



SLORAM Bulletin

Retired Active Men San Luis Obispo

Website: <https://sloram.org>



BIG RAM BLEAT

Carl Kleinman

To nobody's surprise, there's always a lot more going on "under the hood" at the RAMS than meets the eye...

- Time to get involved! Elections for next year's RAMS' Officers and Directors will soon be taking place. So, we're presently soliciting all Members' nominations (including nominating yourself!) for the positions of Little RAM, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, and up to three "at-large" Directors positions. Job descriptions are contained in the "Governing Document" section of the website, or you can contact me for information. Please email your list of nominations to me at slocarlk@gmail.com no later than August 20th.
- Craig Perry (in addition to his full-time job as Program Chair of our crack Program Committee) has feverishly begun searching for entertainment at our upcoming December Holiday Gala, leaving no stone unturned! He then has the fun of selecting the menus for the Gala and next year's luncheons. Here's hoping that he picks twelve consecutive months of double chili cheeseburgers, with Animal Fries as the vegetarian option!
- Undoubtedly the most fun "job" at the RAMS (other than the "well-paying" job of collecting money at meetings!) is being Big Bean at the Coffee Cabinet! If you would like to try it one time to see if it's to your liking, Greg Horne (our current Big Bean) has graciously offered to let any Member serve as his "Co-Big Bean" at one meeting to try it out. No obligation, but I guarantee that after being up there once, you will be

hooked! So let Greg, Larry Burke, or me know if you are interested!

- I'm first to admit that I "borrowed" the idea for my "Bulletins from the RAM Vault" from photojournalist David Middlecamp's regularly featured series in the SLO Tribune titled "Photos from the Vault". I am now excited to announce that David has agreed to speak to the Coffee Cabinet on August 20th about the history of the SLO Tribune and his acclaimed series (clearly not to be confused with my unacclaimed series!)

This reminds me that we could use a dose of RAM history from our infamous RAM Vault...

- Did you know that there used to be seven RAM Branches? According to the May 1996 Bulletin, in addition to our current SLO Branch #2, there was a second SLO Branch #7, as well as Branches in Five Cities, Santa Maria, North County, Arroyo Grande, and Morro Bay. While six of them unfortunately fell by the wayside over the years, our Branch is bigger and stronger than ever! We owe it to all of you guys who show up each week and month!
- The June 1993 Bulletin talks about a RAM policy of providing free lunches to jokesters:

"The ritual of telling a joke to be awarded a free meal has become a much-discussed subject by our members – in a negative vein. After discussions with several parties, it has been decided that the best approach would be to 'screen' these humorous anecdotes before they are rendered to the gathered attendees. So, voila! – a SLO RAM 'Jester' has been miraculously created to solve the problem. Bob Bostrom, who has experience as a cruise ship 'raconteur', has been selected to act in this filtering capacity."

So, I asked Bob Mott, our resident “ChatGPT” on all things RAMS, what he remembers about this policy. He said that during announcement time, a few men would tell jokes - some funny, some filthy unfunny, and many that were well-known jokes from late night comedy shows. The Joke Master was appointed to screen the jokes and select a few that were very funny and that could be told without all attendees reciting the punch line in unison along with the joke teller!

After reading this, I was ready to put in a request for several free lunches for all the attempted jokes (funny or otherwise!) that I’ve told at meetings as Big RAM and Big Bean, only to be informed by our Executive Committee that this policy ended decades ago! Oh well...my jokes (and Steve Sicanoff’s) shall continue unabated anyway!

I think I’d better stop writing for now. After all, while the RAMS are about having fun, I don’t want to accidentally include all of next month’s fun in this month’s Bleat! See you next time!

AUGUST 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 (\$5 and \$10 bills appreciated).**

The next Luncheon meeting is on **August 18th**. The featured speaker will be **Garret Olson**, President/CEO of the SLO Chamber of Commerce. Garret will present *What to know about YOUR SLO Chamber of Commerce*.

The entre selection for lunch is Chicken Parmesan with Whipped Potatoes, and the vegetarian selection will be Vegetarian Lasagna. Desert will be German Chocolate Cake.

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.

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.

