

# The Pointer

Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe  
May 2024



## My dear friends of SIGP,

It has been my honor and privilege to lead SIGP for the past two years. Together we have accomplished so much. To help women and girls achieve their educational goals, we raised more than \$15,000 with our Infinity Cruise, \$1,600+ at our Kentucky Derby event, and \$1,600+ at our Holiday Silent Auction, and that was just the first year.

As my presidency ends, my focus will be getting back to my passion—helping to eliminate human trafficking. I will be reporting current ideas and information to our club on how we can bring more awareness to our communities about this horrendous crime.

As I transfer out of the president's position, I leave you in good hands. Bette Lepouttre will be an amazing leader. She has the passion, drive, and initiative to keep our club moving forward. When I asked Bette to be my President-elect, I promised her we would be partners for four years. So, see, you have not gotten rid of me just yet.



## In other news ...

Every April the Midwest Region holds its Spring Conference. This year, SIGP members Mary Ellen Burke, Paula Davis, Roseanne Horne, Bette Lepouttre, and Bev Todd from the Macomb Club, and I drove to Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, where we enjoyed seeing our Soroptimist friends and did a little sightseeing. Audrey Jarvey was installed as the new Governor along with her new board.

This year's Wine & Spirits Raffle is underway. Everyone should have received their envelopes with one-hundred dollars' worth of tickets, along with a flyer and instructions. We are anticipating making more than \$5,000 with this year's raffle and are strongly encouraging you to sell all your tickets to achieve this goal.

**President's Message** *(continued on next page)*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karrie Blankenship  
*President*

Diana Langlois  
*Vice President*

Bette Lepouttre  
*President Elect*

Mary Bryk  
*Secretary*

Nancy Solak  
*Assistant Secretary*

Ross Braun  
*Treasurer*

Mary Ellen Burke  
*Assistant Treasurer*

*Directors*  
Roseanne Horne  
Kerri Green  
Carolyn Barth  
Aleksa Andjelkovic

The name Soroptimist was coined from the Latin *soror*, meaning sister, and *optimus*, meaning best. Soroptimist is perhaps best interpreted as “best for women.”

### President's Message (continued from p. 1)

The Spring Seasonal Supper was on April 25, at The Continental at the Ford Estate, and we had a great turnout. Watch for the next Seasonal Supper date, time, and venue (probably The Voyageur in St. Clair, MI) in your upcoming newsletters.

Every year our club prepares Mother's Day Bags for the women at Positive Images (PI) and this year is no different. On May 7, at 7 p.m., Mary Ellen Burke will host this project. All are welcome. For more information, please see page 4.

June is around the corner and that means two things: dues are due, and your new board and president will be installed. June is the end of our fiscal year, and the nomination committee worked diligently getting a slate together for our vote. We still have two vacancies, Vice President/Membership Chair and President Elect/Program Chair. It is not too late to volunteer.

At the April meeting the board moved to raise dues, which passed with 45 yes votes and one no, bringing our June 2024/2025 dues to \$140 and in June of 2025/2026 to \$150. An invoice with the updated information will be emailed later this month. **Please be considerate to our treasurers, Mary Ellen Burke and Ross Braun, and have your money to them promptly before June 30.** If you have decided not to renew your dues, please contact Mary Ellen at [meb65065@gmail.com](mailto:meb65065@gmail.com) or Ross at [braunross@aol.com](mailto:braunross@aol.com) at any time before the deadline so they are not waiting for your payment.

The vote for the new 2024-2026 board will be at the Wednesday, May 8, General Meeting at 7 p.m. The ballot of officers is on the next page for your review. Per our Bylaws, *Article V, Section 2, a quorum is required for officers and Board members to be elected.*

SIGP Secretary Mary Bryk has sent an email to SIGP members with instructions on how to vote electronically for those unable to attend the meeting.

It has been a wonderful two years, and I am looking forward to what our new board has in store for us.

# Please vote for SIGP's next slate of officers

A vote will be taken at our next General Meeting, Wednesday, May 8, at Fishbone's Rhythm Kitchen & Café. Although we gather as early as 6 p.m. to meet and greet each other, the meeting officially starts at 6:30 p.m. The vote will be taken at 7 p.m.

At this time, nominations for all positions will be taken from the floor. See Article 5, Section 2 of the Bylaws at the bottom of this page.

If you are unable to attend, please cast your vote before May 8, at 7 p.m., via text, phone or email to Secretary Mary Bryk (brykmary@gmail.com — 586-839-8754).

