

The Pointer

Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe
May 2023



President's Message — Don't forget your hat!



See that number? That's the address on Sugarbush.

Derby Day at Sugarbush on May 6th is rounding the corner and a nose away, and since April showers bring May flowers, I'm hopeful we will have sunshine and flowers for the day. ([47956 Sugarbush Road, Chesterfield Twp., 48047](#)).

Don't forget to wear a hat. There will be a contest!

If you volunteered to bring a dish or other items essential to the event, please arrive between 5:00 and 5:30 or as close as possible. If you are not able to arrive within this time frame, please plan to get your items to either Bette Lepouttre, Kerri Green, or Diana Langlois.

Hybrid meetings have been suspended and will be on an as-needed basis. I am requesting 24-hour notice so I will have time to plan with Fishbones to have the audio and video equipment available.

The 115th Midwestern Spring Conference was held at the Kensington Hotel in Ann Arbor, April 21-23. Our club continues to shine in our region, evidenced by the awards our club received. These awards are due to the dedication our members put forth.

Each fiscal year, as a Soroptimist International club, we are expected to give at least one Live Your Dream award and conduct a Dream It, Be It program. However, SIGP members are passionate and always seem to go above and beyond those expectations. The Midwestern Region Club Activity Report, previously known as the "Governors Awards," is submitted by each club president to be recognized at the Spring Conference.

Our club was recognized for our "exemplary" accomplishments in the four pillars: Fundraising, Programs, Membership and Public Awareness.

We were also acknowledged for Celebrating Success in the Membership category for the Bingo event and the Public Awareness category for our video documentary, *2021: Insights on Human Trafficking*.



Karrie Blankenship

President's Message (continued on next page)

President's Message (continued from previous page)



Soroptimist International of the America's (SIA) Celebrating Success Awards recognize outstanding club projects that improve the lives of women and girls through programs and access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment. An award can also be given to Soroptimist as an organization that improves the lives of women and girls. These awards recognize the best practices of Soroptimist clubs in each region and help fulfill the four pillars of SIA's strategic plan: fundraising, membership, program, and public awareness. Each region selects a finalist in each of the four pillar areas. Four federation finalists will be selected from the region recipients to be celebrated as the best projects in the organization.

**Give yourselves a big round of applause!
Great job, ladies.**

Above are the SIGP members who attended the 2023 Midwest Region Spring Conference: (l-r) Paula Davis, Mary Ellen Burke, Karrie Blankenship, Roseanne Horne, Bette Lepouttre, and Francine Pegues. Not pictured: Aleksa Andjelkovic

Below are the awards our club received at the 2023 Spring Conference. (Top) The award for Membership (Bingo Event), (bottom) the award for Public Awareness (Insights on Human Trafficking Video Documentary), and in the middle is the highest award given: EXEMPLARY!



President's Message (continued from previous page)



(Far Left) SIGP President Karrie Blankenship receives "Best Actress" Award from SIA President Stephanie Smith. Be sure to check out the fabulous workshop (pages 14 & 15) Stephanie presented at the conference.

(Left) SIGP President Karrie Blankenship receives a certificate from Christine Fowler Shearer, Midwestern Region Governor, for our Public Awareness program—our club's production of the video documentary, 2021: Insights on Human Trafficking.



First timers to the conference were recognized. At far right is SIGP member Francine Pegues.

President's Message (continued on next page)

President's Message (continued from previous page)

We are cruising along with our **ALL ABOARD FOR AWARDS!** fundraiser

Below is the list of sponsors from whom we have received money or a promise of a donation, totaling \$14,150. Tickets for the cruise are still available and the ad will be in *The Grosse Pointe News* in May.

To purchase tickets, visit our [website](#) and click the BUY IT NOW button. To pay by check, make it payable to **SIGP**, and mail or drop it off to Mary Ellen Burke at 2037 Shorepointe, Grosse Pointe Woods, MI 48236. Please indicate on the memo line that it's for the cruise. If you are bringing a friend, please indicate their name so they can board the yacht.

— Karrie Blankenship, SIGP President

DIAMOND

Wells Fargo Investments

PLATINUM

3-H, Hope, Healing & Health, Inc.

