



INCORPORATED

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TAMALPAIS BRANCH NO. 47



# TAMAL TALK

A SIR PUBLICATION

A Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation of Retired Men Devoted to the Promotion of Independence and Dignity of Retirement.

Big Sir --	Doug Twitchell	415-897-1759
Little Sir--	Frank Ghazzagh	415-505-7931
Treasurer-	Bill Stewart	415-990-2010
Asst Treasurer	Will Kaefer	415-9271043
Secretary -	Ned Lawrence -	415-595-1092
Asst Secretary	Alan Thomas	415-457-4576

Luncheon Meeting:  
**McINNIS GOLF CENTER, SAN RAFAEL**  
Fourth Tuesday of the month  
Happy Hour at 11:00 am, as always

Editor/Publisher - Ron Kosciusko —415-435-0650  
Attendance Committee—415-881-7477

Directors: Jake Solomon, Jim Kleiser, George Brown, Bob Gonzalez, Rick Coburn

State President - Ed Benson [ebensonbwa@aol.com](mailto:ebensonbwa@aol.com)  
Region 3 Director Dennis Pangburn [pang1@comcast.net](mailto:pang1@comcast.net), Area 6 Governor - Sandy Grieve [agrieves1@comcast.net](mailto:agrieves1@comcast.net)

MARIN COUNTY

DECEMBER 2020  
OUR 47TH YEAR

Vol. XLVII No. 12

## BIG SIR'S MESSAGE

**IMPORTANT NOTICE: DUE TO COVID-19 (The Corona Virus) SIR LUNCHEONS AND ALL SIR ACTIVITIES ARE CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving. This has been a very challenging year but we do have many things to be thankful for.

Several weeks ago we received updated guidance from our state leadership that we must suspend all SIR in-person activities. This applies to those activities that had been previously approved (hiking, golf, bocce). This suspension will remain in effect until we are given the clearance to resume.

On a sad note, we lost our member Harry Forst on November 5<sup>th</sup>. Our thoughts go out to his family during this sad time.

There is no planned speaker for December. Our Little SIR is working on obtaining speakers for next year. If you have any suggestions, please send a note to Frank Ghazzagh.

Please keep safe and well.

**Doug Twitchell, BIG SIR BRANCH 47**

## **BRANCH 47 BUSINESS**

SIR Branch 47 Board Meeting  
Tamalpais Branch  
Zoom meeting from members' homes  
November 23, 2020

Meeting was called to order at 10:30 a.m. by Big Sir Doug Twitchell and a quorum was determined to be logged in. It was reported that Branch 47 member Harry Forst had recently passed away.

**Attendees:** Doug Twitchell, Frank Ghazzagh, Rick Coburn, Jake Solomon, Alan Thomas, George Brown, Bob Gonzalez, Bill Stewart, Will Kaefer and Jim Kleiser and George Miller. Missing was Ned Lawrence. Minutes from Board meeting of October 20, 2020 were moved for acceptance.

**Corona Virus Updates:** There have been no known afflictions of COVID-19 among our membership as far as we know.

### **Big SIR Report:**

Big Sir Doug reported on a letter he had recently received from Ed Benson, the State SIR President. All SIR sponsored activities were to end immediately. If friends are to gather for whom SIRs is their common ground, there is now a prohibition on using the term SIR with any activity.

We will have one more membership call-in for 2020.

Discussion developed regarding two members who remain delinquent. The final dues request was mailed to them with November 30, 2020 as a final payment date. They will be removed from the membership roster in the preparation of the 2021 roster. Doug will coordinate the final processes.

Discussion developed regarding the preparation of the 2021 membership roster. Any changes in format will be discussed with Erick Young. Due to non-meeting circumstances, all eligible to receive a roster may obtain it as a PDF file. The only other way the roster can be distributed would be by regular mail, an expensive proposition. If we resume face-to-face meetings in 2021, the roster can be commercially printed at that time.

