



The Vision



Governor's Message

Greetings

We are living in interesting times, to say the least - not just as Soroptimists, but as Americans, as Midwesterners, as human beings. I hope that you're doing well and that you're taking time to take care of yourself. We are all in this together, separately... If you're feeling isolated, reach out to your Soroptimist sisters.

Here in Soroptimist World, we're transitioning to a new biennium, with an official demarcation line of July 1st. Governor Darcy and I have always tried to be as transparent as possible with region business and we will continue to do so as we move forward. By now, if you registered for Spring Conference, you should have received a refund. If not, please let me know. SIA recently announced that 2020 Convention has been canceled. If you registered for SIA Convention, they are processing refunds for all paid registrations, ticketed meals and optional events. At this time, they are going to hold on to the club registration fee until finances are sorted out. Please know that they are doing their best to resolve many issues and they are doing this while working remotely from home. I'm grateful that they have the technology to continue working and that they are being as transparent as possible.

Speaking of transparency, if you haven't done so yet, checkout my State of the Region address and Governor Darcy's Installation speech – both are on the Region's Facebook page.

I want to take a bit of time to discuss membership. I'd imagine that a number of you are dealing with the loss of a job or shuttering a business, and renewing your club membership is probably not the first thing on top of your to do list. SIA will have funds available to assist in defraying costs. Please use the link below to find more information about the program, and if you're able, contribute money to the effort. Additionally, I encourage clubs to work within themselves to help members who may need a hand with dues for the next year. I also have good news about membership, as we will soon be chartering two new clubs in the next biennium: Hines Park, MI and Green Bay, WI.

<https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/whats-new/2020/soroptimist-strong.html>

The MWR board met virtually on April 25th and were joined by our official SIA representative, Director Margo Hartman. We held our Healthy Region discussion and dealt with other region business. By now, your club should have received a Survey Monkey link for voting, if your club has not, let me know.

If you haven't already, I'm asking you to learn some new skills, like Skype, Zoom or Go To Meeting, as virtual meetings are our new normal. You can do it!



As hardy Midwesterners, we'll power through these trying times. Let's stick together and continue to "do" Soroptimist.

Stay safe & be well
Kris Armstrong,
Midwestern Region Governor

Inside
May 2020
Edition are:

Articles from
your
Midwestern
Region
incoming
and
out going
Board
Members,
Chairs
&
MUCH MORE!



SOROPTIMIST
Best for Women®

Soroptimist International Midwestern Region

Retiring Board Member - Gov. Kris

I've asked all MWR board members to write about their experiences serving on the board and safe to say, I've learned a lot. I had planned to do some show & tell at Spring Conference. Since that fell through, here's my script for your review.

And now - could Cheryl Fouts, Missie Austin, Vicky Hicks, and Vivian Walczesky join me up here? I've been talking about leadership, so you may be wondering just what in the heck Kris has learned in her ten years on the board, the last two as Governor. It's a reasonable question. Each of the Governors I've served under have their own style of leadership. And they have no idea of why I've called them up here. Don't be afraid.

We've just received word of an approaching meteor! Whatever shall we do?

Cheryl led with business skills - A meteor? Puffs cig. I'm here to tell you, I don't have time for this nonsense! Sigh. Ok, I'm going to get some equipment over here and we'll start digging a shelter. Could someone bring me some more coffee? I'll get a sign-up sheet started for equipment operators and shovelers. Drinks more coffee...

Missie led with can do energy - A meteor? Spreads out arms. Ladies - what a great opportunity for some Soroptimist Adventure! Jenny, Jenny Honey - get a semi-trailer over to my house and gather up all of my craft supplies. Wait - take two trailers - that should handle most of it. Ladies, for those not constructing the cave, we'll work together on quilts, scarves and mittens. It will keep us busy and help us keep warm over the long nuclear winter. Don't dilly dally. Sips coffee, looks around for something to knit.

Vicky is the no BS, blonde version of Cheryl - A meteor? Sigh & eye rolling. Oh Jesus God! Seriously? Ok, ok - give me a minute to think. Wendi, call Tim and let him know I'll be home late for supper. Ok - honey, sweetie - you - yes you - call into my office and have some power cables run out here to the shelter. And a couple of generators. At least we can have a few creature comforts. What? Yes now! Sigh...

Vivian is Spock - A meteor? Fascinating. When? Hmm, that soon. Big or small? Medium? Um, hmm - I see I see. To recap, you might say, we're well on our way to having an electrified, cozy crafty cave to survive this event. Does anyone have any ideas of what else we may need? Uh hum, uh hum, yes, I see. Agreed, we'll need some food and water. And yes, porta potties & TP to help with morale. Let's get to work on that right now, get me some data!

And now it's my turn. Poor Darcy. So far all I've thought of is to add some booze and tall men...All kidding aside, I've learned so much about our Midwestern Region - the people, the clubs, the projects. I've learned that we are a hard-headed, hard-working, and big-hearted bunch of fabulous women. Which I mostly knew, but really had no idea of the scope of awesomeness that is Midwestern Region. I've also learned that each biennium is different, even though the focus never leaves our mission to help women and girls. And I'm here to tell you that we're in good hands moving forward.

As far what Governor Darcy may have learned from me? Lead. It's ok to be yourself, even if you're a goofball, but you must know yourself, know your stuff, trust your people and keep your sense of humor. Leadership is the key, because you never know when a meteor (or global pandemic) might come along.

In Coming - Gov. Darcy

Greetings to all of you,

In a million years I would not have thought this would be how my Installation speech would go. I hope I'm the only Governor that will every have to go into their biennium this way. If there is anything that I know about Soroptimist, it is that we are resilient. As Soroptimist members and Americans we will conquer this Global Pandemic and come out stronger.

