

SIR BIDWELL BRANCH HISTORY

1983 to 2018

THE BEGINNINGS OF SONS IN RETIREMENT (SIR)

Damien L. Reynolds conceived the idea of **Sons In Retirement** in the Spring of 1958. Three friends, all retired, would meet with Mr. Reynolds on occasion for a friendly luncheon. He suggested that they join him in implementing his idea. A kickoff luncheon was held in Claramar Restaurant in San Mateo, California on July 23, 1958. Five friends of the four founders came to that luncheon.

The name, **Sons In Retirement** (SIR) was adopted by the 18 members of the new club at a second meeting on August 20, 1958. Because most retired men wish to have nothing to do with things pertaining to inactivity, the name seemed to give dignity to retirement...the usual lot of most men.

The guidelines of **Sons In Retirement** were set forth in **Rules and Procedures** drawn up at the time of incorporation of the Club in late 1959. Revisions in the **Rules and Procedures**, as needed, are made by the State Board of Directors of the non-profit corporation. Early guidelines were:

1. **Sons In Retirement** (SIR) was to be a luncheon club composed of men retired from full-time, gainful occupation.
2. Authorized expenses of the Branch are to be defrayed through dues and/or voluntary contributions. The amount of dues or a suggested amount for voluntary contributions shall be approved by the Branch Executive Committee (BEC). Fund raising events are not allowed.
3. The organization would espouse no political party, religion, or sect of any kind.
4. Eligible men would be invited to join after attending at least one luncheon meeting as a "guest" and being introduced by the sponsoring member.
5. The Club would meet monthly for a lunch, and a suitable program would become a part of each luncheon.

SIR began as a single Branch of nine members in 1958 and grew to 21 Branches with 5,500 members by 1968. On its 20th Anniversary in 1978, membership was 18,000+ with 75 Branches. By December 1988, membership had rapidly increased to 31,561 with 160 Branches.



The SIR Insignia: **A Rooster**. The adoption of the symbol/logo of a "Rooster," together, with the slogan: "*Promoting the Independence and Dignity of Retirement,*" sums up the feeling of accomplishment & meaning of SIR!!

SIR STATE GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION

Sons in Retirement, Inc. is a Non-profit, Public Benefit Corporation organized under the California Corporation Code. It is designated as the State Organization. Membership in the State Corporation Board Of Directors are the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Regional Directors, Area Governors, the current Big Sirs of Chartered Branches, and Corporate Officers appointed by the President. All corporate members are entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting.

SIR Branches are Non-profit, Public Benefit Corporations operating under SIR State Organization Corporate By-Laws and Standing Rules, but with separate responsibilities to the California Secretary of State, State Corporation Laws, the State Franchise Tax Board, and applicable Federal laws and regulations; including those of the IRS.

Branches, in addition, have their own By-Laws and Regulations.

An Active SIR Member has the right to vote on all matters before the Branch membership for decision, and to hold a Branch or State Office.

The Branch Executive Committee (BEC), often incorrectly referred to as the "Board of Directors," is empowered to formulate regulations governing the procedures applicable to the Branch.

Branch activities and events must be approved by the BEC, especially to provide liability insurance protection covered by the State organization. The Big Sir, Little Sir, Secretary, Treasurer, and their Assistants, and six Directors constitute the Branch Executive Committee.

SIR BIDWELL BRANCH 110 HISTORY

On April 4, 1983, Bidwell Branch 110 held its first meeting at the downtown Chico Elk's Club. At the first meeting, the designation "Bidwell Branch 110" had not yet been assigned. The branch was sponsored by "Chico Branch 63" which had grown so much in active members that it could not accommodate more members and still fit in an available luncheon venue.

The following men were selected to serve as Officers during the initial probationary period for the Branch:

Big Sir:	Robert P. Johnson	Treasurer:	Dave Aranson
Little Sir	Leonard Lloyd	Director:	Reg Thom (HLM 1994)
Secretary:	Melvin Nilson	Director:	Charles Jenkins

In September 1983, Volume One of the Branch newsletter; ***SIR Branch 110 Roosters Tale***, was published and distributed to branch members and also to officers of its other nearby branches. Seven new members were inducted in September 1983, and by April 23, 1984, when the branch charter was received, the active membership had grown to 118 Charter Members. In the late 1990's, the branch was flooded with applications for membership, reaching its peak of

295 in May 2000. A waiting list was formed and it took up to 14 months waiting on the “Guest” list for an opening to occur in order to become a member.

