



**Incorporated**

SIR exists to enrich the lives of its members through fun activities, luncheons and events while making friends for life.

# THE ROOSTER'S CROW

The HOOKER OAK BRANCH #84 meets the FIRST THURSDAY of each month at  
MANZANITA PLACE,  
(inside the Elks Lodge building)  
1705 Manzanita Avenue,  
CHICO, CA, 11:30 AM

The Branch Executive Committee meets at 10:15 AM on the same day at the same place.

**SONS IN RETIREMENT,  
HOOKER OAK BRANCH #84**

Volume 47, Number 2

**February 2025**



## SIR Happenings



### Cycling Club

The February Cycling Club ride will begin at Veteran's (formerly Wildwood) Park. Weather permitting, we will ride from the park on February 7 at 10 AM. The ride will be an easy pace mainly on bike paths and will travel through the airport complex ending at the Chico Air Museum. From there we will retrace our route for a total distance of 10 miles.



For More Information Contact:  
**Tim Kressin - 951-743-1297**  
**Ken Doglio - 530-933-3921**

### GOLFERS

Branch 84 and Branch 110 tee off together for several tournaments at courses throughout the area. Now that the weather is cooperative, you can dust off your clubs, hit the range for a few practice swings, and join the fun.

For information on upcoming golf outings, please contact Paul Brossoit.

530 514 3486

**FORE!**



## SIR Branch 84-Current List of Special Interest Clubs

**Bowling Club** - Ray Quinto 530 343 6752

**Fishing Club** - Ron Ward 530- 354-5147

**Golf Club** - Paul Brossoit 530 514-3186

**Hiking Club** - Rich Utter (Branch 110) 925-922-7020

**Movie Club** - Greg Sanger 530-518-7924

**Writing & Book Club** - Chip Meriam 530-228-1544

**Special Activities Club** - Alex Van Patten 530-566-2151

**Cycling Club** - Tim Kressin 951-743-1297

### BOWLING CLUB

The Bowling Club meets every Tuesday night for drop-in open bowling, from 6:00 PM to 8:30 PM, at the Bolero Bowling Center in Chico.



Ray Quinto  
530 343 6752

## OFFICERS

BIG SIR,	Chip Meriam-----	228-1544
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TREASURER ASST.,	Ray Quinto-----	343-6752

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HOUSE MANAGER,	Jim Hertl-----	897-0402
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SPECIAL ACTIVITIES,	Alex Van Patton-----	530-566-2151
SUNSHINE,	Jim Hertl-----	897-0402
TRAVEL,	Lowell Terrell-----	895-1737
WRITING & BOOK CLUB,	Chip Meriam-----	225-1544

## FROM THE BIG SIR

Chip Meriam



Greetings, fellows.

It seems our newsletter editor got a bit carried away with the February Valentines theme. If you're observant, you'll find a ♥ on every page. "No," he tells me. "I don't have an affinity for frilly things. I just added the heart graphics as a service to our readers. "You know, to help them avoid the awkward and uncomfortable circumstance of forgetting that Friday, February 14, is Valentines Day." So there you have it. Thanks to our editor, you have been warned!

This month, I want to speak to the value of belonging to the SIR organization.

In fact, membership has been posited to have a health benefit by various medical care coverage groups including one with which you're likely well acquainted—Medicare. You see, loneliness, especially for older adults, tends to contribute to adverse health issues and a shorter expected life span. But participation in a social activity has been proven to help reduce or stave off loneliness. Indeed, social activity is what SIR is all about!



One of the benefits being explored by the State SIR Board is a program called "Grouper". Under certain conditions, with the backing of Medicare, this program pays a benefit of up to \$130 per year directly to individuals who are active in a social organization. I say this with a note of caution: Grouper is being explored at this point. There has been no commitment made by SIR to date.

Nonetheless, being a SIR is a positive experience. In many ways, SIR is an opportunity and forum for adult play. Consider this quote from HarborChase Senior Living:

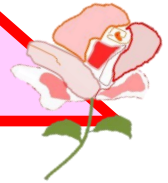
*"Play isn't just for amusement; it's a powerhouse of benefits for older adults. There are many different benefits of playing – and the best part is that the positive impact can be experienced right away. It stimulates the mind, nurtures creativity, and boosts overall happiness. Whether it's games, hobbies, or social activities, play enriches our lives in countless ways...In addition, research has shown that play in older adults can lead to numerous mental and physical health improvements."*

So, gentlemen, as a SIR you're in good company. Participation is HEALTHY for you. Play along. Live long. And invite a friend out to play, too!

PS Don't forget Valentines Day....