As some of you may know, my platform for the 2020-2022 biennium is *Educate to Empower*. I believe education is the way to empower women. When we educate a woman we lift her up and that allows her to lift up her children and her community.

I know all our clubs did amazing things during Governor Kris Armstrong's biennium, and I'm confident we will continue to raise women up through our dream programs and by the work we do in our communities. I understand we will have challenges due to so many fundraisers being canceled or rescheduled and I have no doubt we will still step up to help women and girls.

One of my goals during my biennium is to raise women up through education in our communities and globally. I will lead with compassion and respect and will always listen to your ideas or concerns. We are all in this together and it will take each and every one of us doing Soroptimist to empower women and girls. I am so proud to be a Soroptimist and to be your Governor for the 2020-2022 biennium.

I know it was disappointing that we could not gather together for spring conference this year and to see old friends and to meet new ones, but we will all gather in Fond du lac next year and make it the best spring conference yet. We will appreciate the hugs and smiles so much more.

I look forward to being your Governor and I can assure you that I don't take lightly that I am representing the Midwestern Region. I thank you for your support and I look forward to when we can gather again and share those smiles and hugs.

Hope to see you all soon.



All the Best
Darcy Merritt, Governor - Midwestern Region

In Coming - Gov. Elect

&

Returning Board Member

It is hard to believe that it has been four years already since I became District IV Director—a role that I came into reluctantly because of where I was in my life, but a role that I am so glad I accepted. The clubs in District IV are made up of committed, talented, amazing women, and I have had the pleasure of getting to know them better. I have also had the opportunity to help charter the new SI Cleveland club in our district. In one year, this club has had a powerful impact on the Cleveland community—through service projects, its first Dream It, Be It program, and its ability to fundraise and give out three Live Your Dream Awards.

The SI Cleveland club is not the only club that has done important projects in the past four years. Each club in District IV has a signature program or event that not only raises awareness of our overall mission, but also gives back to women and girls in need. From hosting DIBI projects and mentoring girls through S Clubs to assisting with domestic violence shelters and sex trafficking victims, and so much more.

Being on the board has been a rewarding experience for many reasons. It has broadened my understanding of the impact we, as Soroptimists, have on our communities. It has enabled me to grow in my commitment to our mission, and it has encouraged me to continue in my leadership role.

Yours in Soroptimist Service,



Christine Fowler Shearer
District IV Director

Returning Board Member as:

District IV Director

Since becoming a member of Soroptimist, my club has had at least one member sitting on the Region Board. When asked by a fellow member if I would ever be a Board member, I responded with possibly a District officer if needed, and put the thought aside.

Four years ago, I didn't volunteer, I wasn't exactly asked, was just kind of told that I needed to fill out the board application, and I did. Being district secretary has not been difficult nor overly time consuming, except for possibly the travel time. I have a better understanding of how the Region works, Federation directives, and trying to be as knowledgeable as I can to answer questions from members.

As District Director, I will obviously have more responsibilities. I hope to encourage the members for District IV to be more engaged, inventive, and risk takers; as we start counting down to our 100th Anniversary. And that we are the pioneers and trend setters for the next century of Soroptimist.



Abby Bouton,
District IV Director

Midwestern Treasurer

Two years ago, I was installed as Treasurer for the Midwestern Region. I was excited to work with Governor Kris and the rest of the board! I had been on the Midwestern Region Board previously as a Director and this was a new opportunity to serve our region.

With my accounting experience and previous club treasurer duties, I was familiar with what was needed for this job and looked forward to the job ahead. There was a learning curve as I began to dig in and got to work and I loved it! Working with all of the clubs and with SIA has been an interesting and educational journey! Accounting is a pretty black and white function, but it's the little things here and there that keep it interesting. My predecessors had procedures and processes in place that helped immensely.

Working with Gov. Kris and the rest of the board was the best part! Being on the Board gives you a broader scope of what we're doing not only as region and federation, but as Soroptimist as a whole. This board has worked hard to accomplish much over the last two years. We've worked very well together and had fun along the way! The board meetings are a lot of work but it's also very fulfilling and gratifying.

I want to thank Governor Kris for her dedication and leadership--she's been an excellent governor! I look forward to continue to work with Gov.-Elect Darcy and the rest of the new board over the next two years.



Audrey Jarvey
Midwestern Treasurer

Returning Board Member as:

District Director I

Hi! I'm Susan Frankel and I have been the District I Director these past two years. Since we could not have our Spring Conference, Governor Kris asked that we send an article to the Vision talking about our time in office. I know I have met many of you especially at District and Spring Conference but I first want to tell you how I became to be District I Director and my experience as Director in hopes that someday you may see how easy it is to take these steps on your Soroptimist leadership ladder.

I have been a member of the SI of Fond du Lac, WI club since 2003. I was new to the area and wanted and needed to meet people. I have 3 daughters and the Soroptimist mission held a lot of meaning to me. It did take me quite a few years to take that first step on my leadership ladder. I started by working on committees and being a committee chair. I then took another step up, and held different positions on the FDL board. You learn so much by being on the board of your club, it is like they say, you learn the nitty-gritty of the club. I also attended District Meeting and Spring Conference and I became more excited about Soroptimist. Meeting women from all over the Midwest and feeling their enthusiasm to help women and girls, WOW!! I was taking another step, by learning at these meetings what other clubs were doing, to help women and girls, increasing their membership and fundraising ideas. On the ride home we talked about what we learned and what we could do at our club. I was so excited to share with my club.

I was ready for the next step up on my ladder and I became the Club President. I grew as a leader and I learned that to lead you have to learn to listen. Listen to committee chairs and to new ideas from club members. I loved it, and I believe I grew so much. So, when Kris, who was the Director at this time, came to Fond du Lac for an event and asked me to be the District I Director I knew I was ready for the next step. I knew my club would be there to support and help me. I did luck out that the District I Secretary was another FDL club member, Connie Gindt, and we knew we could work great together. So, we started our journey.

