



# THE MAIL POUCH



Website: [branch69.org](http://branch69.org)

Facebook: Pony Express SIR Branch 69

**The Pony Express Branch #69**  
**December - 2024 Edition**

John Popadak, Editor



## CONNOR'S LUCK OF THE IRISH

In the month of December, there are several exciting events taking place - the NCAA Conference Championship, Bowl Game Season, and of course Christmas Day, Kwanzaa, and Hanukkah.

The 2025 Caller Group has been formed and their first assignment will be the January 9th SIR 69 Membership Luncheon.

A BEC Meal Reporting Committee has been formed to look into why we have so many "No Responses", missed and excused luncheon absences; how do we approve an excused absence, and how do we collect payment for missed luncheon appointments.

The SIR 69 Holiday Christmas Party will be held on December 12th. The Christmas Party is a great social time and fun loving for the membership. At this time, 78 meals have been called in to the Dante Club. SIR 69 Member Les Kurtz & Joyce & Alan of the group "Mischief" will be performing at our Christmas Luncheon.

The nominees for the 2025 Branch Executive Committee were inducted at the November 14th Membership Luncheon.

Hopefully, everything has been healthy and enjoyable for your family. Looking forward to see everyone at the SIR Branch 69 Holiday Luncheon on December 12th. The last official action of the 2024 Big SIR Connor Chin.

**Connor "Lucky Irish" Chin, Big SIR**

**Cell Phone: 1 (916) 601-1854**



## COOP'S CORNER



Christmas Loaves and Fishes" recounts a heartwarming tale of a group of young people who, dressed as Santa Claus, visited a hospital to spread holiday cheer. Over the years, their charitable efforts expanded to include poor children in the neighborhood. One Christmas Eve, they discovered a large group of children waiting for Santa in a squatters' area.

Everyone was stunned, except Santa. He was in a panic. He knew he didn't have enough toys for all these kids. Eventually, however, not wanting to disappoint the children, he decided to give whatever toys he had only to the youngest, smallest children. When the presents ran out, he'd just have to explain to the bigger kids what had happened.

So moments later he found himself perched on top of a car's hood as these 30 or more sparkling clean children, dressed in their best clothes, lined up in order of height, with the smallest first, for their moment with him. As each anxious child approached, Santa dipped into his bag, his heart heavy with dread, hoping to find at least one more toy. And by some miracle, he found one each time he dipped. And as the last of the children received a present, Santa looked into the now deflated bag. It was empty—empty as it should have been 24 children ago.



With a sigh of relief, he let out a hearty "ho-ho-ho" and bade the kids farewell. But as he was about to enter one of the cars (the reindeer, apparently, had the day off), he heard a child scream: "Santa! Santa! Wait!" And out of the bushes rushed two little children, a boy and a girl. They had been asleep.

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## December Birthdays

Mark Kraut	12/01	
Ken Sawitzky	12/02	82 Years
George Langford	12/06	81 Years
Dwight Zook	12/06	81 Years
Ed Linn	12/14	88 Years
Greg Schweitzer	12/14	
Ron Hutcheson	12/16	
James Aylett	12/19	
Gary Lukins	12/25	
Rich Taylor	12/25	88 Years

## December Anniversaries

Bill and Betty Mullen	12/07	50 Years
Rod and Cheryl Lukins	12/08	51 Years
Richard and Rosemary Slocum	12/10	
Conrad and JoAnn Cookman	12/20	58 Years
Paul and Carolyn Ogden	12/21	
Larry and Nancy McLeod	12/23	



## CONGRATULATIONS!

Special CONGRATULATIONS go out to Bill and Betty Mullen on their 50th wedding anniversary!

# THE 2025 CALLERS



The 2025 Callers (from left): Steve Brandenburg, Mark Kraut, Robert Schrupf, Bernie Moreno, Steve Haakenson, Marty Miller, Wing Tse, and Connor Chin. Insets: Bob Clanton and Richard Terrell.

The Callers are responsible for contacting the members on their call list to determine which members will be attending the upcoming monthly membership meeting.



