

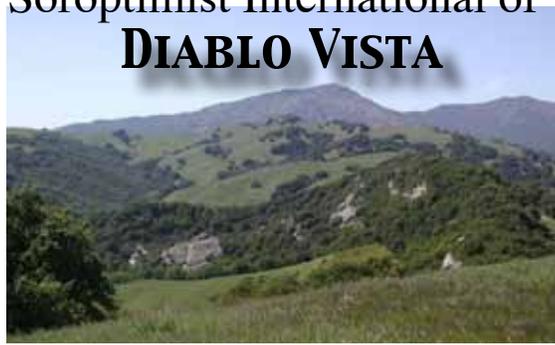


SOROPTIMIST

Best for Women

March/April, 2017

Soroptimist International of DIABLO VISTA



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2016-2017 Club Year
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S.I. Diablo Vista meets the 2nd, 3rd and 4th Wednesdays - 12:00 noon at the Concord Senior Center, 2727 Parkside Circle, Concord, CA 94519

From The President

What a busy time – Easter is almost here.

February was busy getting our Live Your Dream & Violet Richardson Award applications to our judges & then to District chairmen. Thank you to Karen Jameson & MaryAnn Van Buren for making all the deadlines. GET REAL DAY was also in February. Sue Hickman chaired the registration & Cathie Wright organized all the timers for each breakout session – it was a huge success. Thank you to Sue Manning, Karen Jameson, Mary Ann Hazlick, and our keynote speaker – Carlyn Obringer.



While this was going on Norene Lowry was organizing our Woman of Distinction Luncheon on March 22. We honored 5 women who make a huge difference in our community.

- Denise Koroslev – Rodgers Ranch Historical Center
- Ana Villalobos – Monument Impact
- Teri Gallagher – Old Republic Title
- Sonja Wilkin – Clayton Valley Village
- Jane Streich – St. Vincent de Paul - Our Woman of the Year and

- Our Live Your Dream Awardee: Brittany Ayala
- Marie Broman Awardee: Oriana M. Morris
- Violet Richardson Awardee: Joanne Magano

A big thank you to Norene and her committee for this very successful event.

April 27, 2017 will be our YOUTH NIGHT at the Pleasant Hill Youth Center. Mary Ann and her committee are notifying schools and youth programs to register all their very active students.

Conference will be here before we're ready – May 5, 6, 7, 2017. Our delegates have already taken part in a caucus conference call, regarding issues to be discussed.

We are Busy Soroptimists!

Ginger

Schedule of Events

- April 5 - Board Meeting
- April 12 - Business Meeting
- April 19 - Colleen Callahan Insurance
- April 26 - Jessica Bledsloe - Sherriff's Dept. Safety
- April 27 - Youth Night
- May 5-7 - Founder Region Conference
- May 10 - Board Meeting
- May 13 - Poker Night
- May 17 - Kit Ohlman Central Sanitary Dist.



*Jane Streich
Woman of the Year 2017*

S. I. Diablo Vista

Women of Distinction Awards Luncheon

Our Women of Distinction Awards Luncheon was held March 22, 2017, at the Contra Costa Country Club. We honored five women and our Live Your Dream, Marie Broman and Violet Richardson Award winners.



Pictured left to right: Teri Gallagher, Sonja Wilkin, Denise Koroslev, Jane Streich and Ana Villalobos



*** Special thanks to Sarah Mero who took pictures at our Women of Distinction Luncheon.**

Pictured left to right: Brittany Ayala, Live Your Dream Winner, Oriana Morris, Marie Broman Winner and Joanne Magano, Violet Richardson Winner—

S. I. Diablo Vista

Ana Villalobos

As a devoted nurse, chief educator, and well-known organizer, Ana served for over 18 Years in many roles. While employed with the non-profit organization, Monument Impact (MI), from 2012-2016 Ana served as director of Kaiser Permanente's Concord-area Healthy Eating and Active Living (HEAL) Project. In coordination with an amazing committee she successfully brought in over \$1,000,000.00 of grant funding, sponsorships and donations to foster a wellness movement to low income neighborhoods, mostly Latino residents with poor health outcomes and minimum opportunities for free or low cost physical activity.