As Director you should attend the Region Board meetings. There are 3 meetings a year, summer, winter and Spring Conference. Just like your club the region board meeting is the same but on a grander scale. Here you learn about the other Districts in the Region. At each board meeting the District Directors report on their clubs. What they are doing for membership, events, fundraising, Dream It Be It and the Dream awards. If a club is having any difficulties, we would try to see what we can do as a region to help. Besides having the normal board meeting, each meeting also includes some specific details. The summer meeting is the beginning of the new fiscal year. District directors plan the district meeting held in October. District I and III have their district meeting together. Since two districts are involved in each meeting the directors and secretary's work on the agenda, possibly a theme or idea to bring to the region board. We have conference calls and many email exchanges in the planning. We present our agenda and budget to the region board. They review and comment and will give suggestions to help make sure the SI 4 pillars are a part of the agenda. As a new director it was great having the whole board to help with this process. January board reviews the results of the district meeting, how they did financially, and the presentations. The dates for the next District Meeting and the locations are set. In January we also help plan the Spring Conference. The actual conference is planned by the Governor, Governor Elect, Secretary and Treasurer. The district directors and secretaries help where ever they are needed. January we also work on the Spring Conference Budget and the region budget that will be presented to the membership at Spring Conference. The third region board meeting co-insides with Spring Conference. We review the agenda for Spring Conference and make any last-minute changes.

What else is expected as a District Director? Over the two years in office you should visit each club at least once, preferably at one of their meetings. Attending a meeting is a good way to meet each member and observe how the meeting is conducted. Try to attend a club event if a meeting does not work. Encouraging your clubs to participate with the Live Your Dream and Virginia Wagner Awards and the Dream It Be It programs are a must. Making sure all of your clubs complete any necessary reports to the governor or to specific committee chairs is also important. Keeping everyone up to date with information received from SIA via email or phone is essential. Concerning the Live Your Dream and Virginia Wagner Awards directors receive each club's winner for their district. Setting up judging for the District winners. These are then forwarded to the region to be judged.

Returning Board Member as:

Does this seem like a lot? It does, but I must admit that these past two years have flown by. One of the things we started up again is a District Roundtable meeting. Connie and I wanted to get our district together to have open discussions on how we can improve Soroptimist in our District. The clubs shared ideas that have worked and some that have not, clubs brought questions that we would brainstorm to help find resolutions. I know I have learned so much these past two years and I wanted to continue to learn and share with the members of my club and my district. When asked if I would stay on another two years I did not hesitate too long before saying, yes! Does this take me another step up on my Leadership Ladder? No, but it will widen the step for me. Thank you for the past two years and I hope you will continue to help me in this next 2 years.



Susan Frankel
District I Director

District I Secretary

Having served as District I Secretary from 2000 to 2002 under the leadership of Governor Joan Stallard, and currently serving under Governor Kris and soon to be Governor Darcy, I can say that this roll has really changed.

Back in 2000 the district secretaries did not have a vote on the region board, and we were required to attend at least one board meeting as well as taking minutes at the District Meeting. While I enjoyed my time on that board, making new friends and attending meetings, I didn't always feel like I was part of the board. Don't get me wrong – I always felt welcomed and it was such a joy to see Joan in action with her wonderful southern charm. Having the secretaries be more involved was good move for our region.

I have really enjoyed my time on the current board, traveling with my homies, working on projects for district and spring conferences, and planning round table meetings with Director Susan. Susan and I have formed a great friendship with Director III Mary and Secretary Lata while working on the combined district meeting. Many emails, phone calls and laughs were needed while we endeavored to bring you a great agenda for learning and assisting our clubs and members.

OK, my favorite part of the board meeting is working with our federation visitor who goes through all aspects of our region and works with us on areas where we can use support, and let's us know where we are doing a great job. This takes a few hours but is time well spent. I've learned that we are a lean region with not a lot of money to spare. **SO PLEASE SUPPORT THE ACORN GUILD!** I am shameless.

We've all become more aware of what the other districts and clubs are doing whether it be events, dream programs, new ideas as well as lending support as needed. Serving on the region board has really driven home to me (finally) that this is an international club. It does not matter **WHERE** we are supporting women and girls, we just need to support women and girls.

For anyone interested in serving on the region board I say DO IT - You will not regret the investment!



Connie Gindt,
SI Fond du Lac

In Coming Board Members

District II Director

I would like to introduce myself as the new District II Director for the 2020-2022 Biennium. My name is Ruth Waggoner from the Kenton/Hardin County Soroptimist Club.

I am honored to accept the position of District II Director and excited to be working with the Regional Board for the upcoming 2020-2022 Biennium. Some of you may know me as the Dream It Be It Chairperson for the Region, others from District meetings or Spring Conferences.

I will be anticipating the time when I can come and visit each club for a meeting or one of your events. This will give me the opportunity to know each club better. I will be sending an email out to the Club Presidents at a later date.

I know this has been a very trying time for all our clubs, from not having meetings, to cancelled events that you spent many hours planning. A quote from Barbara Johnson "Attitude is the mind's paintbrush; it can color any situation." We will see normal again and we will get through this. As Soroptimist we continue to stand strong.



Ruth Waggoner
District II Director, 2020-2022

District II Secretary

Hello, my name is Laura Ferguson and I am finishing up my term as President of the SI/Kenton/Hardin Co club this July. I live in the lovely village of Ada, Ohio, where I work for the family business of selling insurance. Not only am I active with Soroptimists, but I am currently a county deputy for the Ohio State Grange and a member of my local Grange, President of the Ohio Knit Wit knitting guild (yes that's the real name), and a board member of Beatitudes community center. At home, I am staff to a cat named Hazel and take the time to aggravate my parents on a regular basis.

