

This monthly article highlights one of our branch members. We hope that you enjoy knowing a little more about your fellow members and the interesting life they have had. If you have someone you would like to nominate or if you would like to help author an article, please email the editor, Ron Nakamoto, at [ron.nakamoto@yahoo.com](mailto:ron.nakamoto@yahoo.com).

## **STAN BARKEY — Former Big Sir and Honorary Life Member**



A volunteer is someone who contributes time, effort and talent to meet a need or further a mission, without compensation. Most people intrinsically believe that the meaning of life has something to do with helping people, and volunteering can feel like you are in harmony with that. There are boundless opportunities to volunteer one's service from the local community shelter to the national challenge of electing a new President to our own SIR organization. Let me introduce you to one who has dedicated his life to helping others. His name is Stan Barkey.

Stan was born in Springfield, Illinois, the third of four boys. His father was a Baptist Minister so they moved to a new town every few years. All in all, he counted twelve houses in two states as his home as he grew up and considers Fort Collins, Colorado as his hometown. The brothers grew up together mostly amusing themselves with "neighborhood pick-up games" and church activities. All of the boys played musical instruments and sang in quartets. His family did not own a TV until he was in high school and he did not see a movie until after he was married in his early twenties. His quiet time was often spent reading a book, something he continues to practice today.

Stan started in the direction of two of his brothers and father towards a calling to the ministry. He completed his studies at the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, receiving his diploma as a Bible major in 1964. He enrolled at Kansas State University while serving as a youth pastor and graduated with a BA Cum Laude in History (European focus) in 1968. When he decided not to pursue a ministry career he notified his draft board. The Vietnam War was still raging and Stan was drafted two weeks after graduation. After Basic Training at Ft. Bliss, Tx, Stan received his specialty training in field radio operations at Ft. Huachuca, Az. For six months he served as an instructor in the school before receiving orders for Vietnam. War is always a traumatic experience and Vietnam was no exception. Field radio operators are known to be targets positioned next to the platoon leader, but with providence or luck, Stan was stationed at Cam Ranh Bay where life was much safer. (Editor's note: The CRB Air and Naval Base was part of the large Cam Ranh Bay logistics facility built by the United States. It was the major military air and seaport used for the offloading of supplies and military equipment. All the service components had compounds and units assigned to the facility from its opening in 1965.) Stan was assigned as an operator for the Army's Military Affiliate Radio System (MARS)

which was the principal way besides mail to send a message (Marsgram) or talk (phone patch) to your loved ones in the U.S. MARS used short wave transmission to connect with amateur radio operators stateside. These “ham” hobbyists ran phone patches through the telephone system to connect parties together similar to the phone company. Those that are familiar with Vietnam know that the predominant exchange was the barter system. As the gatekeeper for instant contact back to the U.S., Stan and his crew enjoyed new barracks, beds, steaks, etc. that were exchanged for calls back home. Life was good but being away from his wife and child was tough so when a call came for an “early out”, he took it and left the Army on April Fools day 1970.

Back in the Bay Area with his family and faced with an unfolding future, Stan visited a job placement facility which resulted in a position with the San Jose Central YMCA working with the Y-Indian Guide Program running the summer camps at Camp Campbell near Boulder Creek. Here he worked with youth similar to his experiences in church. Although rewarding, the pay was low so Stan moved on to a job with New York Life Insurance Company. After barely surviving for three years as a sales agent, he moved onto State Farm in Cupertino. It turned out to be a much better fit for Stan operating with a full service business model. After four years he was promoted into management in the Mountain View area. For the next sixteen years he hired, trained and managed agents in the mid-peninsula area. When State Farm decided to change the field management structure, Stan was selected to a team to design, develop and deliver the training program to be used company-wide to support the agency workforce. As with any change, much less a radical one, convincing experienced managers to change the way they worked posed a challenge but fit Stan’s strengths of diplomacy and clear messaging. He later moved on to consulting for the local agents and continued that for several years after an early retirement.

Stan has been married to Stephanie for 50 years. They met in Chicago where they attended the same church. She is a registered Emergency Room Nurse and they have a son, daughter and five grandkids ranging from 4 to 23 years of age.

Stan retired early so he could dedicate time to what he enjoyed - volunteering and helping out his fellow man. He started out as a general helper in the pantry for the West Valley Community Services organization in Cupertino. He believed in their mission and wanted to help in any way that he could. He sorted groceries, drove a van to pick up loads from various stores, swept floors and did whatever was needed. (Editor’s note: West Valley Community Services, Inc. (WVCS) is a private non-profit, community-based agency that has been providing direct assistance and referral services to the West Valley communities of Santa Clara County for over 40 years. WVCS provides a continuum of basic needs, family support and housing services. Their mission is to encourage the sharing of community resources to provide basic human needs in a caring and dignified environment.) Five years later, Stan is the Board Chair working on policy, multi- year planning, defining strategic direction and special programming. WVCS serves about 7,000 people a year. The average donation is \$50 and there are many “in kind” donations of food, clothing and other goods from stores and individuals. Their creative thinking has spawned an annual “Chefs of Compassion” event where four local restaurant chefs compete creating dishes from the ingredients in the pantry. They serve a crowd of 250-300 culminating in a Best Chef trophy selected by a panel of judges and

a second one awarded by popular vote. Garvin Thomas, NBC local news reporter and fill-in anchor, was the Master of Ceremonies for this year's event. Stan is also a trustee at Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, Ca. (Editor's note: PSR was started in 1866 by Congregational ministers and laypeople who intended that the seminary be; "an Institution of the People, a child of the churches." PSR offers progressive theological education to a diverse student body.) Stan speaks with pride about the seminary's accomplishments with its diverse curriculum and inclusive student body. There is also some sadness and resignation as he notes that many churches are dying with attendance down. The trustees and administration face the challenge of finding a sustainable financial model while making graduate education affordable for students.

Given his busy schedule Stan also finds time to enjoy himself as a member of SIR. He joined in 2004 and by 2011 was inducted as an Honorary Life Member. As with his other volunteer activities he saw a need in the organization and volunteered to help. He served two years as Little SIR, two years as Big SIR, two years as Area Governor and two years as a Director. He currently serves on the Golf Committee.

Stan's message to his fellow SIR's—

"Each of us has a lifetime of valuable experiences. The things we have learned from these experiences can have significant value for others. I would encourage each of us to find opportunities to contribute what we have learned through service as a volunteer in an organization that is doing something for others."

We end this profile with an observation. The strength of an organization is only as good as those that volunteer to lead and support it. Members that commit to help are relevant and make a difference. In Stan's case you would certainly say that he is committed, he is relevant and he is making a difference for his church, community, SIR and himself.