Kaiser Permanente celebrated her leadership often by requesting her presence at national events and local meetings to showcase their best practices. Kaiser acknowledged Concord HEAL as a statewide model for its effectiveness in prioritizing community empowerment, partnerships with schools, government and businesses to improve residents' access to safe and active lifestyles in the Monument Corridor.



Denise Koroslev



Denise Koroslev and her presenter, Tina Young

Denise and her husband arrived in California 41 years ago and moved from Marin County and the peninsula to Contra Costa County in 1983. Her volunteer work with her son's school enabled her to discover Rogers Ranch and she joined with efforts to restore a historic site in Pleasant Hill.

For the past 20 years she has had the opportunity to work with some amazing people as they restored the 1800's farmhouse and made the site relevant in today's world. After heading up heritage programs for school age children, she became president of Rodgers Ranch Heritage Center in 2004. With the help of many volunteers, the rustic, but charming site now provides a venue for workshops including beekeeping, canning, chemical free gardening and housekeeping, drought tips, and herbal studies. The site also offers nature camps for children and opportunities for scouts to earn their Eagle Scout Award.

F.O.R.R. was formed as a non-profit organization in 1986 to raise money for the restoration, preservation and maintenance of the Rodgers Ranch Historic Site in Pleasant Hill, CA. In 1991 the 1867 Buildings were listed on the National Register of Historic Places and represent the few remnants of California's wheat growing past and Pleasant Hill's oldest structures.

In 2014 F.O.R.R. officially became the Rodgers Ranch Heritage Center while expanding their outreach and impact within the community.

Teri Gallagher

Teri Gallagher works as an Advisory Title Officer for Old Republic Title Company for Contra Costa Operations as well as Alameda County, a very demanding, time-consuming job. But along with this, every year, for the past ten years, during the months of October and November, Teri spearheads two charitable drives within Old Republic Title.



Terhi Gallagher and her presenter, Sue Manning

Continued on Page 4

Teri (ontinued)

In October, Teri oversees the food drive which is a competition within Old Republic between its Solano County operation and its Contra Costa Operation. Since the two counties have vastly different employee counts (Solano 31 and CC 105) the competition is based on which county collects the most pounds of food per employee. In 2016, the combined total of food collected between Solano and Contra Costa operations was 38,420 pounds! This is a record for the years she has spearheaded this drive. To put this into perspective, in 2009 and 2010, the combined total food collected was 3017 pounds. Six years later she has her coworkers contributing over 10 times the amount of food collected during two prior years. Her passion for helping those who are hungry is an inspiration to everyone at the company.

No sooner does the food drive end when Teri is on to the next annual charity drive. Again, over the past 10 years, she has led Old Republic's November toy drive in conjunction with the Salvation Army. The program is known as the "forgotten Angels" and it provides toys for children at Christmas who would otherwise go without. Teri rallies the 105 Old Republic employees by passing out to each of them a slip with the age of the child for whom the employee is buying a gift. Over the course of the month, the employees purchase gifts and send them to Teri; she then organizes the toys, makes sure those gifts requiring batteries have batteries, oversees the safe-keeping of the toys and coordinates with the Salvation Army for pickup. The Salvation Army reports that 150 children received new toys for Christmas because of Teri's enthusiastic commitment.



Sonja Wilken

Sonja Wilkin has been at the forefront of bringing the "village movement" to Clayton and parts of Concord for the past 4 years. The village movement, which started in the Beacon Hill section of Boston 15 years ago, is a "virtual village", not a brick and mortar building.

The idea of the village is a community or contiguous neighborhoods, such as Clayton and the southern parts of Concord, with people coming together as volunteers to help village members stay independent and in their own homes. The volunteers help with driving appointments



Sonja Wilkin and her presenter Sue Manning

or shopping, handyman jobs around the house, tech assistance with computers or cell phones, occasional pet help, and friendly visits in person or by phone. Clayton Valley Village has been in development since Sonja got involved, and plans to launch services on May 1, 2017. Development has been done at the grass roots level, again with volunteers from the community, involving organization, structure, government compliance, fundraising, and most of all, getting the word out to the community about what Clayton Valley Village is all about.

Sonja Wilkin's "never give up" attitude about forming Clayton Valley Village is to be admired. Volunteering to build an organization from the roots up is a tall order. Sonja's got the vision and the passion and the boundless energy to make it happen!

Our S Club girls have had a most successful year which concluded with their final project of making Easter Baskets for clients of Shelter, Inc.

