



S.I.R.

**EL DORADO
Branch 23**

ANNUAL HISTORY

2023

**Prepared by
Nick Catrantzos, Branch Historian
Under Guidance of Bill Sutherland, Historian Emeritus
February 1, 2024**

GENERAL INFORMATION

All branch meetings took place on the second Wednesday of each month except December at the Dante Club, 2330 Fair Oaks Blvd, in Sacramento. Executive Committee meetings convened at the same site at 10:15 a.m., with the general meeting beginning at noon. At the monthly meetings, members signed up for upcoming golf tournaments and other sports and social activities. Members participated in the monthly book exchange as desired. Meetings also included a guest speaker covering a variety of subjects of interest to the members.

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR 2023

OFFICERS:

BIG SIR:	Jerry Westerman	LITTLE SIR:	Mark Ashley
SECRETARY:	John Boss	ASSISTANT:	General Davie
TREASURER:	Jim Coe	ASSISTANT:	Don Landsittel

DIRECTORS:

JD Bamfield, PBS	Dave Brunton	David Peterson, PBS
Roger Riley, PBS	Phil Sittner, PBS	Rob Stott

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN:

ACTIVITIES	JD Bamfield		
ATTENDANCE	Tam LeFebure		
AWARDS	Ray Barsch	Assistant	Odell Landers
BOCCE BALL	David Peterson		
BOOK CLUB	Nick Catrantzos		
BOOK EXCHANGE	Mike Pruss		
BOWLING	Steve Porter	Assistant	Ray Zelinski
DIRECTORY	Lam Nguyen		
EDITOR	Paul Domyancic	Assistant	Odell Landers
FISHING	Roger Riley		
GOLF (18 HOLE)	David Brunton	Tournament Director	Gary Bradley
GOLF (9 HOLE)	Steve Ng	Tournament Director	Steve Ng
HIKING	Brian Benner		
HISTORIAN	Nick Catrantzos		
LADIES DAY	Mark Ashley		
MEMBERSHIP	Ray Zelinski		
NOMINATING COMMITTEE	David Brunton		
PICNIC	Rob Stott		
POKER	JD Bamfield	Assistant	Emmett Mahle
RECRUITMENT	Tom Novi		
SUNSHINE	Gordon Routsong		
WEBMASTER	Gordon Callander	Succeeded by	Ski Brown
ZOOM / IT	Lam Nguyen		

MONTHLY PUBLICATION: Paul Domyancic edits our monthly publication, “The Nugget.” It informs members of news concerning officers, meeting information, Big SIR report, Little SIR scheduled speakers or program notes, membership status, bowling and golf information, sunshine report, and financial status.

BRANCH WEBSITE, sir23.org: Ski Brown assumed the duties of website manager after the passing of Gordon Callander. The primary purpose of the website is to create a go-to source for branch news and activities for all current members. Additionally, it serves as a means of introducing the branch to prospective members.

MEMBERSHIP: Chairman Ray Zelinski reported that the ending 2023 membership was 142 active members; including three Honorary Life members, and one Senior Honorary Life member. The specific membership changes were as follows, with all dates in the 2023 year unless otherwise specified:

New members: (8)

Mark DeSalvatore (February)	Johnnie E. “John” Davis (March)
Bill Hooper (February)	Kevin Thompson (April)
Emmett Mahle (February)	Norbert Pappenberger (September)
Dave Schlaufman (February)	Jeff Thorne (September)

Total Departing Members: (18)

Deceased active members: (6)

- Cass Mastalski (died April 22)
- Doug Breien (died May 7)
- Gordon Callander (died June 24)
- Dennis Shimek (died July 17)
- Paul Stevenson (died August 8)
- Bob Anderson (died August 25)

Members otherwise departing: (10)

- SHLM Joe White (released February 8)
- David Godinho (resigned February 14)
- Joe Hannon (resigned February 25)
- Donald Smith (resigned March 15)
- David Kesty (resigned April 19)
- Derek Rudkin (resigned April 20)
- Mitch Valder (resigned July 2)
- Tim Beck (dismissed on August 9)
- John DiMugno (dismissed on August 9)
- Arlie Veis (dismissed on August 9)
- Lowell Suckow (resigned December 12)
- Ron Retterer (resigned December 26)