**Little SIR Report:** Our speaker for Zoom presentation on November 24<sup>th</sup> will be Jeff Davidson on: The Journey is the Destination—Walking the El Camino de Santiago. As of the present time, there will not be a speaker during December which is normal practice. Frank said some of the speakers lined up for 2021 are opposed to making a Zoom presentation. In those cases, Little SIR Frank will find replacements.

**Treasurer's Report:** At the current time there is a little more than \$10,000 in the treasury, but there is no activity for which to incur expenditures. There will be no dues assessment for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2021 which pertains to the 2021 State SIR assessment.

**Old Business:** Honorary Life Member paper work was submitted to Area 8 Governor Sandy Greive to finalize Jake Solomon's appointment to Honorary Life Membership in Branch 47.

**New Business:** The matter was raised that not all of the note takers for the Tamal Talk program write up were in favor of retaining the Tamal Talk feature. It was considered that a recording of the program is now made and obtainable by the membership. The recordings are made upon informing the speaker that the program will be recorded and upon receiving the speaker's permission. The speaker's name and topic are introduced in Tamal Talk a month prior to presentation, and a separate e-mail is sent to the membership pertaining to the program. One final write up is scheduled for 2020. Big Sir asked the Board if they felt that the written write up is still necessary. The Board members feel that the amount of information that is being disseminated is sufficient to cover program information. Those members who miss the presentation are free to view the program on video and the written coverage will be discontinued for 2021.

Board also engaged in discussion regarding outreach to membership for the Holiday season. Logistics and assignments were part of discussion and Board members offered their shared cooperation.

Next Branch 47 Board meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2021. The November meeting was moved for adjournment at 12:15 p.m.

**Alan Thomas**  
**Assistant Secretary**

## **SIR Branch 47 Speaker Review – November 2020**

### **Jeff Davidson- “Walking the El Camino de Santiago”**

The speaker for the November 2020 SIR Branch 47 Zoom talk was Jeff Davidson, former fire chief for Mill Valley. His talk was about his experiences walking the El Camino de Santiago in northern Spain. According to tradition, the remains of the Apostle James are buried at the Santiago de Compostela Cathedral in Galicia, Spain, which is the destination. The walk has been a pilgrimage for over 1000 years, and more than 20 million people have made the trek. The most common starting point is St. Jean-Pied-de-Port, on the French side of the Pyrenees mountains. That route is 800 km (500 mi) long and can involve a month or more of walking.

The scallop shell is the symbol of the pilgrimage, and it is used in signs to mark the path and to mark accommodations. The symbol is based on the legend that the body of St. James was being transported to Spain when it was lost at sea in a storm. After some time, though, the body washed ashore intact and covered with scallop shells. Jeff is an avid hiker and was inspired to do the walk after watching the movie “The Way”. The film stars Martin Sheen, whose character walks the Camino and grows spiritually. Jeff was attracted to the cultural and historical aspects of the journey. Since he had only 26 days to complete his journey, he had to average more than 20 miles per day. The more typical time is closer to 37 days.

A typical day for him would begin at 6 AM, with a first meal at around 10 AM. He would walk until the late afternoon and would stay at one of the many pilgrim’s hostels (Albergue) that are available to those with a Pilgrim’s Passport. The Pilgrim’s Passport is a document that is carried by those making the pilgrimage, and it provides a record of journey. Like a regular passport, it is stamped by officials, in this case, at each town or village along the way. Typical costs are 7-10 Euros per night for the Albergue and 10 Euros for dinner. Doing laundry every day was part of the routine.

Jeff described a wide variety of scenery, from cities to towns to countryside. The steepest part of the journey was the beginning, involving a climb up the Pyrenees from St. Jean-Pied-de-Port. He was particularly impressed by the churches along the way. One of the high points (literally) was the Cruz de Fierro (Cross of Iron), a monument on a 4300 ft mountain that is the highest location on the Camino. Pilgrims often leave rocks they’ve carried from their homes, representing leaving behind their burdens.

Jeff describes how the experience stays with him, and how it reaffirmed what was always there. I made him more appreciative of what he has. He also described “Camino Magic” which is a rare situation in life where everyone is on the same “compass heading.”