In November the girls wrote encouraging cards for breast cancer patients and collected books and magazines. They connected with "Girls love mail" in Folsom, who distributed the cards magazines and books to various sites to the breast cancer patients.

School will soon be out and the girls will elect officers for next year before mid-May. Thanks to Mary Ann Hazlick who has been the club advisor to S Club this year.

Jane Streich

Jane Streich has served as a Vincentian for 21 years. (St. Vincent de Paul was primarily recognized for his charity and compassion for the poor.)

When asked how she first got involved with St. Vincent de Paul, she replied, "I have been a Vincentian at St. Francis of Assisi since 1995 when our pastor gave us two vacant rooms in the rectory for an office and food pantry. As a retired office administrator, my experience was put to good use in setting up and maintaining policies and procedures, a file system, database, etc. We quickly became a major food resource for low-income families and the homeless in the Monument corridor area. Special holiday programs were developed and improved over the years, including a Thanksgiving distribution of a turkey and food for 150 families, an "Adopt-a-Family" program for Christmas gifts for 50 families, a distribution of 90 Easter Baskets in the spring, plus 60 back-packs filled with school supplies in August."

Jane is most proud of their "Special Assistance" program. Over the years they have helped hundreds of people in desperate situations from rent or utility assistance, to getting a family in a motel for 2 or 3 nights, to arranging donated furniture deliveries. They are helped by fellow Vincentians at St. Agnes, St. Bonaventure, St John Vianney and the HOPE conference for their financial help on some cases. Jane says, "I have been blessed by God in so many ways and I feel an obligation to give back by continuing to help those in need through St. Vincent de Paul. *



Jane Streich and her presenter Mary Ann Hazlick

March Birthdays!

Flower: Violet

Birthstone: Aquamarine

March 24 Gabriela Freitag

April Birthdays!

Flower: Lily

Birthstone: Diamond

April 30 Toni Northington

* [Special thanks to Sarah Mero who took pictures at our Women of Distinction Luncheon.](#)

Sad News

Club member, Diane Graham lost her husband, Chuck, on March 2, 2017. Chuck was active in Rotary for many years. After his retirement from Pacific Bell in 1990, he and Diane opened a full service portrait studio and photo lab in Concord. Both their daughters Jennifer and Jeannette came on board with them and the business became Graham Family Photo. Diane has been our club photographer for many years with help from Chuck and Jennifer when the occasion called for Diane to be in the picture. When Chuck and Diane retired in 2005, their daughter Jennifer carried on with the photography business and opened her own studio in Brentwood. Diane has moved to an assisted living residence in Antioch. Her new address is:

Diane Graham
4751 Dallas Ranch Rd. #107
Antioch, CA 94531

Our Mission is to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

Vision — Women and girls have the resources and opportunities to reach their full potential and live their dreams.

Core Values — **Soroptimist International of the Americas is committed to:**

- **Gender Equality:** Women and girls live free from discrimination.
- **Empowerment:** Women and girls are free to act in their own best interest.
- **Education:** Women and girls deserve to lead full and productive lives through access to education.
- **Diversity & Fellowship:** Women from varied backgrounds and perspectives work together to improve the lives of women and girls.



www.sidiablovista.org



Brittany Ayala, Live Your Dream

Brittany is an intelligent, self-motivated and strong person who has worked hard to achieve her current position in life," states one of her teachers. Brittany is a single mother of a 3 year old son and is currently an undergraduate student working to complete two associate degrees: Political Science and History. She is the first in her family to graduate from high school and the first to go to college. One of the first political science courses she studied, Introduction to American Politics, prompted her desire to pursue a career dedicated to social justice and public service. She wants to become a civil rights attorney and is applying to the University of California Berkeley.



She has had the opportunity to intern for Congressman Mark DeSaulnier as well as State Assembly Candidate, Mae Torlakson. "These experiences have provided first-hand insight beyond the classroom; it has demonstrated to me the requirements to run for public office, along with the exertion and responsibility of being a successful public figure."

She plans to get her Bachelor's degree and apply for enrollment at one of three law schools, Yale, Georgetown, or Berkeley Boalt Hall. Following ten years of practice in the law field, it is her intention to run for public office in California. "My study of political science helps provide the basic tools for understanding the world politically, economically and socially and what I can do, starting with my own community, to make the world a better place to live."