Deceased prior members: (1)

- Dennis Scharosch (died October 10)

Membership Age History:

Membership Age Summary – SIR Branch 23 – Years					
Date	Jan 1, 2020	Jan 1, 2021	Jan 1, 2022	Jan 1, 2023	Jan 1, 2024
Average Age	78.3	78.5	78.3	78.0	78.2
Median Age	78.7	78.9	79.1	78.9	78.7

TREASURER REPORT: Treasurer Jim Coe reported the end of the year financial status, shown in the following table in comparison to the last 4 years. Starting in 2021 the Branch Treasurer provided banking service for the Bocce Ball program. The checking account total includes both branch funds and bocce ball funds. Tam LeFebure led an independent audit that found the 2023 treasury accounts in good order.

Date	Jan 1, 2020	Jan 1, 2021	Jan 1, 2022	Jan 1, 2023	Jan 1, 2024
Checking Account	\$4471.25	\$5706.89	\$4258.87	\$4988.05	\$6118.87
Savings Account	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Petty Cash Account	\$400.00	\$400.00	\$400.00	\$400.00	\$400.00
Total Branch Funds	\$4871.25	\$6106.89	\$4358.87	\$4974.05	\$6518.87
Bocce Ball Funds			\$300.00	\$414.00	\$691.00

ATTENDANCE: Attendance Chairmen Tam LeFebure reported the attendance information at the monthly BEC meetings.

The table below shows the significant statistics in comparison to the data for the previous four years. *Due to the COVID pandemic in 2020 and 2021, in-person lunches were cancelled from April 2020 until July 2021. Three lunches were held in 2020 and five in 2021, and branch meetings were held on Zoom for the intervening months. The attendance information for the ZOOM meetings is not available. In 2022, the branch moved its luncheon from the Carmichael Elks Club to the Dante Club.

Year	2019	2020*	2021*	2022 (Elks)	2022 (Dante)	2023
Average Attendance	70.8 %	68%	63%	60.5%	62.7%	64.2%
Most Attendance	2019	2020	2021	2022	2022	2023
Month	April	January	November	March	August	March
Attendance	115	110	106	101	98	112
Percentage	79.3%	72%	70.0%	67.8%	64.5%	73%
Least Attendance						
Month	October	March	August	July	November	July
Attendance	91	89	87	88	94	85
Percentage	60.0%	58%	55.7%	56.1%	61.4%	57%

AWARDS Ray Barsch coordinated the following awards during 2023:

SIR Century Senior– 100+ years of age

Bob Kenney (awarded by proxy to son, Scott, in April 2023)

Honorary Life Membership Badges (presented in May 2023 by Jack Reefer, State SIR Area 4 Representative):

Paul Joyce
Forrest Wright

SPEAKERS: Little SIR Mark Ashley arranged programs and invited a variety of speakers to discuss their agency initiatives and priorities for the monthly meetings. These included

January	Isaac Sanchez	CAL FIRE (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection) Battalion Chief, Communications
February	Justin Fetterly	California Highway Patrol Public Information Officer
March	Mark Ashley	Little SIR and erstwhile bridge engineer, explaining Jelly’s Ferry Bridge Project
April	Jack Reefer, SIR Area 4 Rep	Our area representative supplied a statewide update on SIR. Then Big SIR Jerry Westerman ran a trivia quiz.
May	Greg Freeman	Fair Oaks Library and representative of greater Sacramento Library
June	Brian Annis	Chief Financial Officer of California High-Speed Rail Authority
July	Deb Banks	Executive Director, Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates
August	Bonnie Rea	Family Care Specialist, Alzheimer’s Association
September	Mike Woods	Vice President, Morton Golf
October	Donna Rixman	Benefits of yoga
November	John Trembly	Knotty Wood Barbecue Company
December	No program	Ladies’ Holiday Luncheon at North Ridge Country Club

BOWLING 2022/2023:

Steve Porter reported the following information on branch bowling league adventures.