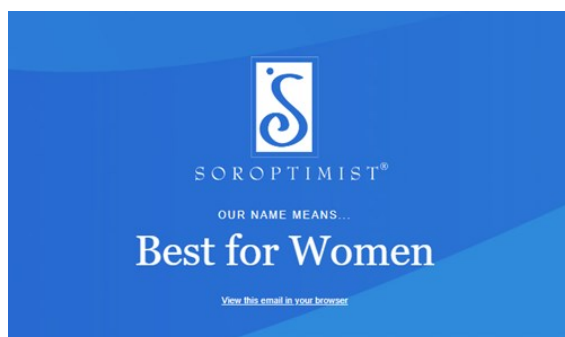
## 2024-26 Slate of Officers

President — Bette Lepouttre  
Secretary — Mary Bryk  
Assistant Secretary / Public Awareness Chair — Lillian Frazier  
Treasurer — Mary Ellen Burke  
Assistant Treasurer (Fundraising Chair) — Roseanne Horne  
Directors — Diana Langlois & Ross Braun  
Non-voting Director — Carolyn Barth  
Past President — Karrie Blankenship

President Elect (Program Chair) — Vacant  
Vice President (Membership Chair) — Vacant

**Thank you to Nominating Committee Chair Kathy DiCenzo,  
and the Committee: Geri Pleva and Bette Lepouttre**

ARTICLE V. Section 2 — Nominations and Elections according to Bylaws. The election shall be held at the May business meeting. The report of the Nominating Committee shall be read again. Additional nominations may be made from the floor provided the consent of the nominee has been obtained. The election shall be by secret ballot if there are two or more nominees for any office.



# Mother's Day Bags – Positive Images Project

We are honoring Positive Images women with Mother's Day gifts again this year. As most of you know we give 50 women a Mother's Day gift bag every year. These bags are distributed to all the residents at Positive Images two locations—Coplin and the Boulevard. (NOTE: The intake kits that Dawn Riddle's committee prepares are distributed to the women first joining the recovery program, most of whom may not be clients on Mother's Day.)

## THESE ITEMS ARE STILL NEEDED:

- ♦ 44 Mugs—No advertisements (You can just bring one or more—a few donations from everyone helps meet the goal!)
- ♦ 15 Cosmetic bags
- ♦ 35 Lip gloss
- ♦ 15 key chains

We have already collected or purchased 50 of the following items:

- \* Jewelry (earrings, bracelets, necklaces, pins)
- \* Decorative 4 X 6 or 5 X 7 gift boxes (for the jewelry sets)
- \* Combs
- \* Soap holders
- \* Pens, journals, lanyards
- \* Kleenex packs
- \* Nylon gift bags



*SIGP member Diana Langlois picks up donations of 50 bags, journals, pens, and lanyards from FLAGSTAR BANK Manager Gordana Bidigare.*

Drop off items: MARY ELLEN BURKE'S,  
2037 Shorepointe Lane, GPW, ASAP,  
or call her with what you plan to donate by May 7.

Prepare bags: MARY ELLEN BURKE'S, 2037 Shorepointe Lane, GPW, **TUESDAY, MAY 7, 7 P.M.**



Getting the bags together for the women at Positive Images is always a fun hour or so. If you like to help others and enjoy the company of like-minded women, this opportunity has YOUR name on it! Call, text, or email Mary Ellen right now!

TEXT Mary Ellen at 313-399-8934, OR EMAIL her at [meb65065@gmail.com](mailto:meb65065@gmail.com)

Let her know if you drop off any items on her patio & if you are coming on May 7, 2024.

Thank you so much! Sometimes there are women at Positive Images who have never received a Mother's Day present. Whether they have or not, be assured they are always happily surprised and grateful.

## Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe Raffle

# WINE & SPIRITS



**Drawing will be held on**

**Wednesday, June 12, 2024 @ 7pm**

**at**

**Fishbone's Rhythm Kitchen & Café**

**on Jefferson Avenue in St. Clair Shores**

**You do not need to be present to win**



**Booklet of 5 tickets is \$20 or \$5 each**

*Cash, check, credit cards or PayPal accepted*

**FOR TICKET INFORMATION**

visit [www.grossepointesoroptimist.org](http://www.grossepointesoroptimist.org)

or contact Karrie Blankenship at

[karrieb40@gmail.com](mailto:karrieb40@gmail.com)

**First Place—\$200 Value**

4 bottles of Wine, 5 bottles of Spirits

**Second Place—\$199 Value**

4 bottles of Wine, 3 bottles of Spirits

**Third Place—\$190 Value**

4 bottles of Wine, 3 bottles of Spirits

**Fourth Place—\$180 Value**

4 bottles of Wine, 5 bottles of Spirits

**Fifth Place—\$151 Value**

3 bottles of Wine, 4 bottles of Spirits

For details of each prize package see  
reverse side of flyer

Ticket sales will support our programs and educational awards for women and girls giving them the resources and opportunities they need to reach their full potential and live their dreams.