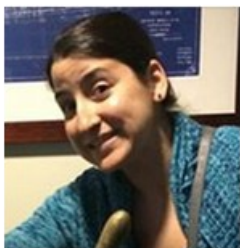
I'm terribly pleased to be the new District II Secretary and to be partners in crime travel buddies with District II Director, Ruth Waggoner. I look forward to seeing you at the Fall Meeting and next Spring Conference.



Laura Ferguson
District II Secretary

District IV Secretary

Having served many different positions within my club (Canton/Stark County), I am excited to now take on a position on the MWR Board. I am so grateful to have the support and encouragement of the current board as well as that of my club members. My expectation for the next two years is to learn more about what it takes to keep our Region healthy and active. I am also looking forward to the opportunity to bring Region information back to my club. We have a lot of new members - some of whom have not had the opportunity to attend a district meeting or conference yet. I think this will give me an opportunity to give them more information about the bigger picture of Soroptimist, and hopefully encourage them to get involved at a higher level as well.



Mary Lorenzo
District IV Secretary

Out Going Board Members

District II Director

My term has ended after six years on the Midwestern Region Board—two years as District II Secretary and four years as District II Director. These have been an amazing six years! Even though some board members have changed during this time, I've learned that all these women are amazing, and we've worked together well. Each member has strengths, connections, and experiences to share. If someone is not as strong in one area, another's strengths will make up for it. Friendships have developed over the years, and it is fun to be able to work with women I might not have had the opportunity to know if I hadn't served on the board. Besides the necessary items on the agenda, there is always some social time before or after board meetings when we can enjoy a meal together or play a game such as Heads-Up and see a completely different side of someone. Besides working with the board, I've enjoyed traveling to and visiting with the clubs in District II. Some clubs are located in cities and some in more remote areas. I've gotten to know some members better than others mainly because I mostly have contact with presidents, treasurers, and awards chairs. But when I've had the opportunity to visit an awards presentation, a fundraiser, or a service project, there are always familiar faces. It's been fun to see new clubs charter and it's been sad to see a couple clubs fade away. I'll miss these experiences, but I know I'll see many familiar faces at District Meeting and Spring Conference each year. Thank you for this opportunity. Keep up the good work!

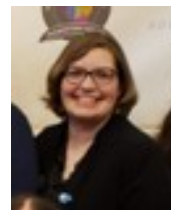


Barb Flory
District II Director

District Director III

Dearly Beloved Soroptimists, This past two years has gone by so quickly. I remember the excitement and anticipation of taking on the task of being District III Director. A montage of song titles and lines seemed to fit that situation perfectly. Excited to meet everyone in District III I hosted a picnic at a local park. There weren't many who were able to attend but it was such a great afternoon relaxing, chatting, enjoying lunch and crafts and sharing Soroptimist stories and laughs. It was a great start of the next two years! Each Club meeting, event, District Meeting and Conference has been the same - a lot of fun activities and meeting new people. Being on the Board has given me insight into the details and timelines of putting on each program, conference, etc within the Region. The personalities of each person on the Board was such a good mix. Travelling around the Region and within the District has been a great adventure! Meeting so many people has really made my heart happy. The fun in planning the activities to be held at District Meeting with Lata and with Susan and Connie in District I were a blast! This Soroptimist opportunity has meant so much and become such a big part of my life. I'm looking forward to the next chapter. The best way that I can end my time as District III Director is with a song (go figure) -

I've Had the Time of My Life, And I Owe It All To YOU!



Mary Pilon
District III Director

Midwestern Secretary

Women at our best helping women to be their best. That tagline has always resonated with me. When asked if I would fill the Region Secretary position for the 2018-20 biennium I accepted without hesitation. The panic attack came in the middle of the night. You know, when it is dark and all your insecurities are magnified times three. Talk about jumping way outside your comfort zone. I am a phonetic speller and I would rather be part of the conversation, not writing it down. But most of all I didn't want to let the members of the region down. My fears were conquered knowing I would not be alone, there would be 11 other women for support. My plan included taking stock in my strengths and weakness, do the best job possible and ask for help when needed.

What an amazing opportunity to increase my skills and knowledge. My penchant for semi-colons and misplaced commas were efficiently repaired by one board member and several others proofed spelling errors. What a team! Tackling the call to conference and program booklet was daunting on my own but very doable with the aid of another. I learned much this past biennium but most importantly I gained 11 dear friends. I am a better woman now because of my experience and I will gladly extend my hand to assist another woman.



MWR Secretary Experience
Missie Austin SI Kenton/Hardin County

Out Going Board Members

District II Secretary

Leadership is fundamental is our latest theme and a true one at that. Without great leadership where would we be in the world today and that includes our beloved Soroptimist organization. Often you hear people say that a person is born to be a great leader. There may be some truth in this statement with natural personality traits the person possess; however there are many experiences that also shapes that person including some experiences they receive in leadership roles as well as people and events that have influenced that person's life. One thing that we need to keep in mind is that leaders are people just like us. They are just willing to stand up and try in front of everyone. Do you have what it takes to be a leader? Hello, yes I am talking to you. I want to hear "of course I Do!" followed by "I am willing to take on a leadership role because Leadership is fundamental and I Empower to Educate and learn."

I joined Soroptimist because it was my birthday present from my mom.....true fact. I actually liked the aspect of the International Organization, education grants for women, and history behind the organization. I feel so honored to be part of an organization that will be turning a century old, 100 years is amazing to me. Being a member for 10 plus years, I have had the best experiences and met the most interesting people who are out to change history for the better of human kind directly effecting women. The education I have received as a member, and board member is invaluable. I do encourage you to take on a leadership role and become involved in Soroptimist. That is why we are here. **You have what it takes to be a leader.** I just wanted to sell pancakes with my mom and Aunt Julie Parthe more to help women in our community. As I took on more responsibilities, I learned more. I learned about Soroptimist and what it meant to be a Soroptimist. I have learned so much about issues facing women throughout history and today. Issues that are global and local. I had never heard of human trafficking until I sat in our monthly meeting and a guest speaker from Grace haven enlightened us with the horrific details of this issue. I would not be able to tell you before my membership, about female genital mutilation or that child birth is still a cause of death in some outlying villages.