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Dave Cato, Jake Dahl, Dave Kronick, Rich Nussbaum,  
Greg Sanger, Scott Stribolt, Ed Thomas



**February 6, 2025 - 11:15  
AM**

**Manzanita Place (Chico Elks)**

**Anna Alexander - Save the El Rey**



Anna is a history professor at Cal State East Bay, specializes in public and environmental history and has a deep commitment to preserving historic buildings that define our communities. As a native of Chico and a Chico State alum, Anna is dedicated to ensuring historic landmarks continue to be cherished spaces for creating new memories and connections.

### **Rideshare Service**

Myles Pustejovsky has kindly volunteered to set up and coordinate drivers to chauffer members who do not drive any longer or do not have rides to our luncheons. His plan is to divide the area up into districts and ask for volunteers in each district to pick up and drop off members before and after each luncheon. If you are interested in volunteering to pick up fellow members on the way to and from our luncheons, or would like to take advantage of this new club service, please contact Myles.

Myles Pustejovsky

530-342-4751

mandaturham@att.net



### **Luncheon Fare**

**Pork Chops with  
Mandarin Orange Sauce**

**Garlic Rice**

**Vegetable Stir-Fry**

**Coconut Lem-  
on Bar**



**IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND THE FEBRUARY 6 MEETING, PLEASE NOTIFY MIKE CRUMP BY FEBRUARY 2 530 588 4781**

## WISDOM

I finished the January article with a lead about a rat in an Indian restaurant in Bangkok. I realize “rats” may not be the most uplifting subject to discuss, but nevertheless it is important. So here goes. I have two personal stories.

Thailand: About 1981 my wife and I volunteered 6 weeks in a Cambodian refugee camp. While there my wife found out that she had a cousin in Bangkok and her husband was a mission school superintendent. We ended up spending several days with them. They took us out to eat at their favorite Indian restaurant, along with their two children. Their girl, about 10 or 12 years old, proclaimed, “he just went by.” “Who went by?” I asked. “The rat. We have seen him here before.” I replied, “BEFORE?!” Sure enough there was a ledge running the length of the restaurant about 3” below the ceiling. You could see hair brush marks on the ceiling. Beats me why a very fastidious couple would revisit such a restaurant, and with guests. I assured her I did not want to witness the rats reappearance.

Ft Worth, TX: I was sitting in my office and heard a troubling sound, which I immediately dismissed. The next day I heard it again. There was a gnawing sound overhead. I immediately went to the attic to investigate. It was a large attic in where I had built storage shelves. Open-eye investigation revealed I had a big rat haven on my hands. Nests, burrows, and evidence of gnawing on the ceiling joists were present. I found their access was where the AC pipes entered the wall and sealed it. There lay an avocado pit. My wife had been burying food scraps in the garden beds and that was a steady food supply for them. I put a snap trap in the main burrow and poison all over the attic. I got one big rat in the trap. It must have been the only one up there when I sealed it as it never stank at all. What a relief with the hot summer months approaching.

Some rat trivia:

Chicago, Washington DC, and New York City are the rattiest.

Rat population in cities varies from one rat per one to four humans.

Rats often live with or near humans.

Rat species number 56.

Male rat is a buck, female is a doe. and a pregnant female is a dam.

CDC says 12 disease are directly linked to rats including Black Death.

Sexually mature at six weeks, socially mature at six months.

Rat meat is eaten in some cultures and was consumed by our civil war troops.

One rat means there are more rats.

Rats will bite babies and children while sleeping.

Used to be men who worked as “rat trappers”.

Rat predators include some dogs, cats, and birds of prey.

Methods to control or eliminate populations include elimination of human food waste, trash and debris (places to hide), secure pet food, secure compost site, poison and traps, and possible removal of bird feeders.

I will consider a more pleasant topic for next month.

January 20, 2025 *Richard Kannenberg*



# USELESS AND IRRELEVANT WORDS

February 2025



## Extraterrestrial Aliens Probably Exist, or Not?

*"Two possibilities exist: either we are alone in the Universe, or we are not. Both are equally terrifying." Arthur C. Clarke*

Born in Rome, Enrico Fermi was a scientist who developed skills in mathematics and physics. He earned his doctorate in physics from the University of Pisa in 1922. Fermi's research focused on general relativity, statistical mechanics, and quantum mechanics. He studied Einstein's theory of relativity and delved into the nature of atomic nuclei. One of the many things he is well known for is his famous "Fermi Paradox" which addresses the contradiction between the high likelihood of extraterrestrial life and the lack of evidence for it. Fermi asked his colleagues over lunch one day, "Where is everybody?" He was wondering why if life was so abundant, and our planet, so conspicuous as a life host planet compared to most in the universe, hadn't been visited by aliens. With all the hype about UFO's it would seem that we've already been visited but... This question is right up there with the one that seems most important for man. That is, "Is there life anywhere else in the Universe?" So, to use the words of a very famous scientist, "Where is Everybody?"

