A non-profit club devoted to the promotion of independence and dignity.
Luther Burbank Branch 17, Santa Rosa, CA
Website: https://www.sir17.org

The *REDWOOD BARK* Newsletter August 2026

All members are invited to attend our next regular SIR Luncheon/Meeting on Thursday August 20th at The Epicenter, 3215 Coffey Lane, Santa Rosa.

You can reserve a place at the luncheon, or cancel a reservation, through our website by clicking here. If you told the Phone Committee **"Yes"** you plan to attend but later find that you will be unable to attend, please contact **Rod Mooney** at (707) 328-1819 or by email at rnktla@gmail.com by **noon on August 13th**. Also: If you are bringing a guest, or if you originally said **"No"** but changed your mind and decided to attend, then please contact **Rod Mooney**. If you are a no-show you may be charged for your meal!

Big Sir Art Appling's Message:

art4747@msn.com (707) 538-1769

Good Men Wanted:

Recruiting is about much more than simply adding names to our membership list. It is about making sure Branch 17 remains active, welcoming, and enjoyable for years to come.

Like many senior men's organizations, our branch depends on members who are willing to participate, share ideas, help organize activities, and eventually step into leadership roles. Many of our current members have already contributed a great deal of time and energy to the organization. Bringing younger members helps keep that work going and brings fresh enthusiasm to the group.

In this issue, you will see a recent survey conducted by new member Michael Cuthrell. He surveyed several of our younger members, who offered lots of encouraging feedback. They gave Branch 17 an average overall satisfaction rating of 4.25 out of 5 and an average welcoming score of 4.5 out of 5. They described the branch as friendly and welcoming and said that our newsletters, orientation materials, lunch meetings, and wide variety of activities help members feel informed and connected.

The survey also showed what attracts people to SIR in the first place. Social activities, community service, and personal recommendations from friends were important reasons for joining.

(cont'd on page 2 left)

Little Sir Stew Lauterbach's Message:

stewlauterbach@gmail.com 707-495-0985

Organize Your Own SIR Activity:

When I first joined SIR in 2022 I wanted to do a hiking group. To do this I first talked to Fred Rose, our Activities Chair. We need to do this, as every activity group needs to be approved by the BEC to be covered by the liability insurance that SIR provides. For guidance please speak with any of the branch leadership.

After I did this I sent a SurveyMonkey to the membership asking a few questions to help establish the interest, how difficult and what days worked out. On our first meeting we determined that we would split into two groups, one for those who wanted an easy social walk of a few miles on relatively level paths, and a second group who wanted hikes of several miles with elevation gain. The easy group is the Walking activity and continues weekly, Tuesday mornings.

The first year the more vigorous Hiking activity group was about three to four hikers weekly, hiking three to five miles and about 500 feet of elevation. Now, three years later, we have a text list of 20 and get about eight to 10 hikers weekly. There is talk in the group about creating a third group for hikers who want to go six or seven miles with 1,000 feet of elevation. We are working on the details for that. Starting an activity group is not difficult and keeping it active requires very little time. So, if you have something you'd like to do (biking, fishing, or..?) talk to Fred Rose or anyone in leadership and we'll help you get it started.

(cont'd from page 1 left)

That last point is especially important: our current members may be our best recruiters.

Please take a few minutes to read the survey and the feedback, which offers valuable ideas about how we can continue to attract, welcome, and involve new young members. Thank you Michael…and congratulations on the excellent work.

Most of us probably know someone who is retired or approaching retirement and would enjoy meeting new people, taking part in activities, or becoming involved in community service. A personal invitation can make all the difference. Our website is very good, and we know it generates applications. Sometimes people just need to be asked.

Every new member brings new experiences, interests, and ideas. By encouraging them to become involved we can help ensure that Branch 17 continues to be a strong and rewarding organization for everyone.

Our Speaker for August

Jamie Escoubas is a seasoned senior-care leader with over 25 years of experience across assisted living, memory care, adult day respite, and non-profit services. As President and CEO of Council on Aging, she leads organizational strategy, operations, and community partnership initiatives to expand access to aging services.

Jamie is dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for older adults and supporting caregivers through effective and compassionate service.

The "dog days" refer to the hot, sultry days of summer. The phrase originates from ancient Greeks and Romans, who connected the season's intense heat with the star Sirius, the "Dog Star." They believed Sirius's close alignment and combined brightness with the sun caused the summer's scorching temperatures.

July Speaker Recap: Are You Prepared for Wildfires or Earthquakes?