GOLD

Mary Ann & Robert Victor

Iuliana Keyes—Thomas Financial Group, LLC

MPS Company

Raymond James – Grosse Pte. Farms

Roy O'Brien Ford

SILVER

Molly Hohlfeldt, Adlhoch & Associates

Bokano Builders, LLC

GP Tax Service, LLC

Chuck & Karen Shreve

Miller Law Firm

PEWTER

Marchiori Catering

BRONZE

Flame Furnace

Fidelity Appraisals

Dr. Peter Jost, DDS, PC

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Grosse Pointe News

Infinity—Ovation Yacht Charter

HONORABLE MENTION

Lakeshore Financial Planning

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 Andjelcovic

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

Congratulations to my SIGP sisters for achieving our sponsorship goal for

ALL ABOARD FOR AWARDS! Well done.

Now the easy part: We ask people to join us for a delightful lunch aboard the *Infinity* yacht. A full boat will show our sponsors the strength of our club and our commitment to helping women and girls. Please buy or sell one (1) ticket. We are an organization of 65 committed women. If everyone sells or buys at least 1 ticket, we will be halfway to filling the yacht. Can we count on you to support our club?

Please copy the flyer below to send to a friend or two even if you can't attend. Remember, this event will replace the MANY fundraisers we sponsor each year.

—Francine Pegues, *Infinity Cruise Chair*, fepegues@comcast.net

ALL ABOARD FOR AWARDS!

Soroptimist Infinity cruise to support women's education

Tuesday, July 11, 2023 • 11:30am-3pm

- Boarding at Jefferson Beach Marina, 24400 Jefferson, St Clair Shores
- \$175 per person • Brunch and drinks included
- Yacht is handicap accessible on 1st level
- Use QR code or Checks made payable to SIGP mailed to:
Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe
32 Lake Shore Drive, Grosse Pointe Farms, MI 48236
Check must be received before July 1, 2023, to ensure reservations.
- Only 100 tickets available

Soroptimist is a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.

grossepointesoroptimist@gmail.com

Thank you to our sponsors!

grossepointesoroptimist.net

Observations on Midwest Spring Conference

From Francine Pegues, Infinity Cruise Chair: As a first timer, I was repeatedly welcomed by the conference attendees and made to feel like a valued member of SIA. I found the conference was a recognition and celebration of the success of each club in the region. Feels like we're a mighty region within the SIA! The conference also helped me put in perspective how SIGP fits into this worldwide sisterhood. It was wonderful to be embraced by my sister Soroptimists.

From Bette Lepouttre, President Elect: First, I want to congratulate Karrie on receiving a special award and being recognized for her commitment, promptness, and ability to get the job done! Second, congratulations to our club as we continue to shine as one of the best in the Midwest Region!

I attended a session called, *Telling Your Story!* It made me realize that EVERYONE has a story, their life journey, to tell and share! A few points I came away with when speaking to someone about being a Soroptimist:

- We are all storytellers and all live in a network of stories!
- Everyone communicates, few connect!
- When you have a chance, tell your story but don't push your story. Let the listener see themselves in the story!

When was the last time you told your story about being a Soroptimist? Tell your story! You may be surprised that they listen, hear, and reach out to join a fantastic group of women who celebrate and support women and girls reaching their full potential!

SAVE THIS DATE! Tuesday, July 11, 2023

An exclusive opportunity to cruise on the luxurious
INFINITY YACHT
on Lake St. Clair and the Detroit River with
GROSSE POINTE SOROPTIMIST
Leaves St. Clair Shores at 11:30 a.m.; returns at 3 p.m.
Includes Lunch Buffet AND Open Bar!

Tickets are \$175 each. [CLICK HERE TO PURCHASE!](#)
Then click on the "DONATE NOW" button.

May Business Meeting

Wednesday, May 10, at Fishbones, starting promptly at 6:30.
If you want, you can arrive around six to give yourself time
to settle in and greet other members.

Feel free to bring a guest.

Dear Women of SIGP,

As we approach the day set aside to honor mothers, let us remember mothers everywhere. In Ghana, and all around our little planet, and even in our own country, they often struggle to feed and care for their children, sometimes against the most difficult odds.

Let us remember mothers who toil all day and must come home to another set of chores and hard work, cleaning, cooking and caring for the family.

Let us remember the mothers in Ghana and in many countries who suffer post-partum depression, with little support or sympathy, while the fathers may feel no societal responsibility to help.

Let us remember mothers whose cultural traditions mandate female genital mutilation which can cause infections and numerous problems, making pregnancy and delivery most punishing.

Let us remember the child brides, too young to safely enter motherhood. They may develop fistulas that cause a constant drip of bodily wastes through holes in the bladder and rectum. Sometimes the condition leads to dead babies who cannot pass through the proper opening.

