



SLORAM Bulletin

Retired Active Men San Luis Obispo

Website: <https://sloram.org>



BIG RAM BLEAT

Carl Kleinman

My wife says that I never run out of things to say. So as not to disappoint her, let's have some fun, which is what the RAMS are all about...

May 16th is National BBQ Day, so our RAM of many hats (and jokes) Craig Perry has arranged for us to celebrate it at our May 14th Coffee Cabinet meeting. We'll have professional BBQ caterers there to give us their BBQ tips, and we're encouraging all RAMs to wear their BBQ shirts, bibs, gloves, and other utensils to the meeting. Members can also share their favorite recipes and their "secret sauces" but Craig asks that you please label them as either "tasty", "mild" or "DON'T", for the safety of all RAMS' taste buds! Unfortunately, I'll be out of town and won't be able to be there that day, but it sounds like it will be a lot of fun!

Hmmm...perhaps we can convince someone to grill up some baby backs that day...

Years ago, the SLORAM Bulletins usually contained several photos from the recent Luncheons, Coffee Cabinet meetings, and Activity Group events. We'd like to resume doing this, so RAM Member Ken Packer has volunteered to take photos at our meetings, and we've asked the leaders of the Activity Groups to do the same at their events, for inclusion in the Bulletins and our webpage. It's a great way to encourage involvement in the RAMS by both current and potential Members.

I always have trouble remembering the combination to the RAM "Vault" of monthly bulletins, so I made sure this month to write it

on the outside of the vault door. So, let's open it, and see what fun tidbits we can pull out this month...

- In January 2000 the RAMS finally went live online with their first website! While it probably contained some useful information, I'm sure that it wasn't anywhere as fancy or comprehensive as today's RAM website (Dave Harris - that's your cue to take a well-deserved bow!)
- That same month, the Madonna Inn installed a very impressive RAMS sign at the entrance to the Inn alongside the longtime "Lions" and "Rotary" emblems.

Unable to locate the sign, I asked fellow RAM Bob Mott, who knows everything about everything RAMS, about what happened to it. Always good for a good story, he said at one point, someone vandalized it by trying to pull it out of the ground and bent it completely in half. So, Bob and a fellow RAM literally had to run over it with their car several times to flatten it out! Then, after Alex Madonna died, the Inn chose to take down the signs. The RAMS were able to salvage theirs and gave it back to RAM Jack Spaulding who had originally donated it. But, unfortunately, after Jack passed away, the sign was never recovered. I guess it's just another "sign of the times" (feel free to groan at that line!)

- Lastly, the June 1998 Bulletin contained this gem:

"Alex Madonna invited the RAMS' Coffee Cabinet and their 'ladies' to be guests at their Mother's Day Branding Party. The roundup was at his Alberti Ranch and

included a huge barbecue lunch, with Madonna beef and the Inn's notorious cakes. The roundup was of educational benefit for some 200 guests – a veritable ballet of roping, branding, dehorning, vaccination, and castration – ‘all in two minutes or less’.”

That event was certainly apropos to our upcoming celebration of National BBQ Day. But, while it pains me to say this, perhaps we should skip the castration part, eh?

Well, since I'll be traveling for a bit next month, I'll probably arrange for a “pinch-hitter” to have the fun of writing next month's Big Ram Bleat, and I might even give him the combination to the RAM Vault! But hopefully y'all will invite me back the following month!

MAY LUNCHEON

The monthly Luncheons are held in the Madonna Inn Garden Room. They are held on the third Tuesday of the month. Check in starts at 11:00am and **ends at 11:25am** so the check-in team can be seated before the meeting starts. The meeting is called to order at 11:30am, concluding at 1:00pm. SLORAM Members and invited guests are welcome. **Luncheon cost in 2026 is the same as it was last year - \$30 per member.**

The next Luncheon meeting is on **May 19th**. The featured speaker will be **Bobby Soto** from the Atascadero Historical Society. Bobby will discuss the expedition, led by Juan Bautista de Anza, that passed near the San Luis Obispo Mission and was pivotal in the Spanish colonial era – affecting the entire SLO County coast, including the area near Cambria.

The meal selection for lunch is Roast Pork with Yams and Carrot Cake. The vegetarian selection will be Penne Pasta with marinara sauce.

COFFEE CABINET

Larry Burke, Chair



Opportunities are available for members to serve as Big Bean. Each Big Bean conducts weekly Coffee Cabinet meetings over a period of three months. **Steve**

Kennedy is now running with the role of Big Bean through June. Thanks, Steve!

The Coffee Cabinet is held at the Madonna Inn in the Garden Room. Meetings are held every Thursday. They are called to order at 8:30am and adjourned at 9:30 am.

May Coffee Cabinet Programs

Views expressed by speakers are their own and an invitation to speak does not constitute an endorsement by the SLORAM organization.

May 7, 2026 – Morgan Edmunson, Project Manager, SLO Cultural Arts. Morgan will discuss the *Cultural Arts District Parking Structure*.