## A field trip to assist the SI Flat Rock club fill “Purses with a Purpose”

On Thursday, April 11, SIGP members Kerri Green, Bette Lepouttre, Dawn Riddle, Bev Todd (from the Macomb club) and Karrie Blankenship drove to Brownstown, Michigan, to assist the SI Flat Rock club members pack 800 of the 1,200 donated purses with personal items received from the public. The purses were filled with items such as shampoo, conditioner, socks, and feminine hygiene products and will be given to women who are either leaving abusive relationships or are human trafficking survivors.

Officer Sgt. Donald W. Stewart, of the Michigan State Police Prevention Services Department, Monroe Post, was on hand to deliver the purses to their holding facility where the purses will be distributed to women in need.



*Pictured holding some of the purses are members representing Michigan clubs from SI of Flat Rock, Down River, Grosse Pointe, Macomb, and Trenton.*

## Happy May Birthday to ...



**Mary Bryk, May 7**  
**Mary Clare Toffanetti, May 8**  
**Amanda Be, May 10**  
**Toni Adams, May 16**  
**Ross Braun, May 25**

**GP Soroptimist**

**General Meeting**

**Wednesday, May 8, 2024**

**Fishbone's Rhythm Kitchen & Café**

**St. Clair Shores, MI**

**Meeting starts promptly at 6:30.**

**Come early to order a beverage  
and meet and greet the others!**

# Spring Seasonal Supper held at Ford Estate

Spring Seasonal Supper offered Soroptimist members a chance to visit and get to know one another better in a lovely setting at the Ford Estate's Continental Restaurant.

As part of this gathering, members were asked to share something pertinent to women or current issues of the day. Diana Langlois brought an article from *Bloomberg News* about a scam targeting teenage boys. The FBI calls it SEXTORTION.

Maureen Anthony shared that she knew a family whose son was targeted. I encourage you to read the article to bring awareness to your sons, grandsons, and families where you know they have teen boys. Here is the link:

<https://www.bloomberg.news/videos/2024-04-16/big-take-sex-tortion-cases-in-us-are-on-the-rise-video>

Additional link:

<https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/scams-and-safety/common-scams-and-crimes/sex-tortion/financially-motivated-sex-tortion>



*L-R: SIGP members Gwen Shannon, Diana Langlois, Marlane Washington, Barb Skelly, Carol Hofer, Bette Lepouttre, Roseanne Horne, Sue Plath, Cindy Gohlke, Maureen Anthony and Lillian Frazier. In the photos above them are Edsel and Eleanor Ford.*



Please be sure to browse the rest of this newsletter. It will make you proud to be a Soroptimist when you see all the other things our club is doing or has done.

# True Stories from Ghana

## *The Gourd by SIGP member Carol Hofer*

The photo of the gourd pictured below reminds me of a story dear to my heart when I was living in Ghana and traveling around West Africa during a school break. My trip took me through remote areas, and I was crammed into a truck carrying too many passengers, but grateful even to be squeezed in and not have to wait another two hours for another truck. Suddenly the driver stopped the vehicle, told us to get out, announced he had to deliver wood in another area, and promised he would return “soon.” An hour passed, then another, then another, then another. After six hours waiting in the desert-like atmosphere of the dry season, we were all tired, annoyed and panting with thirst.

In the distance I spotted a compound. Water, my friends, is life. Why not see if the inhabitants had it? I trudged over and found a small crowd sitting outside. They were startled at the strange woman emerging from the dusty atmosphere out of nowhere. Some were confused. Perhaps they had never seen a white person before. A baby peeked at me and screamed. I backed away slightly and asked in the Hausa language for water. No response. I tried the French word for water. Still, no understanding. English? Nope. Pantomime? I motioned with my hands brought to my mouth, head tipped back, to show what I needed.

