for our wives and guests!

We were privileged to have one of our favorite groups – Sister Swing – for the entertainment. Sister Swing is a women's trio with the Andrews Sisters sound that is so awesome most people would not be able to differentiate when listening to either group's recordings. One of their favorite songs, as well as a favorite of the audience, is to get a man from the audience to come on stage while they sing "Oh Daddy." During the singing, the girls will take almost everything from their "victim's" pockets, going through his wallet, stuffing loose bills into their shoes & dresses, passing his keys around, and treating him like a king. It was no exception this year when Past Big Sir **Bill Holden** was their victim (see picture). I know from past experience how well they do their job and it was certainly the highlight of the fun party.



Alta Sierra Branch 124, Grass Valley

Christmas in the Foothills

Roland Boucher, Bulletin Editor

Branch 124 meets at the Alta Sierra Country Club and members usually attend wearing very casual clothes, but in December they put on a jacket and tie and bring their wives or special friends to the annual Holiday Luncheon to enjoy an outstanding meal, good entertainment, and fine companionship.

Following a social hour that helped people get into the holiday spirit, outgoing Big Sir Bill Drown welcomed everybody and started off the proceedings with the Pledge of Allegiance. He introduced various committee chairmen and expressed his gratitude for all the work they had performed to keep the Branch running smoothly during his term in office.

It was then time to eat. The menu choices this year were Chicken Picata or Bacon Wrapped Pork Loin with Belgian Chocolate Mousse for dessert, all very tasty and well prepared!

Following the excellent meal, entertainment was provided by The Bear River Jazz Unlimited Choral Group, an award-winning group from the Bear River



High School in Auburn (see picture). They sang a medley of songs ranging from *Mac the Knife* to *Sonny Boy* and their performance was heartily enjoyed judging by the applause they received.

Area 33 Governor **Ken Newman** was a guest, and after everybody had been fed and entertained, he performed the installation ceremonies for the 2009 officers and directors. Incoming Big Sir **Gene Byrnes** then took over as Master of Ceremonies. He thanked everyone who had helped him organize the event but he himself deserves the most credit for the success of the Holiday Luncheon.

The festivities concluded with a drawing for lots of door prizes, most of which were donated by local merchants. The dining room emptied very slowly as people continued to visit after the proceedings were officially over, confirming that the affair had indeed been a success.

Happenings Travel Bulletin

March 2009

March 4-12, 2009
Discover Sicily

This 9 day trip includes r/t air, hotel accommodations and 11 meals. Travelers will enjoy a deluxe bus and guided tours of Taormina, Mt. Etna Volcano, a local winery tasting, Catania, Caltagirone, Pizzaa Amerina, Villa Casale, Siracusa, and optional tour to Palermo. Cost is \$2743 PPDO. Offered by Area 6 Travel. Call **Henry Puccinelli** at 415-457-3990.

March 4-17, 2009:
Princess Cruise to Hawaii

Want to get away on the cheap? Join us for a relaxing trip to Hawaii aboard the beautiful Golden Princess, R/T from Los Angeles. The low price of \$995 PPDO even includes a \$50 credit for onboard purchases of wine and canapés. Offered by Branch 161 Travel. Call **Bob Damico** at 925-634-0465.

March 14-22, 2009
Ft Lauderdale to Ft Lauderdale

Visit six different ports, including: Princess Cays, St. Thomas, St Maarten, Grand Turk, and Great Bahama Bank. Prices range from \$1940 to \$2350 PPDO, which covers all costs. Offered by Branch 143 Travel. Call **Bill Torrens** at 209-667-0244.

March 19-24, 2009
Spirit of Washington D.C.



The trip includes the Monuments, World War II Memorial, National Gallery of Art, National Museum of the American Indian and more. This 5-day trip includes 4 breakfasts and 3 dinners. Cost is \$1,799 PPDO. Offered by Branch 44 & 78 Travel. Call **Jerry Mills** at 661-325-5951.

April 2009

April 12-26, 2009
Exotic Panama Canal Cruise

Enjoy 14 unforgettable days and nights on the Coral Princess. Some of the stops are: Aruba -- Caratagena, Columbia -- the Panama Canal -- Puntarenas, Costa Rica -- San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua -- Puerto Quetzal, Guatemala -- and Huatulco, Mexico. Prices range from \$2869 to \$3469 PPDO and include r/t air. Offered by Area 14 Travel. Call **Pete Lepisto** at 209-948-2265.

April 28 -- May 5, 2009
Savannah & Charleston

Seven nights including Hilton Head, Jekyll Island, Jacksonville, St. Augustine and St. Simon Island. We will be touring the gardens of beautiful southern plantations and much, much more! This will be a Spring Time extravaganza of Azaleas & Dogwoods and each day we will experience the best this beautiful and venerable area has to offer. Price of \$2508 includes r/t air from the Bay Area. Early bookings will receive a savings. Offered by Branch 153 Travel. Call **Ralph Hunt** at 650-967-8467.

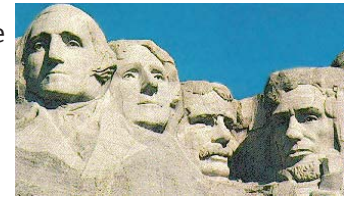
May 2009

May 24-June 3, 2009
Alaska Cruise

Ten night inside passage cruise on the Sea Princess. Ports of call include: Ketchikan, Juneau, Skagway, and Victoria B.C. Prices range from \$1456 to \$2373, including r/t air from San Francisco. Offered by Branch 63 Travel. Call **George Smith** at 530-342-3133.