May 14, 2026 – Bill Fieldhouse & Robert Bonilla, SLORAM members and Pro Caterers. Bill and Robert will discuss “*How to BBQ Like A Pro*”. This is in honor of National BBQ Day on 5/16.

May 21, 2026 – Ian Parkinson, SLO County Sheriff. Sheriff Parkinson will discuss “*Current Events, with Q & A*”.

May 28, 2026 – Bill Ingalls, Photojournalist. Bill will present a “*Viet Nam War Photo Essay & Book*”.

June 4, 2026 – Ivan Lapidus, retired Dentist/SLORAM Member. Ivan will inform us on *Sleep Apnea*.

HIKING GROUP Russ Bik



On April 3rd we hiked Poly Canyon Road from the campus to the Architecture Graveyard.



It has been two years since we last made this hike, and the group did a splendid job of navigating the most difficult part—campus parking. It took 2.74 hours and was 4 miles round trip. Elevation change 585 feet. There was a huge assortment of student projects stretching back to the sixties in the Graveyard and even a brand new one. There is a really huge suspension bridge which reached out over a creek that was particularly impressive. On the way back we noticed a lone oak on a distant hilltop which will become our first hike in May.

Our second hike in April was on the 17th (map pictured).



It took us to Cambria and along the coastal bluff trail. We first entered the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve just off Hwy 1 and hiked along a stream and through a forest. The hike was 5.1 miles long and took 2.75 hours with a 440-foot elevation change. Few hikes offer an equivalent variety of scenery

News Flash: On Friday May 1st we hiked from the Old Stagecoach Road trailhead at the bottom of Cuesta Grade to the “Serenity Swing” which hangs from a lone oak overlooking Poly Canyon. This was our first HARD hike of the year and the first time our group has hiked this pioneering trail. We have a report with some great pictures at <https://www.ramhikes.org/5-1-26> For more information about the hiking group visit <https://www.ramhikes.org> or contact our hike leader Russ Bik at rbik@me.com.

FRIENDSHIP REPORTS

**Dick Adams, Co-Chair,
Ken Riener, Co-Chair**



The purpose of the Friendship Committee is to identify and extend friendship and best wishes to those SLO RAM members who are unable to attend SLO RAM activities because of sickness, injury or becoming severely impacted

by other events. Also, if a SLO RAM member passes away, his spouse or partner will be extended friendship and best wishes. A “SLO RAM Friendship and Best Wishes” card will be circulated for signatures by all SLO RAM members at a monthly SLO RAM luncheon or weekly Coffee Cabinet meeting and forwarded to the member or family.

Please help us identify others who should receive the “SLO RAM Friendship Card”.

Contact:

Dick Adams, 619-302 4462,
richardbadams@sbcglobal.net or,
Ken Riener, 805-458 7519
ken.riener@gmail.com

SLORAM GOLF

Nick Higgins

If you enjoy hitting and chasing golf balls, please join us at the Laguna Lake Golf Course on Wednesday mornings for a friendly round of golf. This 10-hole course is great for all skill levels. It's an easily walkable course or if you prefer, they have electric carts for rent.



Tee time is 8:30a. Please arrive a bit earlier to pay, check in and allow us to get organized. If you are a golf newbie or haven't golfed in a while that's okay. We just want to have a good time. See you there!



For more information contact Nick Higgins at 1-559-289-1586.

WEB UPDATE

Dave Harris



The Virtual Day Trips videos are back when you visit the Day Trips page or from the top menu. Also, a new Historical Videos folder has been added to the Documents page where you can watch virtual Coffee Cabinet meetings from the pandemic years when live meetings were banned.

SLORAM DAY TRIPS

Hal Thilmony

Due to weather concerns, illnesses and other diversions only 10 hearty souls made the trip to Painted Rock. Here we are clustered at the entrance for a group photo. For more photos and information related to this trip go to [Day Trips - SLORAM](#).



You will also find a new subsection on the RAM Day Trip web page called [Virtual Day Trips - SLORAM](#). Here you will find videos that either complement our Day Trip outings or provide glimpses into historical activities or destinations of local interest. Three videos are currently posted. The first video is an excursion to **Painted Rock** for those who were unable to make the recent outing. The second video highlights the **Carrizo Plain Superbloom** that we missed when our April 2023 RAM outing was cancelled due to heavy rainfall. The third video is rare 1922 footage of the **Exposition Park Raceway** that was located in the area of San Luis Obispo that is now Meadow Park.

Our next Day Trip outing is in the works. It will be announced once finalized.

SLORAM TASTERS

Bill Sisler

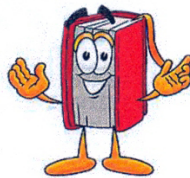


On April 2nd, we met at the Turley Winery in Templeton. Although we tasted a white wine, we primarily tasted Zinfandel wines from several geographic areas. The purpose was to experience the differences caused by location, soils and

weather. We finished by tasting some Petite Syrah from the historic Pesenti vineyards adjacent to Turley. The Turley staff were great hosts, and we were located at outside tables in view of the vineyards. The weather was great and we had a good turnout. We were able to bring our own cheese and bread to accompany our tasting.