Let us remember that many traditions in developing nations like Ghana consider the head of the family, the father, be given the choicest parts of the meal every day, including meat if there is any, with the leftovers given to the children and the mother, sometimes leaving them malnourished.

Let us remember mothers who are forbidden to use their talents in the public sphere. They hear the cries of their daughters whose lives are stunted by cruel traditions that may forbid them even to go to school.

As our club supports our girls at St. Anne in Damongo, we are fighting that injustice.

Our girls at St. Anne will one day give birth. For them, and for all mothers, let us pray.

— Carol Hofer, SIGP member and Ghana Liaison

Native American Blessing

President Karrie Blankenship and President Elect Bette Lepouttre wish each of you a very happy Mother's Day! Being a Soroptimist, you "mother" all who come in contact with you, so here is a Native American Blessing:

May the sun bring you new energy by day.

May the moon softly restore you by night.

May the rain wash away your worries.

May the breeze blow new strength into your being.

May you walk gently through the world and know its beauty all the days of your life.

~ Apache Prayer

MENTORING FOR SUCCESS UPDATE

What a nice way to begin April by meeting with 2021 mentee **Tonesia Nesbitt**, 2022 mentee **Danyelle Easley** and 2023 mentees **Lauren Gothro** and **J'nai Baker** at Leo's Coney Island on Jefferson and 9 Mile, April 1.

SIGP members/mentors attending were Katherine Baetz, Toni Adams, Marlane Washington, Bette Lepouttre and Diana Langlois. We shared a meal and personal stories about our lives. Here's an update:

Tonesia Nesbitt is on leave from Wayne County Community College District (WCCCD) but plans to return to school in the fall.

Danyelle Easley is a bank teller at Comerica on W. Grand Blvd. and continues classes at WCCCD.

Lauren Gothro plans to complete her degree in Social Work in 2024 while raising four children.

J'nai Baker is completing prerequisites at WCCCD before entering the nursing program. She has a friend, Skylar, who is in the same program, and they study together.

Denise Sargent, one of our 2022 Live Your Dream awardees who lives in Windsor, Ontario, emailed to say she just received acceptance into the third year of the social work program at the University of Windsor. She works part time in a toddler day care and loves the work!

Jeritha Brown, one of our 2021 Live Your Dream awardees, continues to be on dialysis and is further challenged by a heart condition. But she has good news about her children. Ausanae will complete her master's degree in social work on May 4, and is entering the doctoral program at the University of Kentucky. Arial, who is 19 and living in Troy, will take her test to become a Realtor®. Amaya is graduating from high school in June, and Amiracle is in middle school in St. Clair Shores. Jeritha asks for your prayers for her and her family as finances are difficult since she can no longer work due to her health.



A key to establishing a relationship with the mentees is the fact that the mentors contact their mentee about two times a month via phone call, text or in person to say hello and give support and encouragement. Katherine Baetz will mentor Lauren as they are both in the field of social work and Lori Schumann has offered to mentor J'nai Baker.

Members are always invited to hear more about MENTORING FOR SUCCESS. Please contact Diana at 313-690-1515.

At left: We did not get a group photo, but we did get a photo of J'nai, her daughter Jaycee, and friend, Skylar, enjoying a coney and fries!

Accessory Sale Is Back!

It's never too late for me to echo all the accolades we heard after the Membership Event/Accessory Sale held March 31! The team of Donna, Dorothea and Anita did a top-notch job of displaying and pricing jewelry, purses, wallets, scarves. Everything was priced to sell and that's just what it did! It sold! The last count I heard was \$1612, all donated to support awards and projects of Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe!

The numerous delicious choices of food added to the party atmosphere and was thoroughly enjoyed by members and their guests.

Five Guests Join SIGP!

Cynthia Gohlke, Susan Kozak and Maija Taipale joined SIGP and two more, Gwen Shannon and Sharon Zmick joined soon after this stupendously fun event. Please reach out to welcome them at business meetings and answer any questions they may have about agenda items!

A heartfelt thank you to all who donated items, to those who brought food and drink to share, and to those who came to shop and brought a friend or two! TEAM (**T**ogether **E**veryone **A**chieves **M**ore) and that is just what happened!

— Diana Langlois, SIGP Membership Chair

P.S. Hope you enjoy the photos on this and the next three pages.



The Accessory Sale Committee:

(l-r) Anita Sandercott, Donna Fitzgerald who hosted the event in her home, and Dorothea Williams.

Accessory Sale (continued from previous page)



All the accessories were exquisitely displayed.



All the food was delish! This is just the dessert table!



Our favorite guest and supporter Margaret Bommarito.



