



DECEMBER SIR's WELCOME

FROM

BRANCH 163

TO ALL MEMBERS AND GUESTS



**WE WISH YOU A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR
From the SIR Executive Committee
To You!**



December 2023 Christmas Luncheon

We had a wonderful attendance last year to our December program and we look forward to sharing time with you and your significant other for lunch and entertainment again this year.

We will meet at Hodel's Fine Dining in the traditional 'Kern Room' on **December 19th at 11:00 A.M. {Please Mark your calendar's now so you won't forget. And, do talk to your spouse or friend now so they can schedule also. We really do this mostly for them anyhow!}**

BAKERSFIELD COLLEGE CHOIR



Dr. Jennifer M. Garrett, Director of the B.C. Choir has agreed to perform for us again this year and we feel honored to receive them. They will sing some seasonal and Christmas favorites -- sure to get us into the Holiday spirit.

Don't miss out: **December 19th**

A CHRISTMAS POEM

Christmas time is finally here.
It only comes but once a year,
And it's a time to spread good cheer
To those we love and hold so dear.

Christmas time is a time of glee,
A time when peace and love run free,
A time for those like you and me
To sit beneath the Christmas tree.

Christmas time is a time of joy,
A time to sit back and enjoy
The smile on each girl and boy,
As they play with a Christmas toy.

Christmas time is a time to share
The passing of another year.
Birth of Jesus, a joyful prayer,
To show loved ones how much we care.

Christmas time is a time for song,
A time for us to get along,
To make us feel Lord Jesus strong,
Forgive all those who did us wrong.

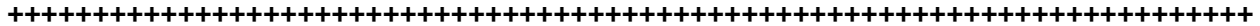
Christmas time is a time to pray,
Put love and kindness on display,
Show compassion along the way.

Christmas time should be every day!

Happy Birthday Oscar

- We are pleased to share in the honor of Oscar Chavez turning 100 years this day, 19 December
- We have a special cake for our dessert and for Oscar's delight.

Please wish Oscar a Happy Birthday when you greet him.



DECEMBER EVENTS

5th Honor Flight Breakfast 8:00 A.M.

12th SIR Lunch-out: Sugar Mill 11:00 A.M.

**19th Christmas Luncheon: Hodels Kern Room
11:00 A.M. \$20 per person. Cash only**

(Sorry but we cannot take credit cards)

Oscar Chavez 100th Birthday

B.C. CHOIR Performance

**30th Pool Buddies: Bankshots; Olive Dr. and
Roberts Lane 11:00 A.M.**



A CHRISTMAS WISH FROM OUR BIG SIR JIM SHAPAZIAN

Gentlemen, it is Christmas time again. I for one am not ready, but I never am. Yes, I've put up the outside lights but that's it. Much more to do. How about you guys? Do you still get involved in decorating for Christmas? If you do, be careful about climbing ladders as many of you should not be doing. Falls are a big part of senior injuries. Don't be a part of those statistics. Here is wishing you a very Merry Christmas with many more to come. Remember our Christmas luncheon on December 19th at Hodel's. Bring your wife or friend and get in the spirit of what Christmas is about. We'll have a great time with the Bakersfield College Choir bringing their excellent singing and joy to us all. Blessings to all of you men and your families and a special blessing to Oscar Chavez on his 100th birthday.

Jim Shapazian

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May you experience the Hope and Peace that Christmas offers



A TRIBUTE TO SIR OSCAR CHAVEZ



100 Years and Going Strong!

Sir Oscar Chavez, our elder brother, patriot, businessman, friend to many has more memories and experiences than many of us will ever have. At 100 he is a walking history book.

Oscar was born in Los Angeles December 19, 1924. The family moved around the L.A. area frequently so he attended different schools. His mother and father were separated during these early years and he and his brother lived with their mother. Oscar remembers they were poor, had very little money, and seldom could afford a 5 cent Good Humor Ice Cream!

After school and whenever possible he sold magazines and the Saturday Evening Post outside the local market. He attended Berendo Jr. High, 7th through 9th grades, where he played softball each year. He was captain of the Jr. High team and, in fact, was good friends with Gene Mauch who became a well known Major League player. Gene played for six clubs and then managed four clubs for 27 years with the distinction of being the 'winningest' manager who never won a pennant nor the World Series. Needless to say the Jr. High team was successful as well.

Oscar attended Los Angeles High School and played baseball and football. During these years Oscar continued his friendship with his future wife Angelina, who was enrolled at and was the graduating Queen at Poly High school.