On May 7th, we will meet at Brecon Estate Winery on Vineyard Drive in Paso Robles. This winery was the former Norman Winery. If you are interested in joining our group, please contact Bill Sisler.

**Don't be spineless, join
THE BOOK CLUB
Bill Woodson**



The SLORAM Book Club meets on the 4th Tuesday of the month at 2PM at Mt. Carmel Church, 1701 Fredericks Street, SLO.

Books reviewed by the Club are read & recommended by Members. The books always elicit observations and critiques that are interesting & informative. The Club discussion has a round-the-table format.

May 26

“A Fever in the Heartland” by Timothy Egan. Presented by Bob Zdenek. It's the roaring 20's. It is also the height of the Ku Klux Klan influence in America's heartland set into motion by D.C. Stephenson, Grand Dragon. Judges, prosecutors, ministers, governors and senators all proudly claimed membership. The author, a Pulitzer Prize winner, gives us a very interesting saga of how a predatory con man became one of the most powerful people in 1920s America, with a plan to rule the country—and how a grisly murder of a woman brought him down.

June 23

“The First American” by H. W. Brands. Presented by Bill Woodson. USA's 250th anniversary is here. Get in the mood by reading a great biography of Benjamin Franklin. It was a Pulitzer Prize Finalist.

Franklin was something else. Here are some of the hats he wore simultaneously: journalist, father, inventor, provocateur, moralist, ladies' man, diplomat, propagandist, revolutionary, tinkerer and humorist. The author brings to life one of the most delightful, bawdy, brilliant, original, and important figures in American history.

July 28

“The Fish That Ate the Whale” by Rich Cohen. Presented by Bernie Troy. The fascinating untold tale of Samuel Zemurray, the self-made banana mogul who went from penniless roadside banana peddler to kingmaker and capitalist revolutionary. A Best Book of the Year by San Francisco Chronicle and The Times-Picayune.

August 25

“The Only Plane in the Sky: An Oral History of 9/11” by Garrett M. Graff. Presented by Gary Taff. September will be the 25th anniversary of 9/11. This book can make the anniversary more poignant for all of us. The book is the first comprehensive oral history of September 11, 2001—a panoramic narrative woven from voices on the front lines of an unprecedented national trauma.

September 22

“A Gentleman in Moscow” by Amor Towles. Presented by Susan Heinemann. A novel about a man who is ordered to spend the rest of his life inside a luxury hotel. The mega-bestseller with more than 2 million readers. A New York Times “Readers' Choice: Best Books of the 21st Century” pick.

**SLORAM MEN's LUNCH
Gordon Mullin**

It's the Just Lunch Bunch. Join us for lunch at the Elks Club in SLO on Tuesday, May 26 at noon. No speaker. No agenda.

If you have any trouble getting in, call Gordon Mullin (805) 235-5098. See you there.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Greg Horne

Question: what is the well-dressed RAM wearing these days?

Answer: a personalized blue-and-white Retired Active Men name-badge!

Don't have one of your own? Getting this fashionable accessory could not be simpler. Just put your name on the order form you'll find on the table on the right as you enter the Madonna Inn Garden Room. I would like to have your \$12 up-front, but no worries if you can't find me on the day you make your order. I'll get it from you when I deliver the finished badge. Our supplier, Josh from Grand Awards in Arroyo Grande, turns around these badges in a day or two. Last week, I watched him do the engraving with a CO2 laser on two-layer plastic: very impressive!

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Last Name	First Name
Adams	Dick
Ardman	Harvey
Baillie	John
Boudreau	Michael
Branin	Barry
Crisosto	Carlos
Equinoa	Richard
Flores	Jose Luis
Gilbert	John
Jensen	Mike
Knox	John
Ramsey	Larry
Whitney	Mike

May ANNIVERSARIES

Name	Yrs
Bennett, Steve & Joanne	17
Bosserman, Gordon & Jennifer	53
Busby, Cid & Denise	40
Christopher, David & Janis	53
Dilallo, Michael & Carol	41
Erickson, Larry & Shirley	30
Meek, Larry & Jeanette	68
Pottratz, Dick & Jeanie	65
Smith, Roger & Joanna	55

ARE YOU UP TO DATE?

If your contact info or other SLORAM data or status has changed, let us know. Just click *CONTACT* on the SLORAM website (<https://SLORAM.ORG>). You can also click *CONTACT* if you have a question about SLORAM or any of its activities.

CALLER DIRECTORY

Terry Whittaker

A-B:	David Werner	909-702-8787
C:	Hal Thilmony	510-604-2025
D-F:	Mike Dilallo	805-489-5172
G-I:	Terry Whittaker	805-441-2829
J-L:	David Werner	909-702-8787
M-O:	Terry Whittaker	805-441-2829
P-R:	John Knox	805-305-2632
S:	Nick Higgins	559-289-1586
T-Z:	Hal Thilmony	510-604-2025