



History Retired Active Men SLO Branch #2

Purpose of Retired Active Men SLO Branch #2

To promote the happiness of retired men by helping renew former friendships and associations and to provide opportunity to establish new acquaintances through affiliation with other retired men. The RAM organization is just for fun. It promotes activities that are of interest to its members. It espouses no political party, religion, philanthropic, ideological or other social enterprise.

Founding of Retired Active Men

Founder Fred Appleton (1915-1995) was retired from being an engineer at Litton Industries. Living in Aptos, California, he was a very active member of Sons in Retirement (SIRS), an organization very much like Retired Active Men. He moved to Pismo Beach in 1987.

Appleton was denied his request to establish a branch of SIRS in the Five Cities, SIRS saying that they did not wish to form chapters south of Monterey County. They did, however, allow him to use their by-laws and other documents as models in setting up a similar organization in San Luis Obispo County. That initial branch, Five Cities Retired Active Men (now known as Oceano), was formed in 1988 and thrived.

Launching RAM in San Luis Obispo

After two years, Appleton believed retired men in San Luis Obispo could benefit from a similar group. Using a list of candidates obtained from the ladies at a meeting of the SLO Newcomers, he conducted an introductory meeting of 29 men in the Round Room at the Madonna Inn on March 20, 1990. Thirteen of them joined, and Tom Sullivan became the

first Big Ram. A list of all of the Big Rams appears at the end of this history.

The first RAM Bulletin was published in July 1990. It included a roster of 53 members, showing that the membership had quadrupled in just three months. Articles of Incorporation for Retired Active Men, San Luis Obispo Branch #2 Incorporated as a non-profit corporation were filed on March 14, 1991, largely through the efforts of Bob Smith and Ralph Prince.

Active members from that first year are Fred Churchill, Howard Bentzinger, Loren Nicholson, Paul Tuttle, Ralph Reese, Tom Sullivan, and Walt Gonyer.

Paul Tuttle designed a Ram head logo to use in lieu of the rather unimpressive one of Oceano Branch #1. It remains our SLO Rams logo, and has since been adopted by Oceano and other Rams branches. He also donated the handsome brass Ram's head that was the inspiration for the Ram logo. That brass ram has presided over every meeting since.

Expansion in the Area

Demand for membership soon exceeded the limits set by the first two branches, and new branches were established. The following table shows the branches and when they were organized:

1. Oceano (originally Five Cities) - 1988
2. San Luis Obispo (including some members from Oceano) - 1990
3. Santa Maria - 1991
4. North County - 1993
5. Arroyo Grande (spin off from Oceano) - 1994
6. Morro Bay - 1994
7. San Luis Obispo (Elks) (spin off from Branch 2) - 1996

These seven branches now have over 750 members in the Central Coast. The steady growth of RAMS throughout the Central Coast proved that the RAMs satisfied an important need for retired men.

Retired Active Men Association (RAMA)

In 1992, anticipating the growth and expansion shown above, The Retired Active Men California State Board of Directors (usually referred to as the State Board), renamed Retired Active Men Association (RAMA) in 2002, was set up to assist in the formation of new branches, apply standardized By-Laws, act as liaison with all government agencies, and as a forum to coordinate branch programs and activities. Fred Appleton was the first President. Tom Sullivan, Ralph Reese, and then Paul Tuttle, all from Branch #2, were presidents through 1995.

In 1998, RAMA announced that it wanted all branches to un-incorporate and merge into a RAMA umbrella corporation under a contractual agreement which included control of the RAM name and logo. Preferring to retain our separate corporate identity, the SLO branch left RAMA and issued its own By- Laws. In 2003, RAMA was reconstituted as a new corporation with new less restricting By-Laws, but Branch #2 elected to remain a separate organization.