Did I think that my membership would lead to a position on the region board? NO, I did not. I do have to thank Bev Bahr, my District Director at the time, for asking me to consider being District II Secretary. She encouraged me to try. District Secretary is the perfect position to "try" on the region board. We do have responsibilities, but not as many as the other board members. You get the chance to "get your feet wet" and learn about the other aspects of being on a 501c3 board, like treasury, laws, procedures, and the running of the business end of things. You are able to voice your concerns/opinions about issues and topics being discussed. You are there to represent the clubs in your district, giving them a voice. Like all the positions on the board, club visits are encouraged. We all love to travel and hang out with each other. We all know that God made us each unique. On a board of 12 people, you will have people drastically different than you. It takes all of us and our unique qualities to collaborate and be successful.

I was just a person before I became involved. Now I have developed skills that help me personally and professionally. The thirst for knowledge has been renewed. Soroptimist has become a way of life, so to speak. The benefits, knowledge, friendships, and self-growth I have received are immeasurable because I chose to become involved. I have learned that leadership and education go hand in hand. We want to educate people to become leaders, but leaders also get educated as they lead and grow. I keep these two quotes on my desk at work to encourage me, now let it encourage you. "Be the change you wish to see in the world "and "things do not grow in the comfort zone"



Jenny Prater
District II Secretary

Returning Chair as:

Midwestern Membership

As Membership Chairperson for the Midwestern Region for the last two years under Governor Kris Armstrong, I became much more aware of the challenges associated with increasing membership in a volunteer organization. For the past two years, I have celebrated the success of our membership campaigns as some club's memberships have increased and we reached our goals, while also offering support and ideas for recruiting new members to those clubs dropping under the 12-member minimum. It has been my pleasure to forward prospective member emails to clubs across our 6-state region, hoping that one of these leads will become a new member. I have enjoyed giving presentations at Spring Conferences, and District meetings which have hopefully given our members some ideas for increasing membership. Getting to know the Soroptimist in our Region through emails, going to District and Regional meeting and connecting on Social media has been the best part of my job as Membership Chair. I have had so much fun, I signed up to be Membership Chair for the next 2 years under Governor Darcy Merritt!



Roseanne Horne
SI Grosse Pointe
Membership Chair- Midwest Region

Membership message for clubs:

We're all preparing for the 2020-2021 club year, and our SIA team has been considering the potential impact of COVID-19 on our organization's membership.

Right now, clubs in many parts of the world are not able to hold in-person meetings and events to deliver the traditional engagement opportunities offered by Soroptimist membership. Members may be facing difficult financial decisions in their household budgets, and this will include whether or not they renew their membership this year. These are just a couple of the considerations SIA has accounted for in projecting a significant decline in membership for 2020-2021.

At the same time, Soroptimists everywhere are connecting virtually in creative ways and carrying on the friendship and fellowship that is so valuable to our members. And our mission is as urgent as ever. We know that the women and girls we serve are vulnerable in this public health crisis, and our members – as well as former members of Soroptimist – **are likely feeling a call to service.**

We are confident in the strength of our organization's mission, and the power of the global connections among Soroptimist members. We will build on these strengths as we seek to bolster our membership to keep Soroptimist strong in 2020-2021 and beyond. **We need as many members as we can to reach our next big goal.**

To that end, SIA staff is preparing a win-back membership campaign. They will be managing this campaign from headquarters and contacting recently lapsed members to directly ask that they **consider re-joining SIA as we prepare for the new club year.** If you know any former members, reach out to them! Let them know what service projects your club is involved with, invite them to your next ZOOM meeting or in person meeting when it is allowed. There are women out there that want to get involved, support a cause, or make a difference...give them a way to do all of that...as a Soroptimist!

My hope is that all of you are doing well during this difficult time. Don't let the COVID-19 pandemic get you down. Let's stay connected. Keep your club membership engaged. Get your message out there on Social Media. Share a link to your website. Put your club membership application online. You might be surprised and get a new member or two!

All the best for women,
Roseanne Horne

Out Going Chairs

Midwestern Fundraising

I joined Soroptimist because I liked the work they did to help survivors of domestic violence.

I was going to be a member and watch how the organization worked. Then the president called and asked me to be the fundraising Chair for the club.

I talked to the previous fundraising Chair to find out what the responsibilities were. The committee and I worked at making the events successful. Then we looked at them and made changes to bring them a fresh appeal.

I was then asked to be the Vice President. Moving into this type of leadership position meant learning more about Soroptimist. I went to the website and read everything I could find. The history was interesting and I was ready to be a good leader. I watched what the President did, how she handled the meetings and dealt with disagreements. You must always be kind, even if it is a hard thing to do.

After holding other positions and being president for a second time I was just being a member again when Governor Kris asked me to be the fundraising Chair for the region. This is different then the club level. You need to try to get the clubs to understand the importance of Club Giving, monthly giving to the Laurel Society, both of which support our dream programs.

Since I believe so strongly in the Laurel Society it was easy to encourage and challenge our region members to join and participate in monthly giving.

Never be afraid to step up to a leadership position and never be afraid to ask for help. That is how we all become better leaders.



Patricia Cavell
Midwest Fundraising Chair

Midwestern Public Awareness

When Kris Armstrong approached me about becoming her Public Awareness Chair, I was apprehensive, but then quite honored. I was my club's webmaster, newsletter editor, friendship link chair, and co-chair of our Human Trafficking Awareness committee. Besides that I was also the Regional newsletter editor. I really had to think about what being the Regional Public Awareness Chair would entail and how much time I would need to devote to the position. I called Chris Speedie, the former Public Awareness Chair. After talking with Chris, I decided to jump in with both feet!

