



**SIR BRANCH 163**

**APRIL 2024**

**NEWS AND NOTES**



## **MARCH LUNCHEON AT HODELS RESTAURANT**

**WE HAD 58 MEMBERS ATTEND AND ENJOY ANOTHER GREAT HODEL'S LUNCH AND, OF COURSE, THE DESSERTS WERE VERY POPULAR. WE DON'T GO AWAY HUNGRY!**

**JUST A NOTE OF REMINDER: IF YOU TOLD YOUR CALLER YOU WILL ATTEND BUT THEN CAN'T, PLEASE LET ONE OF US KNOW SO WE CAN CANCEL YOUR MEAL. OTHERWISE WE HAVE TO PAY FOR IT.**

# OUR SPEAKER WAS OUTSTANDING

## JOHN HOLOCHWOST



SIR JIM PENTICO INVITED JOHN TO SPEAK TO US ABOUT HIS FAVORITE SUBJECT: THE HISTORY OF OLD WEST AND KERN COUNTY. JOHN IS A RETIRED SOUTH FORK UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT AND HE SHARES HIS PASSION FOR OLD WEST STORIES IN SONG. JOHN REMINDED US THAT SONGS WERE WRITTEN TO KEEP THE HISTORY ALIVE AND NOT FORGOTTEN. HE

SANG SEVEN SONGS AND AS I LISTENED I REALIZED HOW INSIGHTFUL AND REFLECTIVE THE WORDS DESCRIBED LIFE IN THE PREVIOUS ERA. ONE OF THE MORE FAMOUS SONGS WAS WRITTEN AT A CAMP FIRE IN DEATH VALLEY – COOL CLEAR WATER, AND LARRY SANG IT BEAUTIFULLY. OTHER SONGS INCLUDED:

STREETS OF LAREDO, TI YI YIPPEE YI YAY, GHOST RIDERS IN THE SKY, GONE FOR COLORADO, ROA MAE OF BODIE. JOHN'S LAST SONG WAS IN REVERENCE OF NATURE; 'THE PLACE WHERE I WORSHIP' REMINDED ME OF THE OUTDOORS BEING REFLECTIVE OF GOD'S CREATION AND HOW WE NEED TO PRESERVE IT THROUGH SINCERE STEWARDSHIP.

JOHN REMINDED US OF 'MULE DAYS' IN BISHOP AND HOW THEY TRY TO RECREATE THE AUTHENTIC OLD WEST LIFESTYLE. IF YOU HAVE NOT GONE, TRY TO, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

JOHN FINISHED WITH A POEM ABOUT THE UNCANNY WISDOM OF AN OLD MINING PROSPECTOR.

THANK YOU JIM PENTICO FOR BRINGING JOHN TO US.

**LUNCH OUT THE SECOND THURSDAY OF THE MONTH  
HOSTED BY SIR GARY CORBELL.**



**LUNCH OUT, MARCH 14<sup>TH</sup> AT SPENCER'S ROSEDALE**

**.....AND, OF COURSE, THE FOOD WAS EXCELLENT, THE COMPANY WAS WONDERFUL, AND WE ALL HAD A GREAT TIME.**

**THE NEXT LUNCH-OUT WILL BE AT: **SI SENOR** RESTAURANT ON AIRPORT DRIVE AND CHINA GRADE APRIL 11, AT 11 A.M. CALL GARY TO RESERVE : 331-9756**

## LITTLE SIR JIM PENTICO IS RELINQUISHING HIS POST



HAT'S OFF TO YOU JIM  
PENTICO  
FOR TRYING TO BE OUR  
LITTLE SIR  
THOUGH MEDICAL  
ISSUES GOT IN YOUR  
WAY.  
WE APPRECIATE WHAT  
YOU HAVE DONE FOR  
THE BRANCH  
WE WISH YOU BETTER  
HEALTH AND WELCOME  
ANY HELP YOU CAN





**SIR RICHARD WEIGELT REPORTED THAT OUR BRANCH SUNSHINE COMMITTEE HAD NO NEW CASUALTIES ON THE BATTLEFIELD OF LIFE THIS MONTH. CAN WE GET AN 'AMEN'?**