Cyndi Foreman, Sonoma County Fire District Division Chief/Fire Marshal gave an excellent presentation at the July luncheon that included reminders on steps we should take toward wildfire and earthquake preparedness. A few examples:

- Do you have the Watch Duty app on your cell phone?
- Do you know your Evacuation Zone? (County and cities are different)
- Have you created Defensible Space around your property?
- Do you have an "Evacuated" tag to put on your mailbox? (Unincorporated areas)
- Do you have a Go Bag for each family member and pet?
- When was the last time you checked the contents and expiration dates of the articles in your Go Bag?
- Do you have provisions that would allow you to cope for 10 days without water, gas and electricity in the event of a major earthquake?

Cyndi's presentation can be found at the Luncheon Speakers page on the branch website, or click this link: https://www.sir17.org/uploads/1/2/3/8/123881033/sir_7-16-26.pdf

August Lunch Menu

Social Hour: 11 am - Lunch/Meeting: 12 noon

- *Meatloaf*
- *Mashed Potatoes*
- *Corn on the Cob*
- *Salad*
- *Bread and Butter*
- *Cupcakes*
- *Coffee and Lemonade*

Activities:

Use this link below to view the latest online Calendar of Events:
https://www.sir17.org/calendar-of-events.html

Boys' Night Out:

We will meet for BNO on Wednesday, August 12th at **Parkside Eats** (was Lepes), 4323 Montgomery Drive, 5:30 p.m. social, 6 p.m. dinner.

This restaurant was recommended by one of our BNO regulars. Let me know by August 7th if you will be joining the group: malvestitidon485@gmail.com.

Bridge:

We meet in the Valley of the Moon Club in Oakmont, Tuesdays, 11 AM to 1 PM for bridge and lunch. If you have an interest in Bridge, contact:

Dean Lundgren 707-544-8088 mdlundgren@msn.com
or
Steve Virtue 707-695-2597 stephenvirtue2015@gmail.com

Explore & Eat

*(Article by **Tom Sparrowe**)*

Explore & Eat will return later this summer! If you have an interesting location for an enjoyable afternoon please contact Tom Sparrowe.

Bocce:

Bocce can be played on most Fridays on the west side of Juilliard Park starting at 10 am. Contact Ken Ford at Kennethford063@gmail.com for more information or simply come on by. Bring a friend and introduce them to SIR!

Book Club

*(Article by **Neil Wheeler**)*

Our book selection for August is ***Chances Are...*** by Richard Russo. One beautiful September day, three men in their late sixties convene on Martha's Vineyard, friends ever since meeting in college in the sixties. They couldn't have been more different then, or even today—Lincoln's a commercial real estate broker, Teddy a tiny-press publisher, and Mickey is a musician beyond his rockin' age. But each man holds his own secrets, in addition to the monumental mystery that none of them has ever stopped puzzling over since a Memorial Day weekend right here on the Vineyard in 1971.

Now, forty-five years later, three lives and that of a significant other are put on display while the distant past confounds the present in a relentless squall of surprise and discovery. Shot through with Russo's trademark comedy and humanity, ***Chances Are...*** introduces a new level of suspense and menace that will quicken the reader's heartbeat throughout this absorbing saga.

We will meet to discuss this book at 2:00 p.m. on Wednesday, **August 26th** at Cypress Point in Howarth Park.

If you have any questions or would like to be on (or off) our email list, send an email to neil@science-one.org.

Couples' Night Out:

(Article by Fred Rose)

Couples' Night Out for August will be at the **Central Market** in Petaluma, Thursday August 28th at 5:30 p.m. The address is 42 Petaluma Blvd. N., the website to check the menu is centralmarketpetaluma.com. We will have separate checks per couple. Contact Fred Rose at:

fredricrose@comcast.net

I will need your reservation no later than Monday, August 24th.

Return to Page 1

Community Involvement Program:

*(Article by **Bob Reuther**)*

Making a Difference at the Redwood Empire Food Bank

Twenty-six of our members volunteered on July 7th at the Redwood Empire Food Bank. Because the Food Bank was closed for inventory on the first Thursday of the month, our team stepped in on the second Thursday instead—and this month, we're back to our usual first Thursday schedule.

During our shift, we packed 352 boxes of senior food, providing 9,152 meals and totaling 10,982 lbs. of food. We also packed 1,246 lbs. of bread, adding another 1,038 meals. Altogether, our volunteers prepared 12,228 lbs., more than six tons of food to be distributed the following week. It was an incredible effort.