I was impressed to learn, via phone conferencing with SIA how our Federation is accomplishing branding the Soroptimist name to the public. SIA had even created awareness tools for clubs to do the same. I was eager to bring this information to our Region at Spring Conferences and District Meetings. Aside from enjoying speaking in front of a crowd, I am treasuring the friendships I made. This continued through emails and regional meetings. I believe I have helped other clubs extend public awareness of Soroptimist in their communities.

While Public Awareness Chair is not a board seat the responsibilities are important to our region and clubs to keep the Soroptimist name in the forefront of our communities. Thank you all for your support and kind words during my position as your Public Awareness Chair. I would also like to say "thank you" to Kris Armstrong for giving me the opportunity to stretch my wings in our wonderful organization called Soroptimist International!



Karrie Blankenship
SI Grosse Pointe
Public Awareness Chair

Soroptimist International of Trenton

SI of Trenton Area Honors Three Women with Awards

The **Live Your Dream Education and Training Award** is about helping women who have faced economic and personal hardships to live their dreams by attaining an education leading to their empowerment, financial stability, and independence.

Ashley Jones of Ypsilanti, a single mother of three young children, was selected to be the recipient of the Live Your Dream award.

Ashley is pursuing a social work degree from Eastern Michigan University. Her desire to pursue this career was decided when she received help from a hospital social worker to get financial assistance and other support when her son needed a liver transplant in 2016. Because of his hospitalization and having another child at home at the time, she had to quit her job. Her mission in social work is to do the same: to help women and children in a hospital setting access needed resources to help them through troubling times. Ashley is currently working thirty-four hours weekly while attending classes and caring for her children. Her hope is to receive her bachelor's degree in social work in August 2020 and eventually pursue a master's degree in the same.

The **Virginia Wagner Educational Award** is given to a woman aspiring to complete a bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree to enable her to reach her career goals. Detroit's **Artiesha Powe** used to self-diagnose her illness symptoms with web searches. Those early experiences led her to an interest in the health field. She started at Western Michigan University with pre-med courses.

Because of extenuating circumstances, she transferred to Eastern Michigan University where she received a bachelor's degree in recreational therapy. During her studies there, she also took a job as a nursing assistant at Beaumont Hospital where she experienced the devotion a nurse has to her patients. Artiesha wants to be a motivating, trusting, and compassionate force to her patients, so she is attending the nursing program at Davenport University with a current GPA of 3.1. She is also working part time at the hospital. She hopes to graduate in April 2021 with a Bachelor of Science in nursing, and eventually become a nurse practitioner.

The **Soroptimist Prime** award is exclusive to SI of Trenton Area. High school girls residing in Brownstown, Gibraltar, Grosse Ile, Riverview, Trenton, or Woodhaven are eligible to apply. The Soroptimist of Trenton Area High School Girls' Award honors young women who make the community and world a better place through volunteer efforts.



Most college graduates don't have the impressive amount of achievements on their resumes as does the dynamic Soroptimist Prime winner, Trenton High School senior, **Mia Moberly**. First and foremost are her remarkable accomplishments in leadership skills. Even as a freshman, her sights were set on making the world a better place. Mia and her friends founded Trenton High's first feminist organization, the Equal Club, to educate and raise awareness of women's issues.

Mia was instrumental in organizing a student walkout at her school to City Hall after the Parkland shooting, which resulted in a disciplinary mark on her school record but spurred her on to pursue more civic awareness. Mia is now the state director and founder of the Metro-Detroit Chapter of "March for Our Lives," a student-led organization that supports legislation to prevent gun violence. In doing this, she has spoken at Amnesty International and other gun violence events, she manages local chapters, organizes events, holds rallies, communicates with the national board, and is even working on a short film project about the impact of gun and domestic violence against women.

This led to joining "Detroit Area Youth Uniting Michigan," a youth activist organization that centers on issues in Detroit and its surrounding area like clean water in schools, climate change and gun violence prevention.

Mia shows her political activism by her many experiences with various roles as member, panelist, and public speaker at rallies,

Soroptimist International of Trenton continued

Mia is also Trenton High's Quiz Bowl captain, French Club vice-president, and JV soccer team captain. Those are just a brief overview of her leadership skills!

Mia has already attended a few academic programs: The Young Women's Leadership Institute at Barnard College, the Davidson Institute for Talent Development's "Young Scholars Program." She was a Joyce Ivy Foundation Summer Scholar full scholarship winner and attended Brown College's summer program, as well as now having a Joyce Ivy Fellowship.

Mia is well-rounded as evidence in her other activities and accomplishments. She is in the National Honor Society, French National Honor Society, Digital Media club, is in marching band, jazz band, is a semi-professional bass guitarist who plays for performances, teaches bass guitar and trombone, plays JV tennis and has been on a travel soccer team, is a four-year academic award winner, and writes a monthly column in the *Trenton Trib* for Trenton High news.

WE'RE IN THIS
TOGETHER

HELP OUR MEMBERS AND CLUBS AFFECTED BY COVID-19.
SUPPORT OUR DISASTER FUND TODAY.

DONATE NOW



WHAT'S NEW

46th Biennial Convention

An Important Message Regarding COVID-19

Thank you for your continued outreach for guidance during the COVID-19 public health crisis.

The CDC currently recommends organizers postpone or cancel events of 50 or more people for the next eight weeks (estimated through May 11). The CDC defines gatherings as conferences, festivals, parades, concerts, sporting events, weddings and other types of assemblies.