**COINCIDENTALLY IF YOU KNOW OF A MEMBER OR A MEMBER'S FAMILY THAT HAS HAD A MEDICAL ISSUE OR A NEED PLEASE LET SIR RICHARD KNOW. 831-2086**

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***MARK YOUR CALENDARS***

***NEXT MEETING AT HODELS***

***APRIL 18<sup>TH</sup>***

***CHECK IN 11 TO 11:30***

***SEE YOU THERE AND BRING A FRIEND***

## BIG SIR JIM SHAPAZIAN



March 26, 2024

I want to give our membership a big thank you for the enthusiasm and participation I have seen recently. It has been a difficult time to see several members and their spouses with life changing health issues. Like I tell many of you older men, make friends with younger men and you will still have close friends while getting older.

I want to announce that we will be having a special guest at our next Board meeting. He is Bruce Corwin, the area representative for SIR. He will impart his knowledge of how we can be a thriving, enthusiastic group that is growing stronger and bigger. We will also let him know what we are doing to accomplish those goals and how we can do better.

I want to encourage all of you members to keep up your enthusiasm and invite friends and family to be a part of our group. Though we lost a great leader and Little SIR, Jim Pentico, to health issues, we have a new person that has been nominated for that position by the name of Don Noriel. He has a great deal of experience as a coach and a teacher and we look forward to our next Board meeting where we will vote to make him official.

I will make a special effort to get to know each of you and if I miss you, please take the time and effort to approach me. Thank you all for continuing your effort to keep our Branch 163 group one we can be proud of.

Sincerely,

Jim Shapazian, Big Sir, Branch 163



# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!!!



**WE ARE PROUD TO INDUCT TWO NEW MEMBERS INTO BRANCH 163 :**

**SIR JACK JAMES - left side**

**SIR GARY OESCH – right side**

**PLEASE REMEMBER THEIR FACES AND GREET THEM AT OUR NEXT EVENT. THANKS FOR COMING ON BOARD MEN.**

# SCAMMERS ARE TRYING TO GET YOU!!!



- DON'T TAKE THIS LIGHTLY SCAMMERS ARE AFTER YOU, YOUR PERSONAL INFO, AND MOSTLY MONEY AND ASSETS.
- THEY HAVE NO CONSCIENCE.
- THEY USE CONVINCING TRICKERY SO BE WARE
- WE CAN NO LONGER TRUST A TRUSTING VOICE. YOU MUST BE DEFENSIVE. GET A PHONE NUMBER OF THE COMPANY CALLING AND CALL THEM BACK. ASK LEADING QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE IF THEY ARE LIGIT.
- IF YOU'RE STILL NOT SURE CALL A FRIEND. DON'T TRY TO DO YOUR SEARCH BY YOURSELF. TWO MINDS ARE BETTER THAN ONE.

## TWO EXAMPLES FROM BAKERSFIELD:

1. A FRIEND OF OURS WAS CHECKING OUT OF THE SELF-CHECK AT COSTCO, RAN HIS CREDIT CARD, GOT HIS RECEIPT, AND WAS ABOUT TO WALK AWAY WHEN HE NOTICED THE AMOUNT. THE LAST ENTRY WAS A \$454 CHARGE THAT HE DID NOT PURCHASE. HE WENT RIGHT TO THE SERVICE DESK AND PLEADED HIS CASE. AN HOUR LATER HE RECEIVED THE CREDIT DUE AND WAS ON HIS WAY. THE COSTCO EMPLOYEE SAID HE'D NEVER EXPERIENCED SUCH A BOOBOO.