The Redwood Empire Food Bank shared this message with us:

"The Redwood Empire Food Bank greatly appreciates your time and energy! By volunteering, you are helping 142,000 children, families, and seniors get the nutritious food they need and deserve. Thank you for coming out and making a difference!"

Join Us Next Month

We'd love to see even more volunteers in the months ahead. Whether you're a returning volunteer or considering joining us for the first time, there's always a place for you in our community service efforts. We also offer seated volunteer opportunities, ensuring that mobility is never a barrier to participation.

If you plan to join us on our next outing, contact George Traverso at geosan@sbcglobal.net by **Sunday, August 2nd**. Remember we are back on the first Thursday in August. That is August 6th.

As a thank you, all participants are entered into our monthly prize drawing held during the coffee break. Last month's winners included **Ernie Giampaoli** (wine), **Al Petrie** (wine), **Neil Wheeler** (candy), and **Walt Clark** (cookies). We also want to thank **Ed Steiger** for providing two bottles of wine, **Neil Wheeler** for providing coffee, and **Rich and Char Yang** for the candy at our break.

(cont'd on right)

(cont'd from left)

After volunteering at the Food Bank, you are welcome to join the group for a Hot Dog Thursday Lunch close by at the Pacific Coast Air Museum from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. A large hot dog or Polish dog, chips, and a drink costs $10. Well worth the price, and a good way to support another good cause.

Coffee Club:

*(article by **Jim Taylor**)*

With good weather we have returned to our outdoor location near the boat ramp at Howarth Park, the second and fourth Thursday of each month from 9 a.m.-10 a.m. Bring a lawn chair and $1 for coffee and pastries. Guests and Partners are welcome so bring a friend. **No RSVP required**. If you have questions, call me, Jim Taylor, at (707) 322-4959 or email me at jameswt@sbcglobal.net

Everyone who attends is entered into our prize drawing and we hope to have you join us!

Global Forum

*(Article by **Marvin Mai**)*

Well, we've put the World Cup into the record books and now I can get back to trying to keep up with all the events of the world in addition to the return of the conflict with Iran. Will soccer ever really take hold in America? Or will the speed and violence of our NFL keep it as a kid's game?

Regarding Iran and as retired military, I fear for the troops as the new drones and missiles put those a long distance from the front in danger. Can the rest of the world continue to sit on the sidelines as their oil and gas supplies dwindle and are not easily replaced?

Are the Russian people going to continue to suffer in silence as they wait 3 hours for 30 liters (8 gallons) of gasoline? What are the odds of a coup and a regime change in Russia and Iran? Our next meeting is 10 a.m., August 14th and as always seats are limited and reservations are a must. Email me at: maimarvin57@gmail.com for a seat.

Return to Page 1

Hiking Group:

*(Article by **Gordon Boultbee**)*

The SIR hiking group meets every Friday, weather permitting, typically at 8:30 a.m. The location changes weekly, and is announced via text message the day before by our hiking activities chair Stew Lauterbach. If you would like to be added to Stew's list, contact him at:

stewlauterbach@gmail.com or 707-495-0985

Photo by Don Powers

Single Sirs

(article by Chuck Stark)

Our next meeting will be on **Wednesday August 5th** at Norm's Kitchen, 478 Larkfield Center. Get better acquainted with other single members. All single members are invited to attend for good food and fellowship, but must RSVP in advance to Chuck Stark, starklaw@sonic.net for this month and/or future meetings, the Monday before the first Wednesday at noon.

Poker #1

*(Article by **Mike O'Neill**)*

Poker #1 had another good month in July. We had 18 players signed up for our July 9th games. Only problem was that we can only play a maximum of 14: two games, seven players each. We have agreed to not expand to three tables for a variety of reasons.

So, back to the 18. Fred stepped down, as did I for a dentist appointment. It would have been cheaper playing poker. So now we are down to 16 players. Fortunately, a few days before the games, three players had to also step down, so we made it to 13 players. There is no perfect way to downsize, but each month it works out.

RESULTS: For Table 1, Les was the big winner, followed closely by Craig. At Table 2, Keith was the really big winner. The buy-in is only $15 so using the term "big winner" is relative. We are not talking huge amounts of money. It's all about the fun, camaraderie and a nice lunch.

FOOD AND SERVICE: Since I was not there, no specific food item review this time. I did get multiple reports that everything was great.

AUGUST: Our next games will be on **August 13th, at Epicenter.** Stop by and join us around 12:30 p.m. for lunch. Meet the guys. Just let me know in advance so I can provide a lunch headcount to the kitchen.