SIR Merger Proposal

During 1994, the SIRS organization approached RAMA proposing that the RAM branches be merged into the SIRS organization. SIRS had established many branches, including a branch in Santa Maria in the latter part of 1993; they had also expanded into Fresno and Bakersfield. Although RAM had been founded based on the concepts of SIRS, minor differences had evolved during the ensuing six years and the RAM branches had a strong sense of pride in the successful growth of their organization. After a few meetings between SIRS and RAMA, the differing viewpoints of the two organizations emerged which led to RAMA declining the proposal:

- in the event of a merger, the RAMs wished to retain the RAM identity and to be the exclusive SIRS subsidiary in the Central Coast, and
- SIRS wanted the RAMs to dissolve and become the same as other SIRS branches.

Membership

Branch #2's membership includes professors and coaches, corporate presidents, city mayors and managers, veterans, beer buffs, wine buffs, doctors, lawyers, and judges. They are from every quarter of the country and from foreign lands, many with strong family ties and traditions. Most have traveled widely from military service or personal interest. Many still regularly travel the country and the world.

Branch #2 has met monthly, on the third Tuesday, ever since that March 1990 meeting. Membership reached 90 by the end of that first year, and to 160 by the end of 1995. With some fluctuation, membership reached 170 in January 2012, and recently numbered 162. The history of the branch's membership and luncheon attendance is summarized in the following table: See Appendix A

A current roster is published with the RAM Bulletin quarterly, and a terminations file is maintained listing information for all who have ever been a member in the past. Information from this file can be obtained from the Secretary.

Activities

Central to the activities of the group is the monthly luncheon meeting, which includes the Pledge of Allegiance, singing, humor, recognition of guests and wellness report, conduct of branch business, and above all, a speaker. Over the years, the group has had outstanding speakers from all walks of life, many prestigious.

A major contributor to the Branch's success is the active participation of its members. In addition to its 12 member Executive Committee composed of six officers and six directors, there are 2 Big Ram Advisors, 9 luncheon reservation callers, a two man Audit Committee, a 50/50 drawing chair where the proceeds helps the Branch pay the cost of insurance with no additional individual assessments, a Historian, a Hospitality Chairman, a Humorist, a seven man Membership Committee, a Publicity chair, a bulletin publisher, a photographer, a six member Program Committee, two Songmeisters, Webmaster, and a couple of other positions. All told, there are 64 positions open, with several members holding more than one position. A testimony to the active participation of the membership is the fact that 45 members, or 38% of the active membership, hold at least one of these positions.

In the 24 years since founding, Branch #2, true to the focus “Active” in the name, has created a number of RAM Sponsored Groups, making it unique in this regard among the seven branches.

- Don Morris started the **SLO Rams Coffee Cabinet** in 1993, and faithfully chaired the unbroken chain of weekly meetings for the first 11 years. Meetings are now chaired on a quarterly rotation basis. These meetings also feature a speaker program.
- Frank Monforte started a Rams Scramble Golf Tournament in November 1990. With ups and downs it is now **SLO Ram Golf**.
- Dr. Paul Spangler initiated a Renovating Rams group in 1993, emphasizing fitness and nutrition, and soon renamed it the Physical Fitness Group. It was reconstituted by Bob Mott in 1999 as the current **Hiking Group**.
- * Gus Wassel organized **The Ram Tasters**, which first met in November 1998 and held its first tasting in January 1999. The group meets monthly at wineries and in members’ homes to learn about wine in a social atmosphere.
- The **Book Reading and Discussion Club** was formed in September 1999 at the initiation of Dave Smith. As in most book clubs, the participants read a monthly selection and then meet to discuss the book, followed by recommendations and selection of future books.
- Jack Peschong and Pravin Bhuta inaugurated **The Lunch Bunch** in 2000, which meets monthly at various restaurants for no-agenda, no-speaker lunches. It is now managed by Steve Bennett.
- * In 2017, Steve Lumm reinstated the Dining Around group. See comments below on the original Four Seasons Dining Round.
- * In 2017, Ernie Dossa started a Poker Group.