One of the men called out to a small girl and she led me to a cistern under the shade of a thatched roof. She took a very large gourd, filled it with water and gave it to me. That moment remains etched in my mind, her handing me the gourd, and my drinking the entire contents without taking a breath, worried she might stop me, my thirst overpowering.

How does one say thank you for life? I had no word, no gesture but to bow and smile. This is hospitality in West Africa, hinting of biblical compassion...a cup of water...show mercy to the stranger.

Our girls at St. Anne in Damongo, Ghana, are all strangers to us. They thirst for education, for a better life. Today our club offers the girls a helping hand to reach that goal. Compassion: It is the same gesture the world over and it makes a difference, just as the strangers who took mercy on me with a gourd of precious water years ago.



*This is not the actual gourd from which SIGP member Carol Hofer quenched her profound thirst. But it was like this one. It is pictured here on a map of Africa. At far left is the outer side of the vessel, and next to it is the inner side. Thanks to Carol and SIGP, we fulfill the global obligation of being a Soroptimist.*



## SIGP well-represented at Midwest Region Spring Conference



*Standing L-R: Roseanne Horne, Bette Lepouttre, and Paula Davis.  
Seated: Karrie Blankenship and Mary Ellen Burke.*

Five SIGP members attended the 116<sup>th</sup> Annual Soroptimist Midwest Region Spring Conference in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, April 19 through April 22. Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe (SIGP) President Karrie Blankenship accepted several awards on behalf of SIGP (see pages 10 & 11). She also attended the Presidents' breakfast on Sunday morning. Our incoming President, Bette Lepouttre, helped sell our embroidered vests, jackets, and tote bags. She also met the incoming regional board members.

SIGP member Paula Davis was a page during the conference. She handed out materials to all the attendees.

One of our past presidents, Roseanne Horne, helped with the ballots for the new President-elect.

Another one of our past presidents, Mary Ellen Burke, connected with many of the attendees from across the region that she has gotten to know over the 30 years she has attended regional conferences, as well as SI and SIA conventions.

The SIGP members who attended the conference enjoyed hearing about the programs and projects other clubs in our region are doing, listening to speakers, congratulating Live Your Dream awardees, going to workshops and having fun at meals and cocktail hours throughout the weekend. On page 11, there is a photo of the Friday night crowd.

If you haven't been to a Soroptimist Spring Conference, you should plan to attend next year in Lafayette, Indiana, April 25-27. Hope to see you there!

*Midwest Region Conference (continued on next page)*

Club Activity Award previously known as the Governor's Award



Laurel award for Best Direction: Infinity Cruise



Soroptimist Grosse Pointe President-elect Bette Lepouttre at the Midwest Conference. If you haven't met her yet, please introduce yourself.



Here's the basket of Norwex cleaning products our club members put together to be raffled off at the conference.

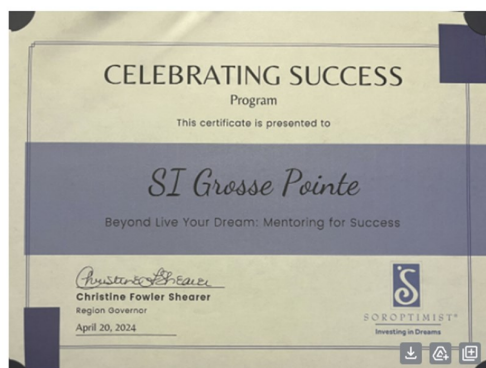


## Midwest Region Conference (continued from previous page)



*Participants on Friday night.*

Celebrating Success for Program



*Here are two more of the Celebrating Success recognitions our club received. At left is the one for Program and the one at right is for Public Awareness.*

Celebrating Success for Public Awareness



*The Anderson & Indy Metro Clubs are already preparing for your arrival next year for the 2025 Soroptimist Midwest Region Conference. As you can see, it will be held in Lafayette, Indiana, a lot closer than this year's conference held in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin!*

***Be sure to read the text in green!***

## A bit of SOROPTIMIST vest just for you!

I'll be happy to take your order for one or both of these vests! I'll see you at the business meeting or you can mail me a check or contact Mary Ellen Burke to use your credit card! Some sample sizes will be available to try on at the business meeting. Ross Braun will embroider the Soroptimist logo and the words: Best for Women on each vest. Contact me (313-690-1515) if you have any questions.