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

## SIR Jesse Starkey

2530 Andrade Way  
Sacramento, CA 95821  
(916) 634-8606  
jstarkey21@comcast.net  
Sponsor: Robert Schruppf



With his father in the Air Force, Jesse was born at Travis AFB in Fairfield. His family moved all over the country as he grew up, but they finally settled in Sacramento as Jesse entered high school. After high school, Jesse went to Sac State and graduated with a degree in economics.

Jesse went to work in the insurance industry and before long became a Workman's Comp payroll auditor. Later, he became a claims adjuster, again for Workman's Comp. He retired in 2021.

Jesse is planning to join our Monday golfing program and he hopes to improve his golf game and play in our tournaments. He is an active poker player, works on his house projects and keeps fit with walking.

Birthday: April 26, 1959

## SIR Ken Barber

7259 Larchmont Drive  
North Highlands, CA 95821  
(916) 634-8606  
kviper3@gmail.com  
Sponsor: Lieutenant Coopwood



Ken was born in Lake Charles, Louisiana, where his father was stationed in the Air Force. He moved around a lot with his family growing up and ended up in Sacramento when his father was stationed at McClellan AFB here. After high school, Ken went to American River College for two years, worked in a warehouse and then in a group home for three years. He joined the Air Force Reserve but soon transferred to the Army Reserve. He served in Desert Storm in 1991 before ending his military service.

Once he returned to California, he joined WECA, an apprentice program for electricians. After working non-union for a couple years, Ken joined Local 340 and became a union electrician for 25 years. He retired last year.

Ken likes bowling, he helps Lieutenant Coopwood with his drone business, and spends time working on his cars, including a Mustang project car.

Birthday: November 26, 1958



Big SIR Connor Chin (far right) welcomes new members Jesse Starkey (left) and Ken Barber (3rd from left) to the branch while their sponsors, Robert Schruppf and Lieutenant Coopwood, look on.

## NEXT GENERAL MEETING

Thursday **January 9, 2025**

Dante Event Center, 2330 Fair Oaks Blvd., Sacramento  
95825

Check-In and Social Hour: 11:00 am to 12:00 noon  
General Meeting, Lunch,  
and Speaker: 12:00 noon - 2:00 pm

## COOP'S CORNER

*Continued from Page 1*

Santa's heart sank. This time he knew for sure he had no more toys. The bag was empty. He had seen it himself. But as the out-of-breath kids approached, he summoned up some extra courage and dipped into the bag one more time. And—lo and behold—there were indeed two more presents in the bag.

That group of friends, now all grown adults, still talk about this miracle on Christmas morning. They still have no explanation for it, other than the fact that it happened.

This was a true story told by the Santa that handed out the gifts. Miracles can still happen if we just give God a chance to assist us.

**Lieutenant Coopwood, Little SIR**

## BRANCH 69 MEETING ATTENDANCE IN 2024

Month	Members	Attendees	Percent
January	133	99	74%
February	134	96	72%
March	134	78	58%
April	135	90	67%
May	137	75	55%
June	139	86	62%
July	136	82	60%
August	136	93	68%
September	136	80	58%
October	136	91	67%
November	138	93	67%

State SIR sets the goal at 70% attendance.

To maintain membership, a member is required to attend one-half of the regular Branch monthly luncheon meetings within the previous twelve consecutive month period, unless the Branch BEC has approved different attendance requirements (State SIR Policy 25; Bylaw 18).

# 2025 BOARD MEMBERS



Your 2025 Board Members are sworn in by Warren Senegal (far right). The Board Members present are (from left) Treasurer Hal Copperberg, Assistant Secretary Alan Weinel, Secretary Bernie Moreno, Little SIR Robert Schrupf, Big SIR Lieutenant Coopwood, and Director Connor Chin.