There were other groups which are no longer active:

- The **Four Seasons Dining Round** was formed in 1994 by Joe Graham and ran for 18 years, closing down in 2012. It was a round robin dinner group consisting of groups of four couples, each taking turns hosting dinners once a month and everyone contributing courses. RAMS participating since the beginning were Pravin Bhuta, Tom Coverdale, and Bob Rice. Coordinators over the years included Bob Mott, Jerry Tuft, Bob Handley, Pete Savarino, Bob Farnum, Pravin Bhuta and Dick Griffin.
- The **Bridge Group** was started in 1990 and run by Lyn Vivrette until Gus Gustafson took over in 1995 until it shut down in 2005.
- The **Computer Group** was started in 1996 and run by Les Meyer until he retired in 2005.

- **The RAM's Blue and Gray Society** was formed in 2011 by Ron Bell as a discussion group to explore the American Civil War. Lectures from The Great Courses by Professor Gary W. Gallagher PhD of the University of Virginia, one of the country's foremost Civil War historians, provided the background for the discussions.
- In 1992 the Rams began holding tennis tournaments. Discontinued in mid-1998, it was revived by Dick Bray as the **Tuesday Morning Tennis Group**, until 2015.
- * In 1992 Loren Nicholson, Rams Program Chairman and Special Events Chairman, with Ralph Reese organized special trips and tours. As interest in long trips declined, Bob Mott reconstituted the program in 2004 as the current **Day Trips and Outings**. Phil Key is the chaired the group until 2017.

In addition to group activities, there are a number of support activities worthy of note:

- **The Ram Bulletin** was started by Ralph Stewart. Paul Tuttle took on the job when he joined Branch # 2 in September 1990, and passed the job to Norm Tiber in 2005. David Harris now handles it.
- Branch #2 appointed a **Publicity Chair** in 1991. Ralph Stewart and Floyd Pembroke filled the role until 1994, when Don Morris was appointed. He has served on this one man committee, ensuring publicity of newsworthy SLO RAM events in local newspapers and magazines ever since.
- In 1999 Jack Spaulding, with Don Morris and Jim Lau, created a **SLO Rams Logo Sign**, showing meeting dates of the SLO Rams and the Rams Coffee Cabinet, and Alex Madonna allowed them to place it next to the Rotary sign at the entrance to the Inn. This sign has since been removed when Madonna made the decision to remove all service club signs.
- * Songmeister Bud Ogren lamented the lack of an official song. Jim Arndt composed the **SLO RAM Anthem**, to be sung to the tune of "Home on the Range." It was published in two issues of The Bulletin in 2001. Bob Mott updated the song in 2009. The anthem appears at the end of this history.
- In 2007 a major rejuvenation of the **Ram Website** was undertaken. Steve Bennett served as the initial Webmaster, followed by Norm Tiber. David Harris has been responsible for it for the last four years.

So, it can be seen from the above that the SLO RAMS Branch #2 has in its twenty years of existence developed a diverse set of activities. These activities certainly fulfill the credo of RAMS: "... to promote the happiness of retired men by assisting them to renew former friendships and associations and to provide opportunity of new friendships through association with other retired men.... This organization is JUST FOR FUN.... We promote activities that are of interest to the members...."

James Kiraly
Historian
12/31/12

Steve Lumm
Secretary
1/22/19

Big Rams

Members who have served as Big Ram are:

- 1990 to 1992 Tom Sullivan
- 1993 Ralph Reese
- 1994 Loren Nicholson
- 1995 Harlan Hamre
- 1996 Bob Mott
- 1997 Don Morgan
- 1998 Dan McCarthy & Frank Monforte
- 1999 Jim Thornburg
- 2000 Jim Murphy
- 2001 Dave Smith
- 2002 Jim Golden
- 2003 Jim Talbot
- 2004 Roger Eberhardt
- 2005 Michael Frucht
- 2006 Dave Bresnan
- 2007 Phil Ruggles
- 2008 Ekki Petring
- 2009 Dean Morgridge
- 2010 Frank Lebens
- 2011 Ted Ivarie
- 2012 Bob Woods
- 2013 Steve Lumm
- 2014 Hank Campbell
- 2015 Roger Malkus
- 2016 Bob Leber
- 2017 Alan Henderson
- 2018 Steve Bennett