The 2022/2023 Tuesday SIR’s Bowling League consisted of a number of bowlers from various SIR branches throughout the area. Branch 23 was represented by 16 members on 8 different teams. Following is a listing of the teams with members from Branch 23 and final standings in the respective division.

Playoffs between the Four Division winners took place on Mar 21 & 28 to determine the first four rankings in the SIR League.

Mar 21

Div 2 Dream Team defeated the Div 4 King Pins 3-1

Div 3 Oh So Close defeated the Div 1 Mike's Raiders 4-0

Mar 28

League Champion Dream Team defeated Oh So Close 2-1/2 to 1-1/2

Congratulations to both teams for a one-two finish in league play!

Div 2

Dream Team	1st Place	(Jesse Kegarise)
Soaring Eagles	2nd Place	(Tony Pruitt, George Hodsdon, Mike Holmgren)
One Board Left	5th Place	(Gordon Hubble)

Div 3

Oh So Close	1st Place	(Jim Eaton, JD Bamfield)
The Old Farts	2nd Place	(Tony Tipton, Paul Elkins)

Div 4

Groovers	2nd Place	(Kevin Wall, Marwan Siagian)
Wizards	3rd Place	(John Brown, Ralph Williams)

Alley Oops	4th Place	(Forrest Wright, Carroll Hamon, Ray Zelinski)
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END OF YEAR LEAGUE AWARDS

Team Awards:

Div 2	Soaring Eagles	High Handicap Game 1008
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Div 3	Oh So Close	High Handicap Series 2761
	The Old Farts	High Handicap Game 971

Div 4	Wizards	High Handicap Game 966
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Individual Awards:

Age: 55-72:

Jesse Kegarise	High Handicap Series	805
Gordon Hubble	High Handicap Game	303
J D Bamfield	Most games plus-70 over average:	7

GOLF

Bill Sutherland captured a busy year of golf activities below.

9-Hole League:

The chairman was Steve Ng. Steve was also the tournament director. He was assisted by treasurer, Tony Tipton, handicapper, Lam Nguyen, and scheduler, Greg Hood. There were 23 scheduled tournaments, with two cancelled due to weather.

The flight winners for each tournament and the top ten point winners are shown in the following tables. During the year, 52 members participated in a total of 369 rounds in 21 events, with an average of 17.6 players per event. That compares to the 2022 season which had 457 rounds in 23 events, with an average of 19.9 players per event.

SIR BRANCH 23 - 9 HOLE GOLF LEAGUE - 2023						
TOURNAMENT FLIGHT WINNERS						
Tourn Nr	Date	Course	1st Flight	2nd Flight	3rd Flight	Players
1	2/24	Bradshaw Ranch	Cancelled - Rain			
2	3/10	Antelope Greens	Cancelled - Rain			
3	3/20	William Land Park	Scott Kenney	Steve Ng		15
4	3/31	Bradshaw Ranch	Bill Sutherland	Gopal Nemana		10
5	4/14	Emerald Lakes	Gary Bradley	Howard Frank		18
6	4/17	Arcade Creek Red	Roger Jerez	Paul Lenny	Chris Chrisopherson	23
7	4/24	Antelope Greens	Bill Sutherland	Sam Scarlett		23
8	5/8	Emerald Lakes	Bill Moore	Gopal Nemana	Paul Vijitakula	18
9	5/19	Arcade Creek Blue	John Mahoney	Andre Boutros	Gopal Nemana	23
10	6/2	William Land Park	Marwan Siagian	Jim Erickson	Bob Chapman	28
11	6/12	Cordova	John Mahoney	Jim DeLong	Steve Ng	20
12	6/19	Emerald Lakes	Erich Wohlenberg	Scott Dutcher	Paul Vijitakula	20
13	7/10	Arcade Creek Red	Tony Tipton	Greg Hood		19
14	7/24	Indian Creek	Roger Jerez	Sam Scarlett		14
15	7/28	Antelope Greens	Mike Hanamura	Gopal Nemana		16
16	8/11	William Land Park	Steve Schmidt	Greg Hood		16
17	8/18	Emerald Lakes	Scott Dutcher	Greg Hood		17
18	8/28	Arcade Creek Blue	Rob Stott	Steve Schmidt		12
19	9/8	Antelope Greens	Frank Abel	Gopal Nemana		18
20	9/15	Black Oak	Jim DeLong	Loren Newell		13
21	9/18	Arcade Creek Red	Rob Stott	Steve Ng		17
22	10/2	Antelope Greens	Jim DeLong	Phil Fotopoulos		16
23	10/12	Bing Maloney Exec	Don Landsittel	Odell Landers		13
					Total Players	369
					Average - 21 events	17.6