— Diana Langlois, Membership Chair

Diana Langlois  
c/o Soroptimist  
3305 Country Club Dr.  
St. Clair Shores, MI 48082



SOROPTIMIST  
Best for Women

**!!! SPIRIT WEAR SALE!!!**

**Soroptimist VEST \$35** Cash or check **\$38** electronic payments

**The Soroptimist "S" logo will be embroidered in white.**

Complete order form with your check made out to SIGP. All payments need to be received no later than April 10<sup>th</sup>. Mail checks to Diana Langlois to address above, OR for electronic payments contact Mary Ellen Burke at [MEB65065@yahoo.com](mailto:MEB65065@yahoo.com) or 313-399-8934.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_



The material is polyester fleece.

Ladies (S) \_\_\_\_\_

CIRCLE COLOR CHOICE:

BLUE

Ladies (M) \_\_\_\_\_

MAGENTA

Ladies (L) \_\_\_\_\_

ONE OF EACH

Ladies (XL) \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

**Check made out  
to SIGP.**

Ladies (2XL) \_\_\_\_\_

April 2024



## Did you know? Soroptimist provides free leadership training?

Throughout the year, Soroptimist International provides all kinds of classes, and they're free! You can join them from the comfort of your own home via Zoom. Click below and it will take you to the details.

### Upcoming Events

#### Get Ready to Improve Your Leadership Skills!

Registration is open for the virtual [Leadership Round Table](#) June 11-12. View the [agenda](#) and [register now!](#)



**CLICK HERE  
for Details**

### *Shedding Light on Mental Health & Substance Use Disorder*

**Did you know that at least 20% of people with a mental illness have a co-occurring substance use disorder?**



**Positive  
Images  
Inc.**

THERAPEUTIC RECOVERY COMMUNITY FOR

## Substance Use Disorder

The butterfly is symbolic of our rebirth as we change and grow in our recovery.

**sign-up**



Message Us at  
[info@positiveimageinc.org](mailto:info@positiveimageinc.org)



Visit Us  
13336-13340 E Warren Ave.  
Detroit, MI 48215

## Midwestern Region Board

Governor – Christine Fowler Shearer, SI Cleveland  
([simwrgov@gmail.com](mailto:simwrgov@gmail.com))  
Governor Elect: Audrey Jarvy, SI Fond du Lac  
([adreyjarv@gmail.com](mailto:adreyjarv@gmail.com))  
Secretary – Sheila Zingler-Gilbert, SI Fond du Lac  
([sheilasifdl@gmail.com](mailto:sheilasifdl@gmail.com))  
Treasurer – Linda Alpers, SI NE Suburban Franklin County  
([Isa6976@gmail.com](mailto:Isa6976@gmail.com))

## District III

District III Director – Kellie Klingel, SI Flat Rock Area  
([ktklingel@yahoo.com](mailto:ktklingel@yahoo.com))  
District III Secretary – Gail Hutra, SI Monroe  
([gahutra1960@yahoo.com](mailto:gahutra1960@yahoo.com))

## Soroptimist Websites

Grosse Pointe Soroptimist: <https://www.grossepointesoroptimist.org/>  
Soroptimist International Midwestern Region <https://simwr.org>  
Soroptimist International of the Americas <https://simwr.org>  
Soroptimist International <https://soroptimistinternational.org>

## Soroptimist Pledge

I pledge allegiance to Soroptimist  
and to the ideals for which it stands:  
The sincerity of friendship,  
the joy of achievement,  
the dignity of service,  
the integrity of profession,  
and the love of country.

I will put forth my greatest effort to  
promote, uphold and defend these  
ideals, for a larger fellowship in home,  
in society, in business, for country and  
for God.



## SIGP's PUBLIC AWARENESS COMMITTEES

WEBSITE: [grossepointesoroptimist.net](https://grossepointesoroptimist.net) ..... Lori Schumann  
or for calendar [grossepointesoroptimist.net/sigp-calendar-.html](https://grossepointesoroptimist.net/sigp-calendar-.html)

Submit photos, club information, news, upcoming events, questions and dates  
to this email so the information can be accessed by all public awareness chairs:

EMAIL: [grossepointesoroptimist@gmail.com](mailto:grossepointesoroptimist@gmail.com) ..... Nancy Solak

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS:

FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/soroptimistgrossepointe](https://facebook.com/soroptimistgrossepointe) ..... Nancy Solak

INSTAGRAM: [soroptimistgp](https://soroptimistgp) ..... Nancy Solak

NEWSLETTER & MEDIA: *The Pointer*

is on the club's website and is emailed to each member.

Deadline for photos and articles is the 28<sup>th</sup> of each month ..... Nancy Solak