# GOLF NEWS



**Rick Hom—Regular Course**



**Terry Block—Progressive Golf Club**



## UPCOMING TOURNAMENTS

December 5 - Diamond Oaks - \$56

## NOVEMBER RESULTS

### Bing Maloney (11/07) - Turkey Shoot

*The unanimous consensus was that we had a lot of fun on a beautiful Fall day. There were some outstanding net scores and the results were very close with a number of tiebreakers required, which just goes to show that finishing strong is worthwhile. Congratulations to our winners and to everyone who participated.*

1st Low Net, 2nd Low Net, 3rd Low Net, 4th Low Net

1st Flight: Rick Hom, David Busch, Tom Page, Joe Riley

2nd Flight: Jim Svobodny, William Berndt, Alex Canada, Dan Nelson

3rd Flight: Rod Lukins, Russ Prophet, Paul Woods, Bob Clanton

CTPs: David Busch, Carl Hefner, and Alex Canada

### Emerald Bay (11/15) - Stroke Play

*A cold and foggy start (and some of us had golf games that never warmed up, i.e. mine). Tough pin placements on nearly-immaculate, fast greens made this quite a challenging short course. Many favorable comments.*

1st Low Net, 2nd Low Net, 3rd Low Net

1st Flight: Pat Quinn, Bill Katsifolis, Bob Baker

2nd Flight: Jim Svobodny, Bill Mullen, Alex Canada

3rd Flight: Ernie Flores, Bob Clanton, Steve Haakenson

CTPs: Joe Riley, Dan Nelson, Ernie Flores, Nate Gauff, and Russ Prophet

## UPCOMING TOURNAMENTS

December 16 - Elkhorn - \$51

## NOVEMBER RESULTS

### Alister Mackenzie (11/04)

*The weather could not have been better for the 4 Person, 2 Best Ball Shamble.*

1st Place Team: Terry Block, Alex Canada, James Garror, and Bill Katsifolis

2nd Place Team: Mark Machado, William Berndt, Bill Auch, and Dan Nelson

3rd Place Team: Rick Hom, Jack Osborne, Ernie Flores, and Jim Sprifke

4th Place Team: Jerry Buhlert, Fred Smith, Bill Mullen, and Conrad Cookman

### Bartley Cavanaugh (11/11)

Low Gross: Jerry Buhlert

Low Net: Tom Page

1st Flight Winners: Terry Block, Jack Osborne, and Jim Svobodny

2nd Flight Winners: Dan Nelson, Mark Machado, and Mr. Jones

3rd Flight Winners: Alex Canada, James Garror, and Jim Sprifke





# 2024 GOLF AWARDS LUNCH

## THURSDAY GOLF

- Low Net Trophy Winner: Jim Oblizalo (137)
- 2024 Player of the Year (Tie): Rod Lukins and Tom Page (177)
- Most Improved: Fred Smith (27.9 to 25.5 handicap)
- Fewest Putts: John Valdes (60)
- Closest to the Pin: Joe Riley (3.5")
- 1st Low Net, 2nd Low Net, 3rd Low Net
- 1st Flight: Jim Oblizalo, Joe Riley, Rick Hom
- 2nd Flight: Tom Page and Rus Prophet (tied), Alex Canada
- 3rd Flight: Marty Miller, Bob Clanton, Bill Mullen

## MONDAY GOLF

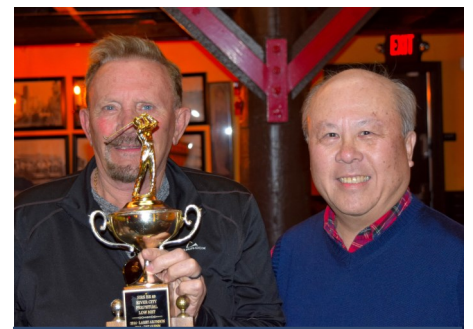
Monday Group Golf scheduled 24 tournaments in 2024, of the 24 that were scheduled 21 tournaments were played and 3 were cancelled due to weather. Monday Group averaged 18 golfers per tournament and paid out \$2,060 in tournament prize monies, \$100 in CTP, \$100 Hole in One and \$550 in Club Awards (Club Championship and Player of the Year).