U.S. President Trump is calling for all gatherings of 10 or more to cease. Some areas of the U.S. are moving to sheltering in place. In fact, any organization involved in delivering its services through public gatherings are suspending operations.

Given the latest information from our U.S. public health officials, we are recommending an additional three weeks for good measure ... so **June 1**.

A Message from your Governor Elect and Program Chair Darcy Merritt

Dear Fellow Sorooptimists,

I hope you are all healthy and safe. Amidst the craziness in our world I wanted to bring you all some good news. As you know I am your Governor Elect and Program Chair. I usually share this information with you during our Award luncheon at Spring Conference. First, I would like to say Thank you to all of you for your hard work with our Dream Programs this year. I know many **Dream it Be it** Programs had to be canceled or rescheduled but we were able to hold a few of them before the global pandemic struck the United States. We also had to cancel our award celebrations, however we stepped up and made sure our award winners received their checks and for that I am grateful. Listed below are our **Live your Dream** and our **Virginia Wagner** winners.

Live Your Dream winners

- 1st place from SI Milwaukee is *Geralyn Stiemke*
- 2nd place from SI Lucas County is *McKenzie Moss*
- 3rd place from SI Cleveland is *Amanda Smith*
- 4th place from SI TRI State is *Amanda Smith* (Different women from 3rd place winner)

Virginia Wagner winners

- 1st place from SI Suburban Chicago is *Natalie Nowak*
- 2nd place from SI Canton/Stark County is *Marissa Turba*
- 3rd place from SI Tipp City & Upper Miami Valley is *Laura Fink*
- 4th place from SI Trenton Area is *Artiesha Powe*

Congratulations to all the award winners and for the work our clubs did supporting the women in our communities. We had 29 of our 30 clubs participate in our Live Your Dream program, and we had a total of 53 **Live Your Dream** awards and it resulted in an 8.16% increase over last year. We awarded **\$63,650.00** to our **Live Your Dream** award winners in the 2019/2020 club year. Our **Virginia Wagner** and our Other Awards did decrease in 2019/2020 but we still had an increase of 3.59% in our total awards.

Our total of all monetary awards was **\$106,255.00**. Way to go TEAM.

Together we will continue to raise women up through our dream programs and the work we do every-day in our communities. I look forward to being your Governor in 2020 – 2022, and seeing you all at District meetings in the fall.

Best Regards,
Darcy L. Merritt
Midwestern Region Governor - Elect

Soroptimist International of Soroptimist International

'LETS KEEP ON MOVING FORWARD' TOWARD EQUALITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE

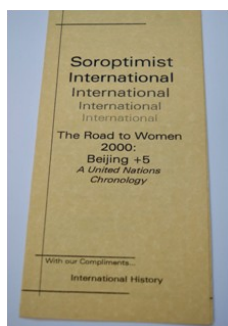
26TH JANUARY 2020 SIHQ CSW640 COMMENTS

by Dawn Marie Lemonds, a participant in the NGO Forum September 1995



"Not one of the 50,000 people at the opening ceremony of the 4th World Conference on Women (4WCW) in Beijing 1995 could ever forget the power of voices singing together at the largest event ever held on women's issues. The **Beijing Declaration** continues to be a "guiding document" articulating the 12 critical issues impacting women of the world. The parallel NGO conference, themed "Look at the World through Women's Eyes" was attended by 45,000 women in the nearby city of Huairou and presented over 2000 scheduled events in the ten day period.

100 Soroptimists participated in both the 4WCW and the NGO Forum – lead by then SI President Patsy Daniels, SI Leaders and UN Representatives. Soroptimist leaders served as advisors to the Government delegations, particularly on Human Rights issues and Education. At the NGO Forum, Workshops were presented by Soroptimists on topics such as 'Women in Prisons', 'Women's Rights in Kenya' and various workshops on education. Ironically, the issue of Human Trafficking was hardly on anybody's minds in 1995 and only mentioned as an 'afterthought' in the Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) – although there were a few great workshops on the subject.



The two conferences focused on Poverty and recognized that a lack of education, lack of paid employment and violence against women are key contributors to the issue. In 1995, there were few elected leaders in power, a great disparity in all services for women, and many countries had prohibitions against women owning property or even making decisions for their children. Technology was revealed in 1995 as something that would positively impact the world and microcredit loans were being given to women to remediate poverty. I attended over 50 workshops and programs, including an 8-hour tribune on 'Violence Against Women', a workshop on 'Muslim Women's Experience of Violence', an amazing play from the Philippines on human trafficking, and I soothed my soul at a singing workshop with a gospel group from Washington DC. My life was forever changed.



Fast Forward to Beijing + 25 and the world is now focused on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Since 1995, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) annually addresses the progression toward areas of the PFA and the SDG's related to gender. What is better- what is worse now? It is affirming that due to constant and persistent NGO presence- gender is now being addressed. Much to the surprise of many, UN Women was formed in 2010- giving women a seat at the BIG UN Table. Poverty reigns as a predominant issue, human trafficking has gained a front seat of concern, climate change, overpopulation, food security and violence in society are also gaining recognition as key issues affecting women. There has been some progress made for women in education, a slight increase in elected women leaders, and some economic advances. Yet, there is much to do. We, as Soroptimists and as citizens of the world must continue our own work and partner with like-minded organizations through advocacy and service. We must "keep on moving forward, never turning back, never turning back" (Reference Holly Near song, sung at the Opening Ceremony)."

Helping women and girls live their dreams

Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe

Zoom Meetings & Chat

SI of Grosse Pointe is staying connected during the COVID-19 Pandemic. They have continued to conduct monthly Board meetings and General meetings by using ZOOM. The Club has purchased a ZOOM account for \$15 a month. The ZOOM membership is also used to hold weekly Friday afternoon Happy Hours. Keeping the club active and connected is important during these difficult times. Many of the SI Grosse Pointe members are single and live alone. Being able to see a familiar face and enjoy each other's company and conversation is important during our social isolation and distancing mandates.