9 HOLE GOLF LEAGUE - 2023		
TOP TEN POINT WINNERS		
POSITION	NAME	POINTS
1	John Mahoney	55
2	Paul Vijitakula	50
T3	Howard Frank	46
T3	Steve Schmidt	46
5	Steve Ng	40
T6	Jim DeLong	35
T6	Loren Newell	35
T6	Rob Stott	35
T9	Scott Dutcher	33
T9	Gopal Nemana	33

18-Hole League:

The chairman was David Brunton and the tournament director was Gary Bradley. They were assisted by Scott Kenney, treasurer, Rich Singer, statistician, John Mahoney, starter, and Bill Sutherland, handicapper. Additionally, Steve Ng, Neil Fairhurst, and Joe Rodriguez served as assistant tournament directors. There were 31 tournaments originally scheduled. Three events were cancelled due to rain, and one was cancelled for being overbooked and was rescheduled.

The flight winners for each tournament, top ten point winners, and championship results are shown in the following tables. During the year, 83 members participated in 28 events for a total of 1087 rounds for an average of 38.8 players per event. That compares to the 2022 participation of 88 players in 30 events, 1274 rounds, and an average of 42.5 players per event.

SIR BRANCH 23 - 18 HOLE GOLF LEAGUE - 2023								
TOURNAMENT FLIGHT WINNERS								
Tourn. Nr	Date	Course	1st Flight	2nd Flight	3rd Flight	4th Flight	Number of Players	
1	2/1	Wildhorse (Big Sir 1)	Don Rodriguez	Andre Boutros	Gopal Nemana		27	
2	2/16	MacKenzie (Big Sir 2)	Bob Ahders	Lam Nguyen	Tam LeFebure	Jim Erickson	53	
3	2/22	Woodcreek (Big Sir 3)	JD Bamfield	Lam Nguyen	John Rowland	Jerry Westerman	50	
4	3/1	Bartley Cavanaugh	Erich Wohlenberg	Tom Freeman	Jim Erickson	Paul Lenny	28	
5	3/16	Davis	Cancelled - Rain, not rescheduled.					
6	3/22	Diamond Oaks (Champ 1)	Cancelled - Rain, not rescheduled. League Championship moved to July 26.					
7	3/29	Ancil Hoffman	Cancelled - Rain, not rescheduled.					
8	4/5	Whitney Oaks	Ron Shilliday	Don Landsittel	Dallas Pennington	Odell Landers	39	
9	4/9	Dry Creek	Gary Bradley	JD Bamfield	John Rowland	Ron Slusher	26	
10	4/26	Mather	Craig Chatelain	Marwan Siagian	John Mahoney	Lam Nguyen	35	
11	5/3	Teal Bend	Erich Wohlenberg	Rob Stott	Andre Boutros	Paul Vijitakula	38	
12	5/17	MacKenzie	Roger Jerez	Mike Long	Rich Battistessa	Steve Ng	48	
13	5/24	Cherry Island	Curt Caldwell	Marwan Siagian	Dana Hamilton	Odell Landers	38	
14	5/31	River Oaks	Cancelled - Overbooked. Rescheduled to Aug 10					
15	6/8	Wildhawk (Champ 1)	Craig Chatelain	Tony Tipton	Frank Abel	Odell Landers	44	
16	6/22	Bartley Cavanaugh	JD Bamfield	Bill Moore	Roger Riley	Mike Holmgren	45	
17	6/28	Bing Maloney	Bill Espinosa	Bill Moore	Marwan Siagian	Gopal Nemana	42	
18	7/5	Morgan Creek Shamble	Shilliday / (blind) / Schmidt / Hooper		Freeman / Tipton / Hanamura / Nguyen		39	
19	7/19	Teal Bend	Bill Espinosa	Rob Stott	John Raley	Paul Vijitakula	43	
20	7/26	Diamond Oaks (Champ 2)	Gary Bradley	Marwan Siagian	Tom Novi	Steve Ng	48	
