

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\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:ron.nakamoto(at)yahoo.com).

STANLEY “STAN” SCARDINO



Here is an introduction to your new Big Sir for 2018, Stan Scardino.

My Youth I was born and grew up in Houston, TX. It was a great place to grow up in the 50's and 60's. Our neighborhood was full of rambunctious friends who were never bored, full of mischief and learning to make our own way. My father was a Division Manager at Foley's, a large retail chain in Houston. I was an only child. I spent my early years on the Gulf of Mexico where we shared a beach house with relatives. I loved the ocean and learned to free dive for oysters, to surf and generally have a ball. My first car was a 1962 Renault Caravelle with removable hardtop. I have driven convertibles ever since!

I met my best friend as boy scouts and we shared a love of the ocean, cars, scouting, and later, girls. Early on, I learned to repair and rebuild cars from friends, uncles and the local garage jocks. Our first automotive challenge was to drop a big eight-cylinder engine into a surplus 1942 Ford Jeep. Houston was a hot-rodder's dream town due to the number of speed shops. AJ Foyt was just starting to win Indy races and my uncle and his cousins had been in dirt track racing with him. My love of cars led to other builds and eventually we spotted a 1952 Chevy Carryall (forerunner to the Suburban) with four flat tires. The owner was more than happy to dump it for \$25. We envisioned this car to be our surf wagon! Long story short, we got it running and used it to transport our friends and surfboards to the beach for a year. We were off to Southern California in late July of '66. We spent the summer



surfing from Malibu to San Onofre enjoying the surfer life. Like the movie "Endless Summer" we were like the seagulls cruising on the waves, moving from beach to beach in the sunny California sun. Soon, summer was over and we beat a hasty, 24-hour non-stop (except for fuel) drive back to Houston to get packed to go back to school at the University of Texas.

My Adult Years I worked one last summer in California again and met and married my first wife. After graduating from the University of Texas, my wife had an offer from an aerospace company working on the Apollo Project at the Space Center in Houston. I had graduated with a business degree, had just turned down an offer from IBM and was contemplating my next move when a family friend who owned a carpet cleaning business decided to get out and approached me. His cleaning equipment needed to be repossessed so he offered me the business if I would get the equipment back. My large stature helped me secure the equipment and I moved along with my wife to the Houston Space Center area and started hustling business. I bid and won a contract with GTE cleaning their telephone switching central offices and branched out to franchises like Shakey's Pizza, etc. Business was good but after three years of managing over 100 employees in a 24/7 business, I decided it was time to move on. The upside of this business was I got to meet several astronauts, which was memorable for a young guy. One evening a friend and I were having drinks with Buzz Aldrin who recounted his favorite story that Neil Armstrong may have been the first on the surface of the moon, but Buzz was the first to pee in his pants there.

I enjoyed hard work and joined my dad for my second startup. He was a true entrepreneur and had spent his career doing new ventures for Foley's. Foley's was anxious to expand beyond their successful retail business. My dad served as the lead to set up the various businesses. When the company decided to consolidate back to only the retail business, Dad did not care to follow and spun off his last venture with them, a contract interior design firm specializing in hotels. We grew like crazy and started to believe that everything we touched turned to gold. We were unstoppable! We had several properties in south Texas under construction and I had taken up flying to be able to land at the resorts to keep track of the business. Flying would become my avocation of choice for over 35 years and 2,000 hours in the air.

As the saying goes, opportunity abounds and soon we were offered an opportunity to own five acres of resort property, with an option for fifteen more, as barter to revitalize a resort hotel, bars and restaurants. Did I want to continue as consultants or become owners? Owners of course! We began building large condominiums on the property. Then, the first energy crises hit and the bottom fell out of the resort properties business...Oops! After months of trying to keep it together, the business declared bankruptcy and I had to look for a real job.