Brittany is fluent in English and Spanish and at Diablo Valley College she voluntarily tutored for various subjects' study groups, took full time classes (12+ units a semester while caring for her son), translated Spanish/English, assisted the elderly in her community, and served on the ASDVC (student government council) all while maintaining a 3.4 college GPA.

Oriana Morris, Marie Broman Award

Oriana is a single mother who is balancing her responsibilities as a parent and the demands of being a college student. She has had many challenges including taking care of her paraplegic, drug-addicted, ill father. Soon after he passed away, she lost the home he had provided her. Oriana had to rely on her strength and resourcefulness to find safe housing, and a job.



Though she is a Freshman at DVC, she has a strong sense of her goals and how to achieve them. For example, she has researched the courses she needs to take in order to earn her AA from DVC, and transfer to a four-year university. She is also in communication with her campus counselors, and has contacted the admissions staff at San Francisco State. When compared to the things she has gone through in her life, she finds the challenges of motherhood while pursuing an education to be the easiest. I have experienced domestic physical verbal and emotional abuse by my daughter's father which led me to my 3 month stay at Rosalie House, a shelter in San Francisco, CA. There have been many times I have been forced to uproot my life and leave a job due to homelessness, just to move and find a new one, starting all over again."

"I am not complaining about my life, the things I have experienced have enriched my character and taught me to be resourceful and self-reliant. I have come a long way and I am very proud to be where I am today. I am proud to be a mother to a beautiful, bright and happy little girl. I am proud to be a freshman student at DVC. I am proud to have found my way back to school, where I have always known I belong, to finally work toward my goals. I am proud to have clear goals with a realistic time line that I now have confidence and motivation to fulfill. I am proud to finally feel a sense of purpose, belonging and meaning. I thank God for giving me strength. I am truly blessed."

Joanne Magano, Violet Richardson Winner

Throughout high school, Joanne has spent a lot of time volunteering for organizations such as the Monument Crisis Center, St. Anthony's and the Contra Costa Public Defender's office. At the Monument Crisis Center she tutors young children who are at risk. She helps the children with their homework in reading, writing and math. She also helps them write in their journals at each session which teaches them other skills such as organizing, planning and having a routine that aids them in their studying. "With my tutoring, I hope the children realize why education is important, how amazing it is to know things about the world around us and that learning can be fun.

She has volunteered at St. Anthony's Dining Services in San Francisco. She helps prepare food, works in the food prep line, as a server to bring food trays to the elderly or disabled, and buses tables. In the same program, she had the opportunity to participate in "Sandwiches on Sunday" where she went with her Confirmation group to the Tenderloin in San Francisco and handed out sandwiches and other necessities.

This past summer, she interned at the Contra Costa County Public Defender's Office. As attorney support, she shadowed a criminal defense lawyer and got a firsthand look at how the judicial systems works. "I gained insight into the world of criminal defense by sitting in on interviews with defendants and their families, assisting with case file preparations, observing court proceedings, writing subpoenas, contacting school districts for juvenile cases, and organizing and filing case notes. This experience made me appreciate the hard work and dedication public defenders put into helping people who cannot afford legal representation. It also changed my perception of those who society calls 'criminals' and taught me not to judge quickly."

"I hope to spread the message that every individual is important and that no matter who you are or where you come from, someone cares about you and you matter. I think this is an important message, especially in our current social climate, when minorities and those living in poverty are being made to feel as though they do not belong in our country. At the end of the day, what matters most should not be the country from which you came or how much money you have in your pocket, but your capacity to understand and love others."



6th Annual Poker Tournament

Saturday, **May 13, 2017**

Check-In & Free Lessons: 5:30 PM

Cards Fly: 6:30 PM

NEW LOCATION Concord Elks Lodge

(former BofA Building)

3565 Clayton Road

Concord, CA 94519

*Fun! Fun ! Fun!
Must Be 21*



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go to: www.sidiablovista.org

or

call Sue Manning

(925) 672-2727 or (925) 408-3848

Buy-In \$60.00, Re-Buys \$20.00, Add-Ons \$20.00

Includes Delicious Hors d'Oeuvres & soft drinks

Alcoholic Beverages will be sold

All proceeds will benefit

Soroptimist's "Dream It, Be It" Scholarships