Meritorious Service Award

The Meritorious Service Award, initially named The Paul V. Tuttle Service Award, was established in 2001 to recognize Rams who make substantial and continuing contributions to the purposes of the Retired Active Men. It is made annually "in recognition of leadership,

dedication and continued support of the RAMS." It was named to honor Paul Tuttle's long record of leadership, dedication and continued support of the RAMS. In 2007, at the urging of Paul Tuttle, the name of the award was changed to "The SLO Ram Meritorious Service Award." After Paul's death, the Executive Committee changed the name back to The Paul V. Tuttle Service Award, in honor of him.

Recipients have been as follows:

- 2001 Paul Tuttle
- 2002 Don Morris
- 2003 Don Morgan
- 2004 Bob Mott
- 2005 Bud Ogren and Don Strassburg
- 2006 Fred Churchill
- 2007 Jim Talbot
- 2008 Roger Eberhardt
- 2009 Bill Fieldhouse
- 2010 Jim Kiraly
- 2011 Norm Tiber
- 2012 Loren Nicholson
- 2013 Gus Wassel
- 2014 Dave Bresnan
- 2015 Hank Campbell
- 2016 Steve Lumm
- 2017 Bill Fieldhouse
- 2018 Steve Bennett

The RAM Anthem

Written by SLO Ram Poetry Chair Jim Arndt, Updated by SLO Ram Bob Mott, Music by Daniel E. Kelly, and Arranged by David Guion *

1.
RAMs talents are broad. While our
leaders we laud
For the songs and the jokes
we await
For our luncheons we meet at
Madonna's, a treat, For our food where
the service is great. Chorus:
RAMs, RAMs here we're
called
Where the grapes and the broccoli
grow Where sometimes is heard a
discouraging word To keep all our city
growth slow.

2.
Oh give us a hand for in pledging
we stand

Saluting our
National flag
With its stars and its stripes, and none
of us gripes

'Cause we're proud of that
tattered old rag. Chorus

3.

Coffee Cabinet meets Thursday morning
for treats

Of coffee and speakers
galore.

Right here in this room there's discussion,
not gloom

Of subjects that are
never a bore. Chorus

4.

Book readers do meet, discuss books
that are neat

From cover to cover
they read.

We're sure that they find it enhances
their mind And through books their
fancies are freed. Chorus

5.

Our golfers are great and their shots they
go straight

When they play on Laguna's
back nine

They mark down their scores and they
swear evermore

That an ace is a
heavenly sign. Chorus

6.

Wine tasting's an art where the nose
does its part

In sensing the fruity
bouquet.

As RAM Tasters lift high and their goblets
drain dry

They join in a
fellowship gay.

Chorus

7.

Oh, hiking's a sport for a
sociable sort

Who love to go forth in
a bunch.

Now they roam far and wide in our quaint
countryside

But always wind up with
a lunch. Chorus

* Sung to the tune of "Home on the Range." When a shorter version is needed verses 1 and 2 may be used. Dr Brewster M. Higley originally wrote the words in poem called "My Western Home" in the early 1870s. The poem was first published in a December 1873 under the title "Oh, Give Me a Home Where the Buffalo Roam." Higley's original words are similar but not identical to those of the song today. The Ram lyrics were written by Jin Arndt for the July 2001 Rams Bulletin, and updated by Bob Mott in May 2009. The music was written by a friend of Higley's named Daniel E Kelley. Early in the 20th century, it was arranged by Texas composer David Guion (1892-1981) who is often credited as the composer.