August Coffee Cabinet Programs

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

August 6, 2026 – Christine Robertson, Exec Director, Coastal Education Foundation. Christine will inform us on *“Emmy Award and Current Activities”*.

August 13, 2026 – Donna Banks & Mike Flamingo, US Coast Guard Aux. They will talk about the *Coast Guard Aux and Support*.

August 20, 2026 – David Middlecamp, Photojournalist at the SLO Tribune. David will discuss the *150-Year Evolution of the SLO Tribune*.

August 27, 2026 – Nancy DeRuchie, of the Rancho Burro Donkey Sanctuary. Nancy will provide *Information on the Activities at the Sanctuary*.

September 3, 2026 – Michael Auriemma. Michael will discuss the *Mediterranean Lifestyle and the Mediterranean Diet*.

HIKING GROUP

Russ Bik

We had two great hikes in July. On the 3rd we hiked the Panorama Trail West of Cuesta Grade, and to put a cherry on top, we decided to include the



Roller Coaster Trail for the first time. The combination worked out to 4.1 miles with a cumulative ascent of 1164 feet. We also added an unplanned excursion to include a loop to see a grove of live oak trees being cultivated. This is where the word “serendipitous” comes from. It means taking a wrong turn and being happy we did. We also got to go through the pedestrian tunnel under the tracks of the “hairpin turn”.



The next July hike was on the 17th also west of Cuesta Grade. This time it was the Old Stagecoach Road. We started at the bottom of the grade and went all the way to the top. When we got there, we felt so good we decided to add another quarter mile and 200 feet. This hike was 5.7 miles with a 1028-foot elevation change—about the same difficulty as Panorama/Roller Coaster.



We have found Stagecoach to always have something weird going on. We were completely alone on the trail except for a van that passed us going up the hill. When we caught up, we found two guys taking a very strong interest in a massive cube-shaped rock with alien writing on it. It may line up with the obelisk on top of Pine Mountain and point the way. They were consulting reference books, taking notes and doing a sketch. They

tried to tell us that they were artists, but we didn’t believe them. When we came back down less than an hour later, they were gone. And then there was our official photographer Barbara who said she saw the Virgin Mary sitting in a tree.



Our first hike in August will be on the 7th. We are going to hike to Pt. Buchon on PG&E property and then walk south along the edge of the cliff along the ocean. It is an EASY 5.4-mile hike with elevation change of only 210 feet. At the turnaround point, we will swallow our iodine tablets and look at the Diablo Canyon nuclear reactor. Beautiful views of the ocean and rock formations. Cumulative Ascent 530 feet. For hike details visit ramhikes.org or contact Russ at rbik@me.com.

Lastly, one of our very frequent hikers is Marv Daniels. He is a retired PG&E lineman which



by its nature takes you out in all kinds of weather to fix important stuff. He has participated in building some of the main trails we have. We can be walking along, and he says, “I helped build this bridge”. He helped build Pismo Preserve. He is a gleaner and a grafter who likes to share with others. A flirt too.

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 SLORAM members who are unable to attend SLORAM activities because of sickness, injury or becoming severely impacted

by other events. Also, if a SLORAM member passes away, his spouse or partner will be extended friendship and best wishes.

A “SLORAM Friendship and Best Wishes” card will be circulated for signatures by all SLORAM members at a monthly SLORAM luncheon or weekly Coffee Cabinet meeting and forwarded to the member or family.

Please help us identify others who should receive the “SLORAM 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 on Golf activities, contact Nick Higgins at 1-559-289-1586.

SLORAM TASTERS

Bill Sisler



On July 2nd, our group met at the home of John Baillie. We tasted six wines on John's patio overlooking a beautiful garden. At the end of the tasting, it was announced that all the wines were purchased for less than \$10. Our group, however, rated these wines nearly as well as more expensive wines. So, it is taste that matters, not price. We also enjoyed some sourdough bread and a variety of cheeses.

Our next gathering will be held at noon, August 6th at the home of Rich Pescatore. This will be our annual Beer and Bratwurst event along with beans and salad. A number of beers will be presented for tasting and evaluation.

If you are interested in joining our group, please contact Bill Sisler.