Everything was going good now but, like many in that era, Oscar received his draft notice in August 1943. He was allowed to finish school and in June of '44 was taken into active military training. He was destined for the Army Air Corps but because of color blindness was retained in the Army Infantry.

While in training in Oklahoma, Oscar would play baseball for the regimental team and he recalls playing against a Major League pitcher from the Boston Braves. Oscar says 'that was quite an experience' facing a Pitcher with professional 'moves'. Did you strike out I asked? "No, I got a hit and got on base", he said. That is a mark of a good batter with a good eye.

He was sent to the Asiatic Pacific Theater 19 October 1944 starting at New Pocitian where there were some hostile Japanese but no conflicts. Oscar received his jungle training here.

Then he was sent to the Philippines where the invasion of the island of Luzon started 9 January 1945. While in port the ship beside them had a bomb explode (it was planted by Japanese divers under the water level) and which trapped 44 men below deck. Oscar says, 'As we were de-boarding a Japanese Zero strafed us and the next thing I knew, I was bleeding with shrapnel in my hip!' Other than a lot of blood loss the Doctors sewed him up and he was able to continue the landing invasion!!

They moved into the center of Luzon Island into a box canyon where the bodies and body parts of enemy soldiers were strewn all over. The stench was sobering. Clean-up forces experienced this situation frequently and is something that is hard to forget.

“We moved through the other Philippine islands and then were sent to occupy one of the island groups at Panay. Some of us were assigned to MP duty and Oscar was responsible for part of the group with police duties. Some of which turned out to be more than exciting”! On one occasion a Philippine Colonel, part of the Guerilla forces, was in the marketplace drunk and brandishing his machine gun. Because of his position, Oscar had to go in and ‘talk sense into the Colonel’ and ultimately ended the fracas peacefully. A man has to be quick-witted for this situation!

During the months of July and August of 1945 Oscar’s infantry regiment was being trained for the future land invasion of Japan. They were to be part of the diversionary forces sent to confuse the Japanese before the main invasion into the heart of the country. Fortunately for Oscar and many servicemen, the war ended and they would not experience the horrific fighting and mass casualties from the invasion.

Though the war ended in August, Oscar was sent to the southern end of Korea where there was still communist activity that needed policing. Finally, Oscar was sent home and discharged in January 1946. His time in service reads like a map: New Guinea, Southern Philippines, Luzon, American Campaign medal, Philippine Liberation ribbon with two Bronze Stars, Purple Heart, WW 2 Victory medal. Oscar was discharged at the ‘Convenience of the Government’ with Mustering Out pay of \$300! Oh, what lives are worth to the military!

Oscar enrolled at UCLA and with several part-time jobs (like making candy in a candy factory or pumping gas at a service station) was able to further his education. He and Angi married in November 1948 and with day jobs and night school, he received his California CPA License in 1954 as well as a degree in Accounting from USC on June 11, 1955. He went on to establish his own accounting firm here in Bakersfield and for 67 years offered tax and accounting work as well as advisory/consulting services.

“Being married to Angi was the best part of my life”, says Oscar. “That and the birth of both our boys: they were the proudest part of our lives. All fathers will understand this and treasure that time they are growing up in the home”.

Oscar and family lived a very active life: working, golf, tennis, water skiing, racing his '57 T-bird, and traveling. They traveled to a number of places as part of their golfing hobby including a number of New England states (lots of Lobster), England, France, Spain, Russia, Canada, Mexico, Alaska (lots of Salmon).

“It’s been a great life, until Angie passed away 17 January 2024, just 9 days short of her 100th birthday. Oscar said, “I hope others have the good fortune and long life that we experienced”.

WORST MEMORIES: Smell of hundreds of dead Japanese bodies at Luzon. Plus, not being able to take a bath for a month at a time in the jungles. “I thought I would forget these things but never did”.

WHY ARE YOU SO SUCCESSFUL? Got a good education. Long hours of study and then work. Enjoy your work. Stay physically active. Make life enjoyable.

SIR Member for 25 years enjoying golf, friendship, and socializing with men.

Oscar is a quiet unassuming individual with the admirable trait of listening well and remembering discussions. In the Army he did not complain nor bemoan his circumstance but accepted each situation as necessary and completed each to the best of his ability. He is the kind of man who makes good out of a bad situation whether it be military conflict or business issues. I am certain Oscar has had to walk from compromising situations that could have led to greater wealth or success, but his integrity would not allow it. I feel privileged to have shared this brief summary of his life experiences.

Thank you, Oscar Chavez for your service.

By: Larry Sitzman, 4 December 2024