A FRIEND OF MY WIFE STOPPED AT A GAS STATION ON ROSEDALE AND ALLEN. FILLED UP, TOOK HER RECEIPT, AND WAS GETTING IN THE CAR WHEN SHE GLANCED AT THE AMOUNT. TO HER SURPRISE SHE WAS CHARGED FOR 270 GALLONS OF GAS. THE BEWILDERED

1. ATTENDANT HAD TO CALL THE OWNER TO FIND OUT WHAT TO DO. SHE ULTIMATELY GOT HER CREDIT BUT THERE WAS A DELAY.
2. MORAL OF THESE TWO INCIDENTS? DON'T BE IN TOO MUCH OF A HURRY TO READ YOUR RECEIPTS. AND YES, READ THEM CAREFULLY BEFORE LEAVING THE STORE.
3. REMINDER, THIS MAY NOT HAPPEN TO YOU BUT TELL YOUR KIDS. THEY NEVER LOOK NOR EVEN TAKE THE RECEIPT!

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## **NOTE:**

**REMEMBER THE B.C. CHOIR? THEIR FINAL PERFORMANCES BY THE 'MUSIC MAJORS' WILL BE ON SATURDAY, APRIL 13<sup>TH</sup>, AT 2:00 PM.**

**EDWARD SIMONSEN INDOOR THEATER**

**FREE ADMISSION**

**SO TAKE YOUR FAMILY AND BE A HERO. WON'T COST YOU A DIME, EXCEPT FOR ICE CREAM AFTERWARDS.**

**MAKE IT A DATE!**

# AN INTERVIEW WITH SIR BILL DIFEE



## SIR BILL DIFEE

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- LONG TIME SUPPORTER OF SIR
- MEMBER FOR 29 YEARS
- LIKES WHAT SIR'S DOES
- MADE LOTS OF FRIENDS OVER THE YEARS

**I HAD THE PLEASURE OF INTERVIEWING SIR BILL THIS MONTH AND ENJOYED WALKING BACK IN TIME THROUGH HIS LIFE EXPERIENCES. EVEN THOUGH HE SAYS HE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH TO SAY, I FIND HIS LIFE MOST INTERESTING.**

**BILL IS OF WELSH DESCENT. HE WAS BORN 22 JUNE 1930 SO WILL TURN 94 VERY SOON. HE WAS BORN IN HUNTINGTON PARK, LOS ANGELES, OUTSIDE OF COMPTON BUT GREW UP IN SOUTH GATE.**

**HIS DAD WORKED FOR THE SANTA FE RAILROAD IN THE REPAIR SHOP SO BILL WAS ACCUSTOMED TO TRAINS. IN FACT, THE FAMILY WOULD GET FREE PASSES FOR TRAIN TRAVEL TO AND FROM FRESNO WHEN THEY WOULD GO UP TO VISIT THEIR GRANDMOTHER. THESE WERE STEAM ENGINES, COAL FIRED! MUST HAVE BEEN QUITE A RIDE!**

**HIS FAMILY MOVED TO BAKERSFIELD IN 1945 WHEN BILL WAS 15 YEARS OLD AND HE WENT TO KERN COUNTY UNION HIGH SCHOOL AS A SOPHOMORE. THE NEXT YEAR THE NAME WAS CHANGED TO BAKERSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL, BHS AS WE KNOW IT TODAY.**

**BACK THEN EVERYONE HAD TO WORK AND BILL WAS NO DIFFERENT. HE WORKED FOR HIS DAD WHO HAD PURCHASED THE SHELL GAS STATION AT CALIFORNIA AND UNION. HE DID IT ALL BUT MOSTLY LUBE-OIL CHANGES AND PUMPED GAS. HE WORKED THERE AFTER SCHOOL AND ON WEEKENDS. (NO REST FOR THE WEARY)! WORK KEPT MOST OF THE KIDS OUT OF TROUBLE AS YOU WERE TOO TIRED AND USUALLY TOO POOR TO DO MUCH. BILL REMEMBERS WORKING THE NIGHT SHIFT AND SOME RUFFIANS CAME BY AND WERE GIVING HIM SOME TROUBLE, BUT SOME FRIENDS CAME BY SHORTLY AFTER AND RAN THEM OFF. IN THOSE DAYS CRIME WAS MINIMAL BUT WAS AROUND. 'NOTHING GOOD HAPPENS AFTER MID-NIGHT'!**