SLORAM DAY TRIPS

Hal Thilmony

Central Coast Zoo - On Tuesday, Aug 11th we will enjoy an escorted tour at the **Central Coast Zoo** in Atascadero. The cost is \$13 per person. A limited number of spaces are still available. Send me an email (hthilmon@yahoo.com) if you would like to participate. A group lunch at the **A-Town Diner** is an option for those who want to continue to socialize after the Zoo tour.

SLORAM Video Trips - While we enjoy the camaraderie of group outings, some places are hard to visit. Others are impossible. A new Day Trip sub-section called [Video Day Trips - SLORAM](#) has links to videos that capture a historical time period or a unique adventure in or around San Luis Obispo. One of the most requested Day Trips has been to **Vandenberg Space Force Base**.

Unfortunately, public group tours are not currently available. As a next best option, two videos (one long and one short) that show a Falcon X rocket launch are posted on this

website. Take a peek. Let me know if you enjoy this and the other videos that are posted there.



If you have suggestions for future SLO-related video adventures or historical topics let me know.

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.

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 meaningful for all of us. Open AI: The book is a powerful and deeply moving account that captures the human experience of one of history's most tragic events. By weaving together firsthand testimonies from survivors, first responders, families, and officials, the author creates an immersive narrative that feels both intimate and comprehensive. The oral history format gives authentic voices center stage, making the emotional impact especially profound. At times, the fragmented structure can feel

overwhelming or repetitive, but it effectively reflects the chaos and confusion of the day. Overall, the book is a compelling, respectful, and unforgettable historical record.

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.

October 27

“The Dreamt Land: Chasing Water and Dust Across California” by Mark Arax.

Presented by Bob Zdenek. The author is from a family of Central Valley farmers. He has watched the battles over water lurch from drought to flood and back again....and it is still going on. As Mark Twain said: Whiskey is for drinking, water is for fighting. An Amazon Editor’s pick.

November 24

“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.

NO BOOKCLUB MEETING IN DECEMBER

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Greg Horne

Luncheon, Coffee – or Both?

A few months back, the Big RAM and I held informal straw polls at the monthly luncheon and one of the Coffee Cabinet meetings, to see if there was support for an adjustment in the Coffee Cabinet start-time to allow more members to attend. The consensus was that the existing 8:00 for 8:30 start is just fine to stay as it is, but in the process, we learned some interesting facts about the attendees at each event.

It turns out that roughly half the regular lunch crowd come to the Coffee Cabinet at least once a month, and half the Coffee Cabinet attendees sometimes come to the lunches. This is great participation, yet with attendance at each event being roughly equal, it also suggests that the majority of our members choose to attend one, but not both these gatherings.

I’ve been digging into the SLORAM history and have discovered some interesting history concerning these traditions. The first RAM group was formed in 1988 in Oceano, based upon, but not connected with, the men’s organization in Northern California known as Sons in Retirement (SIR). SIR did not want to extend its reach beyond Monterey County but did allow RAM to duplicate its format and procedures, with monthly luncheons, activity groups, and a “Just-for-Fun” focus. SLORAM followed in March of 1990, meeting at the Madonna Inn and enthusiastically supported by Alex Madonna.

The informal Coffee Cabinet was started in April 1993, with an initial offer by four RAMs to buy coffee for any member who wanted to join them on a Thursday morning in the Madonna Inn Copper Café. It soon became a popular event and moved to the Garden Room, but it has maintained its informal “drop-in” format, unlike the monthly luncheon, which requires RAMs to confirm their planned attendance to ensure that enough meals are available.

Our lunch committee, headed by Terry Whittaker, maintains two separate lists, distinguishing regular luncheon attendees, who receive confirming phone calls each month, from designated Coffee Cabinet members, who do not. Both groups receive an email invitation and can respond if they wish to attend. Otherwise, however, we make no distinction between the two groups. We keep one Master Roster of RAM members, and all new members are formally “inducted” into the organization. All RAMs are eligible to serve on the Board and our various organizing Committees.

If you're one of the RAMs who only come for coffee, consider trying out the luncheon some time, where there is usually more opportunity to get to know your fellow RAMs during "table talk" time before the formal program begins - just let Terry Whittaker know you would like to attend. And if you don't usually come to the Coffee Cabinet, give that a try too - if it's not too early in the day for you!