21	8/2	Mather	Erich Wohlenberg	JD Bamfield	Rich Singer	Robert Carisoza	42	
14A	8/10	River Oaks - 2 Man Best Ball	Tony Marquez / Steve Ng		Odell Landers / Paul Elkins		36	
22	8/16	Ancil Hoffman	Bob Ahders	Mike Long	Rich Battistessa	Steve Ng	44	
23	8/23	Davis	Jeff Sheline	Jim DeLong	Steve Ng		22	
24	8/30	Empire Ranch	Erich Wohlenberg	Mike Long	Tony Marquez	Paul Vijitakula	46	
25	9/6	Lincoln Hills	Jim Doolittle	Don Landsittel	Tony Marquez	Phil Sittner	33	
26	9/20	Ancil Hoffman	Roger Jerez	Rob Stott	Rich Battistessa	Paul Lenny	34	
27	9/27	Mather	Roger Jerez	JD Bamfield	Frank Abel	General Davie	41	
28	10/4	Bing Maloney	Jim Doolittle	Rob Stott	Tony Marquez	Paul Lenny	31	
29	10/18	MacKenzie (Champ 3)	Jeff Thorne	Mike Pruss	Lam Nguyen		42	
30	10/25	Turkey Creek (Champ 4)	Craig Chatelain	Darrell Beddard	Andre Boutros	Odell Landers	36	
31	11/1	Morgan Creek (Champ 5)	Jim Doolittle	Mike Long	Jim DeLong	Gopal Nemana	37	
						Total Players	1087	
						Average - 28 events	38.8	

18 HOLE GOLF LEAGUE - 2023					
Top Ten Point Winners			League Championship Flight Winners		
Position	Name	Points	Flights	Name	Aggregate Score Relative to Par (best 3 of 5)
1	Ron Shilliday	128	1st	Jim Doolittle	1
2	Steve Ng	109		Bill Espinosa	7
3	Mike Long	101		Craig Chatelain	8
4	Erich Wohlenberg	100	2nd	Tony Tipton	-7
5	Jim Doolittle	95		Mike Long	-1
6	JD Bamfield	90		Tom Freeman	7
7	Andre Boutros	85	3rd	Andre Boutros	4
8	Roger Jerez	75		Jim DeLong	6
9	John Mahoney	71		John Raley	6
10	Phil Sittner	69	4th	Steve Ng	3
				Lam Nguyen	3
				Odell Landers	12
			Big Sir Championship Flight Winners		
			Flights	Name	Aggregate Score (best 2 of 3)
			1st	Lam Nguyen	0
			2nd	Gopal Nemana	1

Bocce Ball:

Dave Peterson and Phil Sittner reported that SIR Branch 23 ran the Bocce program during 2023 from the month of March to its conclusion in October. Carmichael Park hosted the sessions on their twin courts. Sixteen branch members participated during the bi-weekly season. Bocce was also added to our activities during the May picnic luncheon held in Carmichael Park. Comments from participants have been an enthusiastic endorsement of the program, and members are looking forward to this year’s commencement in March.

Book-n-Neers Book Club:

Nick Catrantzos reported that the book club continued to thrive in its second year, consistently drawing up to 10 members and meeting every month in the Event Center at the Raley’s at the corner of San Juan and Sunset Avenues. Halfway through the year, Book-n-Neers started rating the monthly selection on a scale of 1 to 10, which enlivened discussions even more. Often, even a poorly rated book drew spirited commentary. SIR members occasionally ask which books the Book-n-Neers tackled, hence this year’s list, below. Book selections ranged from history to mystery, with several of them happening to touch on a theme of survival.