Mike O'Neill at mikeo46@sbcglobal.net.

to all those born in August!

- *Hap Culp*
- *Bill Daniel*
- *Rich de Lambert*
- *John Dutil*
- *Bo Greaves*
- *Rick Hernandez*
- *Charles Kennemore*
- *Jeffrey Keyes*
- *Dean Loughran*
- *Dean Lundgren*
- *Claude Rosenthal*
- *Jon Sadowski*
- *Ed Steiger*
- *Jack Tolin*
- *Bill Traverso*
- *Jim Weathers*

Beer Call

*(Article by **Keith Hall**)*

A Beer Call has been issued for 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, **August 25th at The Rough Draft, 1001 McClelland Dr., Windsor.** You are cordially invited to join us for beer and BS. We look forward to seeing you.

www.roughdrafttaproom.com

Please let me know (keithlhall573@gmail.com) if you would like to be on the email list for future Beer Calls. Also, if you would like to suggest a venue for future Beer Calls, please let me know and I'll put out the call.

SIR Poker #2

*(Article by **Bernie Stephan**)*

Our fledgling Poker #2 group has left the nest, and our numbers are growing! Our second July game had to be postponed a week because of the World Cup semifinals. Even so, five of us made it—and had a great time.

One memorable hand involved Bob announcing, "I'll be right back," as he rushed off to the bathroom. Apparently absence is a winning strategy: no one outbid him while he was gone, and he returned in time to reveal the winning hand. Confidentially, Bob didn't play nearly as well as when he was actually at the table.

I'm also pleased that Barry has agreed to serve as our backup activity chair. He'll have his own set of chips and cards so the game can go on whenever I'm unavailable. Barry is a dedicated SIR leader who shares the goal of making sure any SIR who wants to play can come and have some fun. We have more prospective players showing interest, so I'm looking forward to a big turnout on **August 5th**. Once we hit 10 players, we'll have enough for two tables!

Come join us at 11 a.m. at the EPICENTER Victory House. There's always room at the table—and it seems you don't even have to stay at the table to win!

2027 BEC Slate of Candidates

The 2026 Nominating Committee, which consists of the last three Past Big Sirs, presented and the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) approved the following slate of candidates for the 2027 BEC. The slate will be voted on by the membership present at the August 20th, 2026 luncheon.

Big Sir	Stew Lauterbach
Little Sir	Jim Taylor
Secretary	Terry Freeman
Asst. Secy.	Bo Greaves
Treasurer	Barry Chapman
Asst. Treas.	Michael Cuthrell
Director	Len Grosso
Director	Craig House
Director	Mike Requarth
Director	Tom Sparrowe
Director	Morgan Beatty
Director	Al Petrie

State SIR Newsletters:

"The Rooster Crows" newsletter is published monthly by the SIR State President and has the latest news from SIR.

The "**State SIR Happenings**" newsletter has evolved from a general newsletter to one specifically about statewide activities, such as travel, golf, bowling, and fishing.

You can find the latest copies online at:

Newsletters - Google Drive (click on the link).

Walking Group:

*(Article by **Richard Lundblad**)*

The walking group meets every **Tuesday morning at 10 am**, weather permitting.

We have been leaving from Cypress Point and go for coffee afterwards. Come join us and bring a friend! If you would like to be on our email list, contact me at:

richardlundblad@gmail.com

707-888-8386

Tsingtao *(a **John Weaver** Story)*

The city of Tsingtao is on the northeast coast of China on the Shandong Peninsula. During the war, we had our landing strip several miles south and west of Tsingtao, surrounded by huge fields of agriculture. It was 1945, the war was over, the Japanese had been repatriated, and the Chinese farmers would line both sides of the only road that allowed them to take their produce to market. This same road was also the only way we could drive to town when we finished our work each day at the airstrip.

We used large trucks to be transported into town when our workday was over. Several trucks were required to move a squadron of technicians and their flight crews. About 30 of us would hop in the back, stand, and hold onto the fencing that surrounded the open truck bed.

One day we were riding into Tsingtao when a roadside farmer decided that this was the time to cross the road. Suddenly, he pushed his cart out in front of our truck. To avoid hitting this field worker, our driver violently turned his steering wheel, causing all the passengers standing in the back to be thrown off balance. Some of us fell to the truck floor while others were thrown against and through the wooden fencing, out of the truck, and one poor soul went under a truck wheel and was killed. It was a totally shocking incident, never to be forgotten by those who had made that trip. Future trips were modified with safety in mind, and never did such an accident happen again.