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Gary Close



I was born in Placerville, CA, a historic Gold Rush-era city in El Dorado County, known as "Hangtown" for the rough justice of its early days. I grew up in El Dorado Hills,

CA, attending preschool through high school in the same school district. In my senior year of high school, I went as a foreign exchange student to Madrid, Spain. I was made an Eagle Scout in 1983 and graduated from Oak Ridge High School in 1984 (Valedictorian) and from Cal Poly in 1989 (BA, Industrial Engineering, Cum Laude).

I started working for Hibshman Corporation in San Luis Obispo while still studying at Cal Poly, and upon graduating became the manufacturing manager. The company specialized in miniature optics for defense and medical applications. When market conditions changed dramatically, I pivoted and obtained a job at Diablo Canyon Power Plant (DCPP) in 1990.

At DCPP I held a variety of positions from engineering to regulatory affairs, recruitment, operations, human performance, performance improvement, land stewardship, and corrective action. I was promoted to Director at DCPP in 2012 and went to PG&E corporate

in 2015 to start a Corrective Action program for PG&E, similar to what we used at DCPP. This program was rolled out to 23,000 employees across the company.

Cal Poly brought me here, and I am so glad that it did. Besides giving me an excellent education at a bargain price, I found a love for the area: the ocean, hiking, biking, and incredible weather. While at Cal Poly I met my wife, who was a local gal from Arroyo Grande. Upon graduating I soon proposed to her - on Madonna Mountain - and we have been married now for 36 years, relocating to Arroyo Grande in 1996.

My wife and I raised our 4 boys here on the Central Coast. We have no daughters, but now we have 4 daughters-in-law! We also have 5 grandchildren, 3 girls and 2 boys, with another due this year.

Harvey Shacket



I was born and raised in Montreal, Quebec, Canada. I attended the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, Ontario (BA, 1970) and McGill University

in Montreal, Quebec (MSW, 1977). In 1984, at age 37, I moved to Los Angeles, and I became an American citizen in 2001.

I worked as a medical social worker in 3 acute hospitals in the Los Angeles area. After retiring in 2017, I began working as a therapist in private practice. I still do this work on a part-time basis, conducting telehealth sessions through the Internet.

I met my wife, Susan, in 1985. We were married in 1991 and, before moving to the

Central Coast in 2024, we lived in Sunland, CA in Metro LA. When she retired, she wanted to leave the heat to live closer to the ocean. We believe that we have now found Paradise!

I am interested in current affairs, and love music, enjoying the excellent musicians on the Central Coast. My wife and I have started doing "Laughter Yoga", which was started in the 1990's. We love to laugh! I am also interested in psychology and spirituality.

Susan and I have been together for 41 years, and we have two sons who share an apartment in Sherman Oaks, CA. My sister and brother-in-law also live in Sherman Oaks. Indeed, they are the reason why I initially moved to LA, where I started a family and launched a satisfying career. I feel truly blessed!

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

Last Name	First Name
Adelman	Jim
Anderson	Bob
Bachellier	John
Campbell	Hank
Carter	Alan
Close	Gary
Emadzadeh	Abby
Felix	Edward
Ferrara	William
George	Roger
Goodrich	John
Hockenbary	Warren
Mott	Bob
Mullin	Gordon
Peake	David
Smith	Ed
Troy	Bernie
Wrathall	Richard

AUGUST ANNIVERSARIES

Name	Yrs
Branin, Barry & Vivian	66
Dossae, Ernie & Judy	63
Fieldhouse, Bill & Faith Ann	66
Grimes, Joe & Mary	62
Hansen, Steve & Ann	63
Hazlett, Larry & Patricia	52
Henderson, Gary & Marcia	49
Kirsch, Ralph & Isabel	65
Lapidus, Ivan & Jennifer	53
Lever, Bob & Shayla	62
Lyon, Mark & Sue	56
Peake, David & Vera	22
Pescatore, Richard & Sharon	56
Rost, Tom & Carole	32
Smith, Ronald & Lynn Choy	40
Troy, Bernard & Maria	58
Whittaker, Terry & Annette	63

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