2023 BOOK SELECTIONS

MONTH	TITLE	AUTHOR
January	Cryptonomicon	Neal Stephenson
February	1491	Charles Mann
March	The Bomber Mafia	Malcolm Gladwell
April	The Missing Piece	John Lescroart
March	Cadillac Desert	Marc Reisner
June	The Blessing Way	Tony Hillerman
July	Wine and War	Donald and Petie Kladstrup
August	The Road	Cormac McCarthy
September	The Martian	Andy Weir
October	The Wager	David Grann
November	Murder in Montague	Glen Sample Ely
December	The 6:20 Man	David Baldacci

Jolly Hookers Fishing Club:

Roger Riley reported three very successful fishing trips for 2023. On April 21, eight members fished out of two guided boats provided by John Crotty. Many rainbow and brown trout were caught, as the members trolled the beautiful water at Lake Almanor. The anglers were Dave Peterson, Loren Newell, Curt Caldwell, Mike Pruss, Steve Brush, Jerry Westerman, General Davie, and Roger Riley.

The fishing experience was so good that a second fishing trip at Lake Almanor was organized for October 13. Once again, the Crotty guide service got the members into numerous trout and a great time was had by all. General Davie came away with the biggest trout from both trips: a beautiful 10-pounder. The other anglers were Mike Pruss, George Zarzana, Curt Caldwell, Bob Betzler, and Phil Fotopoulos.

On June 23, our SIR group chartered the Pacific Pearl to fish for striper and halibut in the San Francisco Bay. All members brought home striper and halibut fillets after a successful day of fishing. The SIR anglers were Dallas Pennington, Ray Zelinski, Ski Brown, Robert Carisoza, Mike Pruss, Curt Caldwell, General Davie, Steve Brush, Dave Peterson, and Roger Riley.

Poker Club:

Emmett Mahle reported that the poker club was off to a brisk start under the lead of JD Bamfield and thanks to the gracious hosting of Bob Betzler at his beautiful home in Folsom. The group met for friendly poker with 5-7 players once a month for 10 straight months in 2023 and looks forward to a new year of poker delights.

REGULAR EVENTS

Branch Picnic:

The branch held a May picnic under the leadership of Rob Stott at Carmichael Park. The food was again catered by the Xochimilco Mexican Restaurant, and included the activities of bocce ball, bingo, cornhole, and, new this year, a very popular putting competition created by Crain Chatelain. Once again, it proved an enjoyable event that came in under budget.

Ladies' Holiday Luncheon:

The annual holiday luncheon under the leadership of Little SIR Mark Ashley, and with the support of John Boss and Rob Stott, took place at North Ridge Country Club in December, in lieu of our usual monthly gathering. Dave Peterson lined up the musical accompaniment, and Big SIR Jerry Westerman passed on the golden rooster to the Little SIR in a seamless transition of power in front of nearly 90 witnesses.

SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

Behind the Scenes

Sometimes, the significance of events comes when they represent good news about things that did not happen. Three such events befell SIR El Dorado Branch 23 in the course of the year:

1-No Ma'ams in SIRs 23

SIR branches across California, particularly those in distress, began to murmur about opening their membership to women, as a means of reducing the thinning of their membership ranks. At a loss for how such a move would keep our branch true to its charter of providing social activities for men, branch leadership declined opportunities to jump aboard this particular bandwagon.

2-No Hike of Fees in 2023

Branch leadership, almost to its own surprise, was able to fend off the prevailing tendency to automatically raise dues and monthly luncheon fees at the end of the year. Success in resisting these inflationary pressures traces to the herculean effort of Roger Riley and others who make it their mission to keep an accurate nose count and match between meals reserved and meals consumed at the monthly Dante Club luncheons and to the diligence of individual members in giving advance notice of their attendance plans to meet catering deadlines. As deadline pressure mounts, Roger is streamlining his system, which will continue to rely on member support.