Soroptimist International of Greater Macomb

SI Greater Macomb was very disappointed to miss Midwestern Conference. It would have been nearby and our attendance rate would have been ten out of 19 of us, and two of them were first time attendees.

We are looking forward to being together as soon as possible. Until we are able to meet in person again, we are settling for online get-togethers. We had a ZOOM happy-hour last week. A few of us need to work on details as we could see and hear but not be heard, or we could hear and be heard, but couldn't be seen. But we will work it out. Also, on May 1st we will be holding an online Board Meeting.



We are optimistic () that we will be able to hold our rescheduled 75th anniversary Awards Banquet this autumn. We have sent out our awards checks, but we look forward to meeting our award winners in person.

Reminder: Clubs need to submit



Celebrating
Success forms by
July 1 to:



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An Inspirational Quote

So true :

I heard that we are all in the same boat, but it's not like that. We are in the same storm, but not in the same boat. Your ship could be shipwrecked and mine might not be. Or vice versa.

For some, quarantine is optimal. A moment of reflection, of re-connection, easy in flip flops, with a cocktail or coffee. For others, this is a desperate financial & family crisis.

For some that live alone they're facing endless loneliness. While for others it is peace, rest & time with their mother, father, sons & daughters.

With the \$600 weekly increase in unemployment some are bringing in more money to their households than they were working. Others are working more hours for less money due to pay cuts or loss in sales.

Some families of 4 just received \$3400 from the stimulus while other families of 4 saw \$0.

Some were concerned about getting a certain candy for Easter while others were concerned if there would be enough bread, milk and eggs for the weekend.

Some want to go back to work because they don't qualify for unemployment and are running out of money. Others want to kill those who break the quarantine.

Some are home spending 2-3 hours/day helping their child with online schooling while others are spending 2-3 hours/day to educate their children on top of a 10-12 hour workday.

Some have experienced the near death of the virus, some have already lost someone from it and some are not sure if their loved ones are going to make it. Others don't believe this is a big deal.

Some have faith in God and expect miracles during this 2020. Others say the worst is yet to come.

So, friends, we are not in the same boat. We are going through a time when our perceptions and needs are completely different.

Each of us will emerge, in our own way, from this storm. It is very important to see beyond what is seen at first glance. Not just looking, actually seeing.

We are all on different ships during this storm experiencing a very different journey.

Unknown author

Helping women and girls live their dreams

Soroptimist International Midwestern Region Board

Governor Kris Armstrong

SI Bloomington Normal

Governor-Elect Darcy Merritt

SI Monroe County

Region Secretary Missie Austin

SI Kenton Hardin Co

Region Treasurer Audrey Jarvey

SI Fond du Lac

District I Director Susan Frankel

SI Fond du Lac

District I Secretary Connie Gindt

SI Fond du Lac

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District II Secretary Jennifer Prater

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District III Secretary Lata Shastri

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District IV Director Chris Fowler Shearer

SI Canton/Stark County

District IV Secretary Abby Bouton

SI Columbus & Franklin County

CHECK US OUT ON
THE WEB!

WWW.SIMWR.ORG



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SI Grosse Pointe
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Soroptimist International Midwestern Region 2018 / 2020 Board



Standing: Christine Shearer, Jenny Prater, Barb Flory, Susan Frankel,
Connie Gindt, Mary Pilon, Lata Shastri, Abby Bouton

Seat: Missie Austin, Kris Armstrong, Darcy Merritt, Audrey Jarvey

Connections for the 2018–2020 Midwestern Board

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Governor Elect -Darcy Merritt - (dmerritt81@hotmail.com)

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Treasurer - Audrey Jarvey - (audreyjarv@gmail.com)

Soroptimist International of the Americas - (siahq@soroptimist.org)

Soroptimist Websites

Soroptimist International Midwest Region - (simwr.org)

Soroptimist International of the Americas (soroptimist.org)

Soroptimist International (soroptimistinternational.org)

Soroptimist Summary (soroptimistsummary.org)

Soroptimist International Midwestern Region Social Media connections

Tweet us [@SoroptimistMWR](https://twitter.com/SoroptimistMWR)

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MIDWESTERN REGION 2020

January 10-12	Winter Board Meeting - Time and Place TBD
January 11	National Day of Human Trafficking Awareness in the US
January 15	Virginia Wagner Award Applications due to Clubs
January 15	District Live Your Dream Award Winner due to Region Chair
January 18-20	MWR Winter Board Meeting, Indianapolis, Indiana
February 1	Club Live Your Dream Report due to District Director
February 15	Virginia Wagner Club Award winners due to District Director
February 15	Region LYD Winner info due to both SIA and Treasurer Audrey Jarvey by Region Chair
March 1	Soroptimist Club Grant applications due at SI HQ
March 8	International Women's Day
March 8	Virginia Wagner District Winners due to Region Chair
March 15	Award Report due from District Directors to Governor Elect Darcy
March 31	Region Virginia Wagner Award Winners names to Region Treasurer Audrey Jarvey by Region Chair
March 31	Governor's Award Form due to Governor Kris Armstrong
April 23 & 24	CANCELLED - MWR Board Meeting Kensington Hotel - Ann Arbor, MI
April 24 - 26	CANCELLED -2019 Spring Conference Kensington Hotel - Ann Arbor, MI
May 31	Club Giving and Founders Pennies contributions to SIA for 2020 recognition
June 1	Dream It, Be It Online Club Reporting due to SIA
July 1	Club Celebrating Success forms due to Kris Armstrong
July 10-12	MWR Summer Board Meeting, Location TBD
July 22 - 25	SIA 46 th Biennial Convention- Bellevue, WA
July 26 – 27	Governors Roundtable – Bellevue, WA