**BILL HAD A DRIVERS LICENSE WHEN HE WAS 15, ALLOWING HIM TO DRIVE SCOOTERS AND MOTORCYCLES BUT HE ALSO DROVE A CAR AROUND ONCE IN A WHILE, BUT NOT TO SCHOOL. HIS AUNT WOULD TAKE HIM TO SCHOOL IN THE MORNING BUT HE HAD TO FIND HIS WAY HOME AFTER SCHOOL. SOMETIMES HE WOULD WALK, TAKE THE BUS, (THOUGH HE COULD BEAT IT BY WALKING), OR CATCH A RIDE. BILL GRADUATED IN 1948.**

**HIS FIRST JOB WAS WITH K.C. EQUIPMENT, THE INTERNATIONAL DEALER ON 18<sup>TH</sup> STREET. HE WAS A MECHANICS HELPER AND WORKED MOSTLY ON TRUCKS AND AN OCCASIONAL TRACTOR. BY THE END OF 1949 THE ECONOMY GOT SLOW AND THEY 'LAID HIM OFF'. SO, IN 1950 BILL ENLISTED IN THE MARINES; THE KOREAN WAR HAD BROKEN OUT AND HE DID NOT WANT TO GO INTO THE ARMY AS HIS DRAFT NUMBER WAS COMING UP! HE WAS SHIPPED TO CAMP PENDLETON (OCEANSIDE) WHERE HE WAS SUBJECTED TO 'TOUGH AND RUFF' INFANTRY TRAINING.**

**IN 1951 BILL WAS SHIPPED OUT TO KOREA WHERE HE WAS ASSIGNED AS A HEAVY MORTAR ASSISTANT GUNNER, A NICE TITLE FOR FRONT LINE DUTY. THEY ACTUALLY WOULD LOCATE ABOUT A HALF MILE BEHIND THE FRONT LINES WHERE THEY WOULD SET-UP THE CANNON AND AFTER POSITIONING THE TARGET ZONE, BILL WOULD START DROPPING MORTAR SHELLS INTO THE 'TUBE'. THIS SOUNDS EASY ENOUGH DOESN'T IT? BUT THINK OF THIS: THE BASE WEIGHED 125 LBS AND WAS CARRIED BY FOUR**

**MEN; THE BARREL WEIGHED ABOUT 100 LBS AND WAS CARRIED BY TWO MEN; THE TRI-POD WAS CARRIED BY ONE MAN. THE MORTAR SHELLS ALONE WERE 25 LBS. SO A SQUAD OF FOUR MEN TO A MORTAR AND SOMETIMES WOULD HAVE TO CARRY OVER A MILE TO THEIR ASSIGNED POSITIONS—NO PAVED ROADS. THEY OFTEN FIRED AT NIGHT, BUT DAY OR NIGHT THEY SHELLED THE ENEMY AND ACCORDING TO BILL ‘WERE PRETTY EFFECTIVE’. ONE TIME HE RECALLED FIRING 200 ROUNDS TO ACCOMPLISH THE JOB. JUST THINK OF THAT: 200 X 25 CONTINUOUS LOAD AND FIRE. THAT’S EXHAUSTING!**

**AFTER KOREA BILL CAME BACK TO CAMP PENDLETON AND FINISHED HIS DUTY AS A MORTAR CANNON INSTRUCTOR. THIS MARCH 30<sup>TH</sup> WILL BE 72 YEARS SINCE HE LANDED IN SAN FRANCISCO RETURNING FROM KOREA. “TIME DOES FLY AND IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY”, SAYS BILL.**

**HE CAME BACK APRIL 6<sup>TH</sup> AND GOT MARRIED APRIL 26<sup>TH</sup> 1952. THEY MOVED TO BAKERSFIELD WHERE BILL STARTED WORKING IN AN OIL TOOL BUSINESS. IN 1957 HE WORKED FOR A GAS DISTRIBUTOR AND LATER A FIRESTONE TIRE STORE. BUT IN 1978 BILL STARTED HIS LIFETIME CAREER WORKING FOR THE BAKERFIELD POSTAL SERVICE AND SPENT 17 YEARS AS A MAIL CARRIER DELIVERING TO RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS. TRULY HE DELIVERED IN THE HEAT, THE COLD, THE RAIN, AND YES THE SNOW ON OCCASION. BILL RETIRED AFTER 17 YEARS, STARTED PLAYING GOLF THREE TIMES PER WEEK, AND DID SO FOR FIVE YEARS. WHEN I THINK ABOUT THAT THERE IS NO TELLING HOW MANY MILES BILL WALKED IN HIS LIFE CONSIDERING THE MILITARY, MAIL CARRIER, AND GOLF!**