To answer that question, is more than very difficult. My thinking is a combination of the writings of Drs. Falkowski, Smethurst<sup>2,3</sup> and my own. It's been said that when people find out you're a scientist, particularly an astronomer, they want to ask you about those very same aliens. They want to know if higher life forms exist elsewhere in our universe, if they are intelligent, and if they look a bit like us. My answer to that is quite simply, "I don't know", but would venture a guess that we may find life elsewhere—that is if we ever get elsewhere. Higher forms of life, like us, and intelligent? Extremely unlikely. The following are my reasons why.

We all live on one small planet<sup>1</sup>, orbiting around a modest backwoods star, in a galaxy (The Milky Way) of around 100 billion stars. It seems reasonable to assume that at least one of those 100 billion stars might have an orbiting planet that could host life. Unfortunately, that's not necessarily true, just because our Sun is a modest star. Not too hot, not too cold. Not too energetic with a fairly constant output of energy. In terms of stars it's pretty small, and fortunately, very long-lived. For most stars: the bigger they are, the faster they use up their fuel so the shorter their lifetimes. The smallest stars, like our sun, burn through their hydrogen fuel much more slowly. Therefore, to develop life on a planet orbiting a different star, it must live as long as the Sun. So, how old is the sun? Without going into all the detail, it is about 5 billion years old out of a projected lifetime of 10 billion years. That's good because it took a long time for life to develop, at least, on our Earth.

The way that stars fuel themselves is by converting hydrogen atoms into helium atoms in a process called nuclear fusion. Here's the rub. Two helium atoms are 0.007 times lighter than the original hydrogen atoms. So, where does that missing mass go? Well, you may have heard of Einstein's most famous equation,  $E=mc^2$  which directly relates mass and energy. The E here is energy, the m stands for mass, and the c is the speed of light. According to this, the difference in mass between the hydrogen and helium atoms isn't "missing" at all, rather, it gets converted into energy in the form of photons, light energy that we use to improve our tans. It's this energy that we, on Earth, are so thankful for because it provides warmth that has allowed life to thrive, food to grow, and many trips to the beach for fun.

As I said, we think that Earth is about 5 billion years old. We know this because the oldest rocks we've found are about that old. Our little blue ball took about 100 million years to form and about 2.8 billion more to develop an environment (really long story<sup>2</sup>) sufficient for life to have a chance at forming. The earliest building blocks of life were in the form of amino acids, proteins and eventually photosynthetic molecules. In short, it's another 1.7 billion years for life (at least very simple life, like bacteria) to develop. It is currently thought that higher forms of life, complex animals, took another 500 to 750 million years. Then, for life, intelligent enough to leave our own planet, and contemplate this question of whether we could ever find extraterrestrial life, we'd need pretty much the full five billion years.



Therefore, this rules out all the stars of more than two times the mass of our Sun, as they'll run out of fuel far too quickly for the 5 billion years necessary for life to develop. Most stars are larger than two times our sun so that rules out most for developing life hosting planets and reduces the chances down to about one in a billion stars. If a star is smaller and cooler than the Sun, the orbiting planet would need to be closer to the star in order to achieve temperatures fit for life. But when a planet is closer to its star, there's a danger of its atmosphere boiling off and the radiation levels being too high. Take Venus, for example. Its day is twice as long as its year. So, for an entire year, one side of the planet scorches under the intense radiation of the Sun and the other, relatively cooler, in endless night. So, perhaps, it's not one in 100 billion stars that could potentially foster life, but more like one in a trillion stars that are the right size to burn for a long enough time to host a planet in precisely the right location.

We also have to take into account the Sun's place in the Milky Way galaxy. We're out on the edge, on a spiral arm of the Milky Way and in a quiet region of space. Not too close to the edge of intergalactic space, and not too close to the dense center where a supermassive black hole resides, generating lots of high-energy radiation. Either way, radiation would kill off any life on planets around stars not in this galactic "Goldilocks zone."

It goes on. For intelligent life to survive, the planet must have the molecular building blocks for life, carbon, oxygen, nitrogen and hydrogen. All these elements are made in the big forges of the universe—those stars more massive than the Sun that burned bright and fast, that eventually explode outward in a supernova. So, any life giving star and planet must form in a part of the universe where there are remnants of a dead star, so that the elements needed for life are present. Therefore, scientists say that brings us to the likelihood that only one star in a quadrillion ( $10^{15}$ ) could conceivably develop life. "But wait! There's more."