May 20-June 7, 2009
Great Wild West

This trip will be by bus ...all the way. Some of the stops include: Salt Lake City, including attendance at a rehearsal of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir -- Yellowstone National Park -- Grand Tetons National Park -- Black Hills tour -- Mt Rushmore -- Crazy Horse Memorial -- Custer State Park -- Devil's Tower -- and more. The trip will be on a new, air-conditioned bus, 13 nights in first class hotels and 12 dinners. Cost is \$2780 PPDO. Offered by Branch 33 Travel. Call **Dale Martin** at 916-359-6121.



May 22-25, 2009
Indianapolis 500

Tour includes r/t air, motor coach transportation while in Indianapolis, hotel stay for 3 nights, breakfasts, box lunches, and dinners, reserved seating for the Festival Parade, and reserved seating at the race track, with a large monitor for race viewing. Cost is \$1852 PPDO. Offered by Area 7 Travel. Call **Paul Peters** at 510-724-8345.

June 2009

June 5-14, 2009
Atlantic Maritimes

This tour includes 9 night accommodations -- a tour of Halifax and Digby -- Nova Scotia -- Moncton -- New Brunswick -- Prince Edward Island -- Charlottetown -- and Braddeck, plus some other tours and stops. The price is \$3495 PPDO. Offered by Branch 88 Travel. Call **John Hoffmann** at 707-642-4925.

June 21-23 2009
Italian Lakes & Greek Islands

Featuring a 7 night Eastern Mediterranean Cruise. Immerse yourself in the breathtaking scenery of the Italian Lakes Region. Unpack once for a memorable 7 night cruise aboard the Costa Fortuna, round trip out Venice. Explore histories and cultures of three distinctive countries Italy, Greece and Croatia. Visit the most popular Greek islands of Mykonos, Santorini, and Rhodes. Also explore the historic walled city of Dubrovnik. Trip includes 25 meals and r/t air. Prices range from \$4679 to \$5429 PPDO. Offered by Branch 10 Travel. Call **Mike Console** at 408-246-1080.

LETS HAVE A GOOD TIME IN 2009

Leadership Action Plan

Continued from Page 1

interest in the success of the plan.

Branch Assessment Report – In order to establish a baseline for focusing leadership attention, a Branch Assessment Report will be requested from each participating branch. The 23 branches in Region 6 completed their Assessment Reports in 2008, confirming the methodology and the importance of this effort. This report will be used as an initial evaluation of each branch's health for the long term. The Leadership Action Committee will collect the Branch Assessment Reports and provide a Branch Evaluation Summary to each Regional Director, with pertinent data and recommendations.

Branch Membership Action Plan – It is anticipated that branch leaders will review their own Branch Evaluation Summary in collaboration with their Area Governor. From these deliberations, a Branch Membership Action Plan will emerge which addresses membership-related issues unique to its branch. This will no doubt entail regional or area meetings, training sessions, and/or leadership visits to the branches.

Here is a sample Branch Membership Action Plan:

- We will induct (10%) of present active members next year.
- We will establish a monthly guest target projected to allow us to meet our monthly induction target.
- We will offer incentives for bringing in members, with appropriate publicity for award winners. (Examples-quarterly free lunch drawing for latest sponsors, branch payment for guest lunches, Area quarterly award presentation for greatest sponsor performance, annual Region award presentation etc.)
- We will give awards for most prolific sponsors in the branch.
- We will have a contest with teams comprised of current members.
- We will develop recruiting aids and distribute them for use.

A **Branch Quarterly Membership Report** will be completed by all participating branches. This report will not only standardize membership reporting but is important for the branch to review and to show accountability for its membership performance, it is also essential for Regional Directors and Area Governors, who are responsible for improving membership-related issues within their assigned Regions and Areas.

The State Growth & Membership Committee, and its task force committees, is charged with collecting and developing ideas and methods for membership recruiting and growth and in concert with the LAP implementation, will be distributing to all branches proven successes and new ideas for consideration.

Salute to SIR Day at the Races

The next Golden Gate Fields "Salute to SIR" day at the races is scheduled for Friday, March 6, 2009.

The price for groups of 10 or more is \$25pp which includes: valet parking or parking for a bus – admission and reserved seating in the Turf Club – daily racing program – prime rib buffet, tax/tip for the food servers included – and a race named in honor of each SIR group in attendance. During this race, up to 6 group members will be invited into our "Winners Circle" to view the race and have a group photo taken with the winning jockey of that race.

High demand for this special offer is expected and any interested branches should contact:



Michael Roberts
Group Sales Manager
Golden Gate Fields
Phone: (510) 559-7380
Fax: (510) 559-7481
mroberts@goldengatefields.com



Get SIR Happenings Quarterly

If you want to get on the "Happenings" notification list, just mention it to your Branch Email Contact.

Every February, May, August and November you can go to <http://sirinc.org/sirhappenings/> and download the latest issue. Happy Reading!

Dwight Sale, Publisher

SIR Happenings is published by the Information Systems Committee.

Dwight Sale,
Chairman/Publisher
Email: dwight.sale@comcast.net

Send news and questions to:
Don MacGregor,
Executive Editor
Email: donmac95@comcast.net

John Skarpelos,
Editor and Production Manager
Email: john@mediart.com