This year's club awards were:

- Alex Canada - Hole in One
- Player of the Year: Terry Block (191 points)
- Club Champions:
- Low Gross Champion: Jim Oblizalo
- Low Net Champion: Terry Block

Low Gross, Low Net

- 1st Flight: Jim Svobodny, Jerry Buhlert
- 2nd Flight: Dan Nelson, Alex Canada
- 3rd Flight: Marty Miller, Paul Woods



Rick Hom presents Jim Oblizalo with the Low Net Trophy



# BOWLING NEWS

Our bowling league continues to have close battles each week and the current standings reflect that. Six of our ten teams are within four points of the league lead with only two weeks left to go in the first half of the season. So it's still any team's chance to win.

Along with the good battles, the league bowlers have had some outstanding scores. Jim Smalling rolled a 259 scratch game, followed closely by Brian Thurston's 258 game. Jim Smalling and Les Kurtz both rolled 663 scratch series. Tom Page has a 300 handicap game, while Patrick Fintel nailed a great handicap series at 788.

Every week, we have openings for substitute bowlers, some weeks just a couple, but many weeks quite a few openings. If you are feeling an urge to try a little bowling, send me an email and I will add you to the list. We had two more subs bowl for the first time last week, plus two more guys have indicated that they are available to sub—thank you guys for your support. We can always use more subs if you are interested.

### Other bowling information:

If you're in the league and want to practice bowl, identify yourself as a SIR league bowler at the front desk at Country Club Lanes and you can bowl for \$.50/game, an increase from the previous \$.25/game. It's still a huge bargain. Also, if you still have some of those old free bowling coupons from making splits, Country Club Lanes will continue to honor them.

Stay healthy, stay active,

**Tom Page, League Secretary**  
**916-488-6465**



## RECRUITING AND PUBLICITY

I was happy to see two new members inducted into our branch at the November luncheon. Our branch has done an outstanding job this year of bringing in personal friends. Rick Hom and I have been discussing the idea of using golf course demo days as a means of getting our branch advertising out to golfers. Stay tuned in 2025 for more info on this concept.

In January, the Renaissance Society will again have an open house on the Sac State campus, which I will be planning to attend to see if there might be some potential members there.

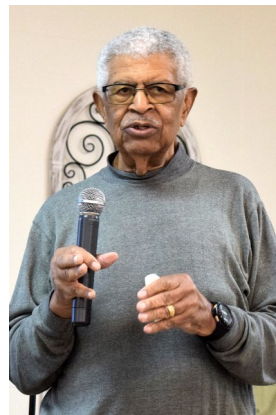
As I've mentioned previously, if any members have ideas about possible recruiting measures, please let me know. We have a couple new outreach efforts to explore in the coming months, but we can always use new ideas. Let me know if you have a brainstorm to share!

I'll look forward to seeing everyone at the December Ladies Day Holiday luncheon.

**Tom Page, Recruiting & Publicity**  
**Director**



## TED PATTERSON FAREWELL ADDRESS



Longtime member (17 years) Ted Patterson addressed the membership regarding his pending move to Texas. He thanked the members for their friendship and support over the years. He said he will miss the branch and wished all well. Ted served as Big SIR in 2013.



# BRANCH ACTIVITIES

## ACTIVITIES CHAIRMAN DINE-OUT:

November we had a wonderful time at the Lazy Dog Restaurant! We had 27 guest attend this very relaxed fun evening. A lot of people enjoyed the Buffalo meat-loaf which was the speciality that evening.



Again if you can think of a restaurant that we can go to, please let me know. The only requirements I have are that they serve liquor and we are able to get separate checks for everyone. I have nothing planned for December since we have many activities and have time with our families and dinners. I will start looking for something for January.

This past year we went to Vincent's restaurant (twice), La Porta restaurant, Catleman's restaurant (twice), Rock And Brew restaurant, Cantina Azteca, Lucille's restaurant (twice), Sammy's restaurant, and Tapa-tio Mexican restaurant.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I will email you when I find a restaurant for January!

**Mark Steffens, Activities Chairman**



## CARD CLUBS

### CRIBBAGE

The Cribbage Group will meet December 4th and 18th this month at the Country Club Bowling alley in the back room. Remember it starts at **10:00 am**. Bring your friends and come play Cribbage with us. Maybe we will do monster Cribbage this month.