When one door closes, another opens and my life career started with IBM reaching out to me again. This time I took the call and quickly signed up with a great guy in the

Houston office. This was during a time when sales representatives were trained in hardware and software support as well as sales for a period of nine months before release to the field. After completion of my training, as fate would have it, I was offered an assignment in San Francisco to work in the IBM Service Bureau Company. I had no idea what SBC was, but immediately said YES! At that time, much as today, house prices were outrageous and we settled for half a house at twice the price! Welcome to California.

My high technology career was off to a whirlwind start when SBC was sold in my first year at the company. It wasn't long before I was asked to take a new position in a different part of the country. Three times I was approached and three times I declined. The final time I was not asked, I was directed to take a new position "or else". I took the "or else" as an indication that it was time to move on and I took a position with Tymshare selling computer timesharing to many of the companies in the Valley. As a sales rep you get exposed to many emerging technologies and meet many great people as part of your daily work. My customers included Varian Associates, National Semiconductor, Oracle, etc. It was a fun and great time in Silicon Valley as the computing environment metamorphized from a central mainframe to a distributed environment. It was at Tymshare that I first met Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak. By this time, I was product marketing manager for a new real-time shop floor control system. Our CEO had mentioned this new system to a friend of his, Mike Markkula. (*Editor's note: see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mike_Markkula*) I was asked to go meet the founders and see if we could help. I walked into an empty building with a lobby and two guys playing with a big screen TV. Yep, it was Wozniak programming an Apple 1 to mimic the gun turret for the Millennium Falcon in *Star Wars*. I walked away wondering who over the age of twelve would ever use such a device?

As most in the technology business know, a Silicon Valley year is like a dog year, and three years later I was arguing with Tymshare management to incorporate the IBM PC as a replacement for dumb terminals, as VisiCalc (forerunner to Excel) had taken a large portion of our row and column modeling business. One year later I had moved on and was engaged in my first Silicon Valley startup providing peripheral products for Apple and IBM PC's. That company, Mountain Computer, was founded by a contemporary of Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak from the Homebrew Computer Club... my next meeting with the Apple guys! (*Editor's note: The Homebrew Computer Club was an early computer hobbyist group started by Gordon French and Fred Moore in 1975. Steve Wozniak credits that first meeting with inspiring him to design the original Apple computer.*) As a front-end marketing guy I experienced emerging trends and soon started a business building Sales and Alliances organizations for computer software companies.

Personal and Senior Years A couple of years after moving to California, my wife and I divorced. It was unfortunate but I was up to my eyeballs in work and travel and did not

have any life beyond that. Fortunately, a few years later I met the love of my life, Susan. We met at work and after a year we started dating. When I asked her dad to bless our marriage, he only said, "What took you so long!" We have traveled life and the world together and are having a ball doing it! We celebrated our 37th anniversary this year and are looking forward to many more. When people ask if I am retired, I tell them, "No", but I did quit getting paid to do what I enjoy. As I started to wind down my friends directed me to activities that have made a substantial difference in my life.

One of my customers from my second startup convinced me to join the Los Altos Rotary Club. I am proud to be able to serve on the Endowment Fund and will Chair our major fundraising event, Fine Art in the Park, this year. (*Editor's note: see <http://rotaryartshow.com>*) From Rotary and Los Altos United Methodist Church friends, I joined Mentor Tutor Connection, mentoring high school students at Alta Vista High School. I enjoyed it so much I joined the Board to help raise funds to expand the number of students we serve. It is personally very satisfying to witness our successes in guiding young people. (*Editor's note: see <http://mentortutorconnection.org> for more information.*)

I never considered SIR a service organization, it was to be more of a "serve me" organization when I was invited to join by friends from LAUMC to play golf. Now, I really like golf, but it is clear that I will have to enjoy playing bad golf! But, with SIR, no one really cares so long as you bring a good spirit to what you are doing...whatever activity that is. I have enjoyed myself and hope I can continue to grow the activities and participation of SIR membership.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your Big Sir!