#### **Q&A- Sampling of questions:**

Is there a more popular season? Spring, summer, and early fall are best. Snow can be an issue in the colder months.

How did you deal with temperature changes? Layered clothing.

How often are there towns? Typically 8 – 10 km between towns.

Were you ever unable to find accommodations? Only once were all the albergues filled. On that night, he suffered by staying at a fancy parador for 75 Euros and enjoyed a fine meal.

Was not speaking Spanish a problem? It turns out that English is a universal language, but speaking Spanish would have been better.

How heavy was your backpack? ~30 lbs, including water.

Were blisters a problem? They can make or break your experience. The key to minimizing blisters is to choose good shoes.

How did you make payments? Things were generally paid in cash. There were enough ATMs so cash was never a problem.

#### **Reported by Erick Young**

The November 24th presentation by Jeff Davidson on The Journey is the Destination - Walking the El Camino de Santiago can be viewed at [SIR47.org/under ZOOMING then events and scroll down to Jeff Davidson or pasting this in your browser <https://youtu.be/d2Yhbh0-WUY>.](https://sir47.org/under-ZOOMING-then-events-and-scroll-down-to-Jeff-Davidson-or-pasting-this-in-your-browser-https://youtu.be/d2Yhbh0-WUY)

STATE SIR SANCTIONED ACTIVITIES



Chairman Ned Lawrence, 415 595-1092  
18 Hole Golf 2020 Season

9-Hole Golf at McInnis Park  
Mondays at 9:00 am, weather permitting  
Contact **James G Bitter** <jybitter@aol.com>  
*Date Day COURSE Start Time Comments*

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THURSDAY 09:45 WALKING/HIKING GROUP

1st week each month: Jake Solomon 415-472-3069  
2nd week each month: Pierre Terrier 415-785-4513  
3rd week each month: Al Springstead 415-250-3808  
4th week each month: Alan Thomas 415-457-4576  
5th week (if applicable): Dee Stuever 415-459-6751  
Call leaders for details about future walks and hikes

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**FROM THE INVESTORS LUNCH BUNCH**

The evolving Covid-19 strategy has had a significant impact on the economy and stockmarket. The stock market has experienced extreme daily volatility over the last several weeks. There has been a significant though partial recovery. Will the recovery continue or will there be another downward trend?

The INVESTORS LUNCH BUNCH held a ZOOM video conference meeting in April With 16 in attendance. This was conducted from the comfort and safety of each person's home. We will again meet virtually on Friday, **DECEMBER 11th at 12:30**. If you are not already in our Investors email list and would like to join the meeting, please send me your email address to [willmary@pacbell.net](mailto:willmary@pacbell.net) so that I can add you to the invitation. This will be an easy way to check out what our Investors lunch bunch is all about.

This virus and our response to it have hampered many of our normal activities. But the market goes on, and so we will too.

If you are a bit intimidated about trying a ZOOM connection, email and I will walk you through a demo.

Hope to see you there.

Will Kaefer, Investors Lunch Bunch Chair  
[willmary@pacbell.net](mailto:willmary@pacbell.net)

**SIRs BIRTHDAYS – DECEMBER**

51	CULHANE	TOM	12	30	45	75
23	GIBBS	LEWIS	12	16	35	85
57	JENSEN	NORMAN	12	12	38	82
69	LUNDGREN	EDDY	12	20	40	80
37	MILLER	GEORGE	12	13	36	84
121	POLAN	DENIS	12	5	40	80
44	PRESCOTT	DELBERT	12	18	38	82
106	SIMON	EDWARD	12	26	24	96

**MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

**Summary:**

<b>Actives -</b>	<b>108</b>	
<b>Gains:</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Losses:</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>



**Tennis Report**

There has been NO SIR Tennis the last 3 months w/ the Shelter In Place during the the Virus. Even though Tennis is considered the lowest risk of all activities, the State SIRS has not yet approved this activity! BD

**IN MEMORIAM**

**HARRY FORST**

**BRANCH 47 ACTIVITY SCHEDULE**

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**HAPPY HOLIDAYS**  
And  
**HAPPY NEW YEAR**