**AFTER THAT HE WORKED PART TIME FOR THE K.C. MOSQUITO AGENCY WHICH WAS ABOUT 6 MONTHS PER YEAR. HE WOULD SCOUT THE CITY, FIND STAGNANT POOLS OF WATER, USUALLY SWAMPS AND AG HOLDING PONDS. WHEN FEASIBLE HE WOULD ‘PLANT’ FISH IN THE POOLS WHICH WOULD FEED ON THE MOSQUITOS AS THEY LANDED ON THE WATER.**

**BILL AND HIS WIFE HAD TWO SONS AND A DAUGHTER, ALL OF WHOM ARE STILL IN BAKERSFIELD. THEY HAVE 6 GRANDKIDS AND 10 GREAT GRANDKIDS! HIS FAMILY IS HIS MOST ENDEARING LIFE’S WORK AND HIS**

**GREATEST PRIDE. OH, AND HE HAS #11 ON ITS WAY IN PORTLAND WHO WILL BE NAMED AFTER BILL! THEY ARE ALREADY CALLING HIM, 'LITTLE WILLIAM'!!!!!!!. CONGRATULATIONS BILL. DO YOU WANT TO GET HIM TO SMILE? ASK HIM HOW 'LITTLE WILLIAM' IS COMING ALONG.**

**BOTH HIS SONS ACHIEVED FOOTBALL SCHOLARSHIPS WITH ONE GOING TO WASHINGTON AND ONE TO NEW MEXICO. BOTH PLAYED ONLY AS 'LONG SNAPPERS'. DO YOU KNOW WHAT THAT IS? ASK BILL. AND THEY WOULD TRAVEL TO SEE THE GAMES WHENEVER THEY COULD LOTS OF DRIVING. BUT HEY, IT IS ABOUT YOUR CHILDREN!**

**HIS DAUGHTER BECAME A LEGAL SECRETARY AND WORKED FOR CITY COUNCIL, ASSESSOR'S OFFICE, AND THE CIVIL SERVICE AGENCY.**

**BILL JOINED SIR IN SEPTEMBER 1995, OVER 28 YEARS AGO NOW. WHY? HIS BROTHER- IN- LAW CONVINCED HIM TO JOIN AND HE HAS BEEN A STEADY PARTICIPANT EVER SINCE. BILL IS OUR THIRD LONGEST RUNNING MEMBER. HE LIKES MAKING NEW FRIENDS AND TALKING ABOUT 'OLD TIMES' AS MOST OF US CAN RELATE TO.**

**I ASKED ABOUT HIS SECRET TO LONG LIFE. BILL SAID HE ALWAYS DID WHAT HE WANTED TO, LIVES A CLEAN LIFE, FINDS GREAT JOY IN FAMILY, AND 'GOOD INSURANCE'. WITHOUT THE GREAT INSURANCE HE HAS, BILL SAID HE WOULD HAVE DIED BACK IN 2010 WHEN HE HAD HIS FIRST CANCER ATTACK. HE SAID HIS FIRST SIX HOUR TREATMENT COST \$146,000. WITHOUT GOOD INSURANCE HE WOULD HAVE HAD TO FOREGO THAT TREATMENT. BILL JUST FINISHED HIS THIRD SERIES OF TREATMENTS AND FEELS VERY GOOD. THOUGH BILL IS VERY LOW KEY AND QUIET, THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT, HE IS A FIGHTER!**

**THANKYOU BILL FOR A LIFE TO EMULATE AND BE PROUD OF.**

*Larry Sitzman*

*27 March 2024*