3-No Online Catastrophe from Villains Exploiting SIR Data

Despite some apprehension that common scammers may be harvesting data from our branch website to target members for assorted scams, even one taking the form of an e-mail request fraudulently claiming to come from our Big SIR, no member fell for these tricks. Nor was there any evidence that our personal data had been compromised via anything circulating in SIR channels. However, in an abundance of caution, branch leadership is keeping an eye on this matter, hence likely alterations to come on the way we post data on our website.

INSIGNIFICANT EVENTS



What Else Happened in 2023?

Nothing is appreciated so much in this life except by comparison and contrast. Accordingly, to give context to some of what else was going on around us in 2023, here follows a sampling of what was happening in the non-SIR universe, among other things:

- **JANUARY: Not So Dry**
Serial atmospheric rivers battered the greater Sacramento area, curbing the usual warnings about how the drought keeps getting worse all the time.
- **FEBRUARY: What Fresh Hell Was This?**
A Chinese spy balloon wafting across the country caught the public eye on the same month that a toxic train derailment and explosion rocked East Palestine, Ohio.
- **MARCH: Back with More**
Yet another atmospheric river packed a wallop into the local region, downing trees and fences while also drenching already soaked ground.
- **APRIL: Nothing Lasts Forever**
Tupperware, a national tradition and institution, tumbled into bankruptcy, despite having experienced a brief resurgence during pandemic lockdown. But the rain finally stopped.
- **MAY: A King Dethroned**
Budweiser, a once iconic beer, lost over 21% of its value and its standing as King of Beers after an ill-fated advertising campaign that marketed to a target demographic at the expense

of alienating its traditional, macho customer base, leading Bud's corporate parent to eventually admit to AP News that the promotion caused Bud Light sales to plunge in a consumer backlash.

- **JUNE: One-Way Adventure**
A Titanic tourism submarine, launching at great cost and fanfare, imploded off the coast of Newfoundland, claiming the lives of the tourist operation's president and four paying passengers. The world watched for word of survivors for five days, although investigators ultimately concluded the vessel imploded shortly after making its dive.
- **JULY: Oh, a Good Life**
Tony Bennet, a multi-generational music icon, passed away shortly before his 97th birthday.
- **AUGUST: From Burning Man to Churning Mud**
The Burning Man festival and increasingly expensive desert adventure in the Nevada desert turned into a mud bath, thanks to brutal torrential rains. This stranded 77,000 festival attendees, who expressed chagrin at being unable to set their ritual fires.
- **SEPTEMBER: Who's Buying What?**
Public outcry started to converge around the mysterious purchase of large parcels of land in Solano County surrounding Travis AFB. Ultimately, it turned out that the buyers were not Chinese spies but Silicon Valley billionaires who plan to build a model city for new tech workers to be able to afford in the future. The secrecy behind the purchase was to keep property sellers from hiking selling price once realizing the wealth of the buyers.
- **OCTOBER: Terror Strikes**
The Palestine terror group Hamas carried out the most bloody carnage against Jews since the Holocaust, with atrocities made more horrifying when Israeli officials played for the global press unedited videos of rapes, slaughter, and infanticide against defenseless Israeli citizens as filmed by Hamas attackers themselves. Details were ultimately revealed when some of those attackers were subsequently captured with their video footage intact.
- **NOVEMBER: A Holiday Hotline Lives On**
The price of turkey went down a little just before Thanksgiving, while the cost rose for cranberry sauce and side dishes. Butterball, however, kept operating its turkey hotline throughout the holiday season, with operators standing by its toll-free number to rescue hapless home chefs from ruining their turkey dinners.
- **DECEMBER: Sushi and Slap-e-tizers?**
A restaurant losing business in Nagoya, Japan, came up with a new feature that had patrons lining out the door for a reservation. For the price of an appetizer, they started offering customers to be slapped in the face by a waitress in a kimono. Move over sushi. Slap-e-tizers are the latest craze from the inscrutable East.

Nick Catrantzos / Sir Branch 23 Historian / February 1, 2024
Prepared under the guidance of Historian Emeritus Bill Sutherland