Our last few rides were more controlled, and our visits included some self-guided tours, including a live stage play of “Madame Butterfly.” The city is very attractive and reminded me of San Francisco, for there were many hills and the city sat on a bay. Tsingtao Beer originated there and was first brewed in 1903. When we arrived, there were only brown bottles with no labels. It would probably be a good place to visit today.

Five Receive IDMP Pins

*(Article by **Gordon Boultbee**)*

Five members received **I’m Doing My Part** (IDMP) pins at the July luncheon. They are Sir **Hap Culp** for sponsoring Dick Azevido; Sir **Charles Kennemore** for sponsoring Michael Cuthrell; Sir **Bob Reuther** for co-chairing our Community Involvement Project at the Redwood Empire Food Bank (sorry for the wait, Bob!); Sir **Jack Rosetti*** for sponsoring Richard Lundblad (in May 2022!) and Sir **Peter Vigil** for sponsoring Chris Riggins. The IDMP pin is a one-time award for sponsoring a new member or serving in a branch leadership position for 12 consecutive months. They are handed out approximately quarterly at a monthly luncheon to members who have earned the award.

*This was Jack Rosetti’s first luncheon since the COVID pandemic! Likewise for Sir **Jim Dale**. Thanks to Sir **Fred Rose** for reaching out to them and encouraging them to return to our luncheons!

Bob Reuther, Jack Rosetti, Peter Vigil, Charles Kennemore, Hap Culp, and Big Sir Art Appling.

One New Member Inducted in July

Bob Cook was inducted by Big Sir Art Appling at the July luncheon. Bob was sponsored by Len Grosso and was formerly a member of Rohnert Park Branch #132, which no longer exists. Bob was an auto mechanic with Henry Curtis Ford.

Attracting the Next Generation of SIR Members

(Article by Mike Cuthrell)

SIR Branch 17 has a long history of providing fellowship, activities, and community service opportunities for retired men. While our membership remains strong, the average member age is 78.5. Branch leadership recognizes the importance of attracting younger retirees and developing the next generation of members and leaders to ensure the branch remains vibrant and sustainable.

To better understand the interests and perspectives of younger members, Recruiting Chair, Mike Requarth, and past Big Sir, Neil Wheeler, asked Mike Cuthrell to organize a small working group of members under age 70. This group was informally referred to as the "Young Guns." Along with Mike, the group included John Dutil, Charles Kennemore, Tim Knapp, and Mike Trenholm.

The Young Guns were asked what originally attracted them to SIR, how satisfied they have been with their membership experience, what ideas they had for attracting and retaining members under age 70, and what would encourage them to take on future leadership roles. While the group was intentionally small and not intended to be statistically representative of the entire membership, their responses provided valuable insights from members who closely resemble the demographic Branch 17 hopes to attract in the years ahead.

One of the most encouraging findings was that the Young Guns believe Branch 17 does not need to make major organizational changes or to completely revamp its offering of existing activities to attract younger retirees. The group instead suggests placing greater emphasis on recruitment efforts such as increasing personal invitations that clearly communicate the social and lifestyle benefits of membership. *(cont'd on right)*

(cont'd from left)

They recommended helping new members become engaged early through introductions, mentoring, and participation in activities. While the group suggested a few additional activities that may appeal to younger retirees, they felt Branch 17 already offers an impressive variety of programs.

Finally, they emphasized the importance of developing future leaders by clearly defining leadership roles, sharing responsibilities among volunteers, and gradually introducing members to leadership opportunities.

The feedback was presented to the Branch Executive Committee (BEC) at its July 16 meeting. The committee agreed that several ideas could be implemented in the near term, while others merit additional discussion and consideration.

If you'd like to learn more, click HERE: https://www.sir17.org/uploads/1/2/3/8/123881033/sir17_young_guns_survey_summary.pdf to view the presentation and see the group's recommendations in greater detail.

Space can be pungent! Astronauts have described it as smelling like gunpowder or burnt steak. Scientists believe that the hydrogen sulfide found in the atmosphere of Uranus means that it smells like farts. Sounds like a place to avoid!

NON-RESPONSIBILITY DECLARATION

All activities arranged for, or by, or sponsored by SIR INC., and its Branches are for the convenience and pleasure of the members and their guests who desire to participate. SIR, INC., and its Branches do not assume any responsibility for the well being or safety of the participants or their property, in any matters pertaining to said activities.