See you there and bring your friends.

**Dan Nelson, Cards Chairman**  
(916) 895-5673  
[Dan.8733@yahoo.com](mailto:Dan.8733@yahoo.com)



### TEXAS HOLD'EM POKER

There will be no Texas Hold'em games in December due to the holidays. The games will resume in January.



**Robert (Bob) Schrupf**  
**Poker Night Chairman**

## INVESTMENT GROUP



The Investment club will meet on December 4 due to holidays. Information and materials will be sent out a few days before the meeting. Please contact Joe Cain for more information.

**Joe Cain, Investment Group Chairman**  
(530) 219-3709  
[jl Cain45@yahoo.com](mailto:jl Cain45@yahoo.com)





# BRANCH ACTIVITIES

(Continued)



## PING-PONG

Ping-ping is still available to all at Swanston Rec&Park on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 11am to 1pm; and at Gibbons Rec&Park on Wednesdays and Fridays from 3pm to 6pm.

**Robert Schrupf, Ping-Pong Chairman**



## BRANCH 69 CALANDER OF EVENTS AND ACTIVIES FOR NOVEMBER

- December 4 - Cards - Cribbage
- December 5 - Golf - Diamond Oaks
- December 12 - Annual Holiday Luncheon
- December 16 - Golf - Elkhorn
- December 18 - Cards - Cribbage

# LAST MONTH'S SPEAKER

Last month's speaker was Gabe Kerschner from Wild Things Animal Sanctuary. As always it was an interesting presentation as he brought several of their animals to the meeting:

The first was a brown lemur.



Then he showed the group a Madagascar Owl.

The finale was a Burmese Python. It took five of our brave souls to hold him.



Little SIR Lieutenant Coopwood presented Gabe with a Certificate of Appreciation and a bottle of wine for his presentation.



## SUNSHINE



A quick reminder to everyone, last month we said a reluctant, "Bon Voyage" to Ted Patterson as he is relocating south to San Antonio, Texas. Although we don't have an address for him, his phone number hasn't changed. So if you have a moment, shoot him a text, I'm sure he'd appreciate it.

1.) **Lennie Silva** - Suffered a Stroke and as of Nov 14 the doctors wanted to hold onto him for monitoring.

2.) **Steve Haakenson** - Will probably be out for the rest of the bowling season with a stress fracture to his left ankle.

- Update: It turns out Steve's ankle was just sprained and he has been tearing up the County Club Lanes.

3.) **Paul Sickert** - Fell and Cracked his left knee cap shortly before the October 10th Luncheon. He'll be out of commission for a while.

4.) **Otis Benning** - (Burst Vein in the area of his knee) (Pneumonia) - I received a report in early June, that Otis had burst a vein that pushed his knee out of shape and while he was in the hospital he picked up a case of pneumonia.

- Update Nov 14, 2024 Otis is doing better, he may even be driving.

- Update October 10, 2024 Unfortunately it's been passed on to me that the Blood Clots in Otis leg have gotten worse.

5.) **Thomas (Train) Walton** - (Recovering from Cancer) (Battling with Diabetes) The doctors, in an attempt to save his foot have encased it in a box temporarily while treating it. (My guess, this will aid in circulation.)

Reach out to someone and let them know we care and they are not alone.

If you know of any of our members or immediate family with health problems give me a call at (650) 240-6019, or call Big SIR Connor Chin.