During this time, under the direction of Travel Chair Mackay “Mac” Martin, Branch 110 had a popular, vibrant and active travel group, with many varied and well attended trips each year. Perhaps most notable of the travel events were Mac’s ***Mystery Trips***. Travelers would sign up without knowing the itinerary....only the length, cost and hints at clothing which might be needed. These trips could be as short as a day, or up to a week long. For all these trips, Mac and his wife Edith would pre-travel the routes, checking out accommodations and sights to see. The Mystery Trips were always well attended, and rated the highest! Since most mystery trips were by motor coach and often involved “picnic lunches,” Mac had a group of well-organized helpers to load, unload and set up tables and chairs, and set out edibles.

State SIR concerns about potential liability led to increased requirements for liability insurance and financial responsibility statements from travel vendors and service providers. This dramatically increased the paperwork requirements for planning trips, reduced the number of potential service providers, and increased costs for trips. The resulting reduction in the number and scope of the very popular branch and state travel opportunities may have played a significant role in decreasing the number of new membership applications.

During 2001 – 2015 the membership gradually declined as those unable or unwilling to maintain an “active” status was greater than the number of applications sponsored for membership. As of January 1, 2018, there were 179 Active Members. During this time, statewide, membership declines occurred in all SIR branches, and many branches have been closed.

Up to 2006-07, Branch 110 had been well known in our community as a reservoir of volunteers for the many charitable activities in Chico. Newspaper articles and photos covered our volunteer activities such as filling Christmas boxes, filling baskets of food for the poor, and volunteering to serve food at free dinners for the needy families. This publicity attracted more new members who wanted to accomplish still more community service in their lives.

SIR Bylaw changes restricting calls for volunteer service to aid outside agencies were prompted by some negative branch activities in the S.F. Bay Area exposing possibility of lawsuits. Orders were sent to all the Branches involved to cease advertising these charitable events in their Branch meetings. No longer could a member Sir stand up during the meeting and announce that there would be a need for some volunteers to distribute food boxes to the needy, serve as waiters at free dinners for the homeless, etc.

In 2005 Statewide SIR Bylaws Article2: RULE 13 was revised:

“Sons In Retirement, Incorporated, and its Branches shall not support, promote, endorse or otherwise act to benefit, directly or indirectly, any other entity, cause, or crusade; or any charitable or civic project no matter how worthy.... Actions prohibited by this rule (Rule 13) shall include, among other things:

- a. Inclusion of material referred to above in Branch bulletins or distributing or making available such literature at Branch or State meetings or events.
- b. Solicitation of business or solicitation for volunteers, collection or distribution of funds, materials or other assistance by any person or persons at any luncheon or other meeting of the Branch or State.
- c. Inclusions of statements, displays or other verbal or graphic material referred to above at luncheons and other meetings or events of the Branch or State...(Revised 11/15/05)(04/08/15)’

These orders created great consternation amongst our Branch 110 leaders and members because of all the great bonds we had created with our local communities for over 20 years since our inception. The strict prohibition, and the decline in branch membership has resulted in a dramatic drop in the number of men seeking to join Branch 110, as well as the numbers of Sirs able to sponsor new members.

The Branch moved its monthly luncheon meeting from the downtown Elks Lodge to the Chico Holiday Inn in mid 1990's. Then, in January 2005, to accommodate its increasing membership numbers with a larger meeting room and to have more available parking, the Branch moved to Chico Elks *Manzanita Place*.

In January, 2010 Past Big Sir Carl Waters recommended that Branch 110 create a branch web site, and he agreed to serve as our first webmaster. In January, 2017 Ron Braziel agreed to take over the webmaster role and to implement the BEC's goals to reorganize, update, and expand the site to make it compatible with the State SIR website format; with the goal of improving access for branch members, and to provide for convenient dissemination of public information.

As years passed and as membership numbers grew, the Branch Executive Committee was expanded by adding two assistant secretaries, two assistant treasurers, and four more director positions. In 2018 a Database Manager position was added to the BEC to replace the 2nd Assistant Secretary.

Routine Operations and Procedures

The monthly luncheon is held on the 4th Monday of each month called to order at 11:30 a.m. The Branch Executive Committee convenes at 9:30 a.m. When needed, a new member orientation is conducted at 10:30 a.m.

Each year the incoming Big Sir appoints interested members to branch-wide positions necessary to the operation of the Branch in the coming year.

--Activities Oversight Committee	--House Manager	--Program Committee
--Attendance Comm.	--Jokester	--Quartermaster
--Audit Comm.	--Maitre D	--Recruitment Committee
--Bulletin Editor	-- Membership Relations Committee	--Rooster Cage/Drawing
--Chaplain & Sunshine	--Roster Editor	--Song Leader
--Food Liaison	--New Member Orient.	--Webmaster
--Greeters	--Piano Virtuoso	

There are no required membership dues in Branch 110. Branch operating funds are raised by a “pass the basket” donation at each luncheon meeting (typically each member contributes two dollars), and by a share of a drawing for prizes held after the close of each luncheon meeting.