Once a new star has initially ignited, and a planet has formed containing those life-giving elements, it must also orbit in the zone around its star where it's not too hot and not too cold. Not only that, but the planet also needs to stay there, meaning that it will enjoy this benign environment for the 4-5 billion years needed for higher forms of life to develop. When astronomers simulate the development of a solar system, forming planets use up the remnant gas cloud by gravitational attraction. They've also found that planets move both inward and away from their star during this solar system development process. In our own system it has been found that Jupiter was once on its way inward as most planets are large and close to their star. Only through its interaction with Saturn was Jupiter stopped from migrating inward toward the Sun and disrupting all the inner planets as it went. This happens almost constantly in the models. If that had happened to us, Earth's orbit could have been disrupted, either moving us out of the habitable zone, or even sling shooting us entirely out of the solar system. Meaning, we wouldn't be here. Adding this little tid-bit to astronomy's conservative estimate of the odds of finding a star with a life hosting planet, we get to an estimate that says there will be only one such planet in a quintillion ( $10^{18}$ ), one followed by 18 zeros, a hell of a big number. This further suggests that the chance of there being another planet that can host life in our own galaxy of "only" 100 billion stars, a very slim one indeed. In other words, finding a planet suitable for the development of life in our Milky Way is about as difficult as finding a needle in a haystack the size of Texas.

But there is somewhat of a, "however..." The Milky Way is not the only galaxy in the universe. When we look out into the sky, we see these beautiful conglomerations of billions of stars everywhere. They are all different shapes and sizes: spirals, blobs, and beautiful colliding train wrecks. Unfortunately, there is no good way to count them because, a) there are so many and, b) we are pretty sure we've not found them all. Another way to think about this is to remember the famous Hubble Space Telescope (HST) "Deep Field" photograph, taken in December of 1995. Astronomers decided to use HST to stare at the darkest, most empty patch of sky that we know of to see what they could find. They took a time exposure of over 90 hours of a  $2 \times 2$  arcminute empty square patch of the sky in the constellation Fornax. Think of it as an image that is about 5 percent of the size of our Full Moon in the sky.



Hubble Deep Field Photo - December 1995

Astronomers didn't really know what to expect, but the latest count on the number of stars found in the image of that patch is a whopping four but, the latest count of the number of galaxies in that photo is about five thousand, so, we really don't know how many galaxies there are. Astronomers have guessed there are at least 100 billion galaxies in the universe. Now remember, this image was taken of the darkest patch of the sky, so in other regions we should see even more galaxies (plus all the galaxies that are still too far away and faint for us to see). Based on this our astronomer friends infer, no guess, that the number of Galaxies in the Universe is around a trillion. I've already said that each galaxy has roughly, 100 billion stars. So, some astronomers and cosmologists have made the wild guess, perhaps with some substantiation, that there are at least 100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 stars in the universe. Therefore, if one in a quintillion stars might develop planets hosting life, then perhaps there are a hundred thousand planets out there that might have the right conditions to develop life! WOW! a whole 100,000 planets across the entire universe and very likely none in the Milky Way. It gets worse... Of these paltry few planets that might develop life, we must ask "How many of these actually develop any carbon based life forms let alone intelligent ones?" Therefore, based on this long winded speculation, my answer to Fermi's Paradox is "There isn't anybody out there," and surely provides one speculation as to why we've never met any. If there are aliens, the likelihood is that they are so far away that any known or wild extrapolations of known space travel technology, even in the imaginings of plausible Sci-Fi writers, would not ever get them here. So aliens? It is extremely unlikely there are any, let alone visiting us.

To carry this thought a step further, the whole concept that UFO's or UAP's (Unexplained Aerial Phenomena), are from an extraterrestrial intelligence is extremely unlikely. We, man, have taught ourselves that when a UAP is observed, our first thought is to ascribe it to an alien spaceship or something of alien origin. When you pile on the huge numbers of fakes, misinformation and social media garbage that promotes thoughts of aliens, we can get sucked down the rabbit hole of believing that they are indeed alien phenomena present. Again, my opinion is very likely not.

But enough, I'm going to take on the question of UFO's in next month's article. This has got to fly in the face of somebody's beliefs or opinion so I would truly love to have someone argue with me about this. Please feel free to "Bring it On."

As always, comments are welcome.

Greg Sanger [gsanger@comcast.com](mailto:gsanger@comcast.com)

1. The Pale Blue Dot by Carl Sagan--<https://www.planetary.org/worlds/pale-blue-dot>
2. "Life's Engines. How the Microbes Made Earth Habitable" by Dr. Paul G. [Falkowski](#). Princeton University Press, 2015. ISBN 978-0-691-15537-1
3. "Space at The Speed of Light" by Dr. Rebecca [Smethurst](#). Ten Speed Press, a Division of Penguin Random House, 2019. ISBN 9781984858696