**James Aylett, Sunshine  
Chairman  
penholder19@gmail.com**



2024 Officers		
BIG SIR	CONNOR CHIN	(916) 601-1854
LITTLE SIR	LIEUTENANT COOPWOOD	(916) 206-2732
SECRETARY	BERNIE MORENO	(209) 245-6313
ASST SECRETARY	ROBERT SCHRUMPF	(916) 897-7114
TREASURER	HAL COPPERBERG	(916) 722-2606
ASST TREASURER	JIM SPRIFKE	(209) 200-2107

Directors		
PBS ALAN WEINEL	(209) 843-1804	JOHN POPADAK (916) 662-0695
BLAKE THOMSON	(916) 922-5227	RON PETERS (916) 847-7196
PBS TED PATTERSON	(916) 607-3050	PBS PAUL SICKERT (916) 396-6230

State Officers	
STATE PRESIDENT:	DALE DECKER
AREA 4 REPRESENTATIVE:	JACK REEFER

Recruitment, Activities, Member Relations & Publicity (RAMP)		
RECRUITING/PUBLICITY/BIO	PBS TOM PAGE	(916) 488-6465
ACTIVITIES	PBS MARK STEFFENS	(916) 214-8650
MEMBERSHIP	JOHN POPADAK	(916) 662-0695

Committee Chairs	
Program	Lieutenant Coopwood (916) 206-2732
Newsletter	John Popadak (916) 662-0695
Chaplain	James Aylett (650) 240-6019
Roster	PBS Alan Weinell (209) 843-1804
Audit	George Langford (650) 823-5493
Nominating	PBS Alan Weinell (209) 843-1804
Attendance	Mark Kraut (916) 929-3494
Orientation	John Popadak (916) 662-0695
Information	John Popadak (916) 662-0695
Sunshine	James Aylett (650) 240-6019
Web Site	Ross Martin (916) 427-0559
Picnic	PBS Jerry Schroeder (916) 801-2530
Activities	PBS Mark Steffens (916) 214-8650

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES CHAIRMEN		
Golf (RC)	Rick Hom	(916) 395-7433
Golf (PGC)	Terry Block	(916) 686-0797
Bowling	PBS Tom Page	(916) 488-6465
Book Club	PBS Alan Weinell	(209) 843-1804
Cribbage	Dan Nelson	(916) 895-5673
Dine-Out	PBS Mark Steffens	(916) 214-8650
Investmnt Gp	Joe Cain	(916) 219-3709
Picnic	PBS Jerry Schroeder	(916) 801-2530
Ping Pong	Robert Schrupf	(916) 897-7114
Poker Night	Robert Schrupf	(916) 897-7114
River Cats	Dennis Kramer	(530) 312-3896
Wine Tasting	Dennis Kramer	(530) 312-3896

Branch Apprl <https://sirinc.org/apparel-and-signage>

### Honored Members

#### HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS

PBS TOM PAGE  
PBS JIM PORTERFIELD  
PRD WARREN SENEGAL  
PBS LENNIE SILVA  
PBS RON HUTCHESON

#### DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS

PBS PAT QUINN

#### SENIOR CERTIFICATES

PBS WARREN SENEGAL  
SIR KEN TOWNS  
SIR VERNON FREEMAN  
SIR HEMAN SMITH  
SIR CHARLES DANT  
PBS ARNIE KELLER  
SIR SIDNEY NEWMAN

Check out the State SIR newsletter "Happenings" for information about statewide SIR activities and other branches by clicking on the Rooster at the right.



**NON-RESPONSIBILITY DECLARATION:** ALL ACTIVITIES arranged or sponsored by Sons In Retirement, Inc. and its branches are for the convenience and pleasure of its members and their guests who desire to participate. Sons In Retirement Inc. and its branches do not assume any responsibility for the well-being or safety of the participants or their property in matters pertaining in to said activities.

Checks, money orders or credit cards for Travel for one day or less (no overnight), where a bus/busses is/are used as the primary means of transportation, may be made payable to the Branch sponsoring the event. All other checks, money orders or credit cards for travel must be made payable to the travel agency. (Rule 420 & 421).

Members are obligated to attend all regular luncheon meetings unless prevented by illness or absence from the Branch locale. (Rule 60). **REQUIRED ATTENDANCE** - A member who misses three (3) consecutive luncheon meetings without having been excused by contacting the designated Branch Attendance person prior to the meeting date, and giving a valid reason, or did not attend one half of the regular luncheon meetings within the previous twelve consecutive month period. may be notified, by letter, of the pending termination of his membership in SIR. (Rule 60, 100 & 107).