To maintain active membership, a member must attend a minimum of six luncheon meetings in the past 12 calendar months. Meetings attended at other SIR Branches may be counted as attendance. Typically 60-70% of active members attend the branch luncheon meetings.

Check-in for the luncheon meeting involves issuance of an individualized badge to each member, payment for the lunch (full lunch or salad only), optional prize drawing tickets, and information stations for upcoming activities and events. In late 2018, the original 30 year old membership badges were replaced with new, large print, easier to read badges.

The luncheon meetings are opened with a non-denominational invocation, an “group sing,” recognition of members celebrating birthdays that month, and introduction of guests by their sponsors. When needed there is an induction of newly approved members and announcements of upcoming events.

A key element of the lunch meeting is a speaker chosen to present for topics relevant to the membership; often local, informational, interesting, and to provide a chance to follow up with questions from the audience. After the meeting is adjourned, a drawing is held for prizes

Each year the Branch offers several all-branch, no host events, for members and guests: Spring Ladies Day, Fall BBQ and a “dressy” Christmas Party. Each event is coordinated by committees appointed by the Big Sir.

Members have organized many interest based activities groups, with golf, travel and the supper club usually involving the greatest numbers of participants. Only active members of the Branch, and their guests, are eligible to participate in an recognized branch activity. Interest activities groups as of 2018 are:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| --Bridge | --Golf | --Supper Club |
| --Cars, Coffee & Donuts | --Hiking | --Travel |
| --Dominoes | --Pinochle | --Wine Club |
| --Genealogy | --Piscatology | --Woodworking |

Membership Roster

Each year, the Branch publishes a ***SIR 110 Membership Roster*** to be made available at the January meeting of the new year for distribution to all active members and then to new members following their membership approval. This document is more than just a roster of members. Its sections contain:

- Annual Calendar of upcoming luncheon and BEC meeting dates
- Branch Executive Committee members with contact information
- Committee and activity chairs and assistants with phone numbers
- SIR State President and Branch 110’s Regional Director and Area Governor
- For each active member as of December, a listing of his name, nickname, wife name, home and mobile phone numbers, email address, retirement occupation, and a photograph; for easier identification.

SIR 110 Honorary Life Members (HLM)

HLM status is awarded by the ***SIR State Board of Directors*** upon recommendation of the Branch BEC for outstanding service to the branch.

1994	Reg Thom*	2005	Jack Lutz (PBS, Senior HLM)
1994	Fred Hotes (PBS, PAG, PRD, HLM)*	2009	Len Whitegon (HLM)*
		2009	Ken Edson (PBS, PAG, PRD, HLM)
1995	Bob Bruner (HLM)*		
1996	Charlie Howard*	2013	Eugene “Gene” Parker (PBS, PAG, PRD, HLM)*
1997	Ellsworth Faris*		
2001	Guy Besnard (PBS, HLM)*	2016	Ken Jensen (PBS, HLM)
2003	Mackay “Mac” Martin*	2016	James ‘Jim’ Kirks (PBS, HLM)
2005	Rev. Robert “Bob” Scott*	2016	Ray D. Rolls (HLM)

Abbreviation Key: (PBS) Past Big Sir (PAG) Past Area Governor
 (PRD) Past Regional Director (HLM) Honorary Life Member
 *Deceased

Bidwell Branch 110 Past Big Sirs

1983	Bob Johnson*	2003	Bob Ponath*
1984	Bob Johnson*	2004	Dave Bisson*
1985	Leonard Lloyd*	2005	Ken Jensen (HLM)
1986	Fred Hotes* (PAG, PRD, HLM)	2006	Pete Lashmet*
1987	Fred Whipple*	2007	Bill Bebensee
1988	Lloyd Jones*	2008	Jim Kirks (HLM)
1989	Cal Sanders*	2009	Carl Waters
1990	Bill Geha*	2010	Don Wilson* 1 st 6 mo.
1991	Don Cloud*	2010	Skip Reager 2 nd 6 mo.
1992	Gene Parker* (PAG, PRD, HLM)	2011	Skip Reager
1993	Larry Keown* (PAG)	2012	Mel McLaughlin*
1994	Guy Besnard* (PAG)	2013	Bill Jemison
1995	Ben LaPlante	2014	Craig Lindquist
1996	Bob Coy*	2015	James Braziel (PAG, PRD)
1997	Jack Lutz (HLM)	2016	Norm Stump 1 st 6 mo.
1998	Fred Reith*	2016-	Keith Johnson 2 nd 6 mo.
1999	Tony Fasolino	2017-	Keith Johnson
2000	Stewart McLay	2018	Dave Rush
2001	Bob Purvis	2019	Phil Morgan
2002	Ken Edson (PAG, PRD, HLM)		*Deceased

SIR BRANCH 110 1983 – 2018 HISTORY ENDS HERE

Ken Edson, Editor
September 2, 2018