The comradery was exceptional and the rooms filled with laughter.



SIGP member Geri Pleva (center) brought two guests, Susan Kozak and Maija Taipale. NOW they are two of our five new members! Welcome!

See more photos on next page

2023 Accessory Sale (continued from previous page)



Another new member, Sharon Zmick (left), who just met veteran SIGP member Jane Evola (right).



SIGP members Nancy Kelley and Roseanne Horne swear they did not plan their dotted outfits! Dots on bottom, dots on top. Photo by Karrie Blankenship.



SIGP member Toni Adams with her friend Jutuan Brown.

Photos by SIGP
member
Nancy Solak



SIGP members Marlane Washington and Kerri Green.

Accessory Sale (continued from previous pages)



SIGP member Mary Ellen Burke and Mary Jo McGhee who helped judge our 2023 awards.



(l-r) SIGP members Nancy Kelley, Karrie Blankenship, Mary Ellen Burke and Mary Clare Toffanetti. Photo by Roseanne Horne.



SIGP members Carol Hofer and Marlane Washington.



(l-r) SIGP members Kerri Green (who helped keep track of the money), Karrie Blankenship and Diana Langlois (who helped inform everyone about all the wonderful things Soroptimist International of Grosse Pointe does).

Let's walk to help eradicate human trafficking!

Though this is not a Soroptimist-sponsored event, there's a 5K walk at Belle Isle you might be interested in. The walk will not only raise awareness about human trafficking (which occurs in every zip code in Michigan), but will also raise funds for those who have been trafficked. There is also a resource fair after.

The walk is Saturday, May 20, and costs \$40 (see link below to register).

Friends, family and all our members are invited to join the walk. We plan to leave Grosse Pointe (meet in the parking lot at St. Paul on the Lake) at 8 a.m.

Please let me know when you've officially signed up. As the time gets closer, we'll organize carpools. Both Bette and I can drive and take passengers.

<https://sparrowfreedomproject.org/>

Once at the site, go to "Events" and click on "Freedom Walk" from the pull-down menu.

If you have any questions, feel free to call or text me at 313-820-1179.

— Nancy Solak, SIGP Assistant Secretary

Happy May Birthday to ...



Photo by Nancy Solak

Susan Kozak, May 6

Mary Bryk, May 7

Mary Clare Toffanetti, May 8

Amanda Be, May 10

Annie Mae Holt, May 15

Toni Adams, May 16

Maija Taipale, May 16

Ross Braun, May 25

CONNECTION AND BELONGING

Spring Conference Workshop by SIA President Stephanie Smith

Soroptimist International of the America's (SIA) President Stephanie Smith attended the SI of Midwestern Region Spring Conference and presented a workshop on Connection and Belonging. Her focus was to illustrate effective listening that fosters understanding.

If you ever need an effective way for a group to learn more about themselves, each other, and to practice effective listening, you might want to try this.

PART ONE: Rate the following list of values as:

1—Extremely important 2—Important 3—Not as Important

ACHIEVEMENT: Produce meaningful results; have accomplishments

ADVENTURE: Take action in the face of the unknown, take risks, see excitement

AUTONOMY: Freedom or independence; ability to choose what you want to do

BELONGING: Be valued by others, fit in

CAREER ADVANCEMENT: Be promoted; get opportunity to move up

CHALLENGE: Stretch yourself mentally or physically

COLLABORATION: Work with others toward a common goal

COMPETITION: Want to win or be better than others

CONTENTEDNESS: Inner harmony; be at peace with yourself

CONNECTEDNESS: Frequent contact and interaction with others or public

CONTRIBUTION: Help or empower others; make a difference

CREATIVITY: Develop new ideas or products; think outside the box; be innovative

CUSTOMER SERVICE: Do what is right for the customer

DISCOVERY: Learn; explore or try something new

FAMILY: Have meaningful and fulfilling relationships with relatives

FINANCIAL SECURITY: Have enough money to feel safe; have a steady income

FRIENDSHIP: Have meaningful and fulfilling relationships with friends

HEALTH: State of mental and physical well-being

Connection (continued on next page)

INCLUSION: Ensure that everyone can contribute to the best of his/her ability

INTEGRITY: Adherence to moral and ethical principles; honesty

LEADING OTHERS: Have influence over what others do, direct others in their work.

LIFE BALANCE: Equilibrium between work and non-work

LOYALTY: Stay committed even under adverse circumstances; have a sense of duty

MASTERY: Competence; be very good at what you do; expertise

PERSONAL GROWTH: Development; progress

PLEASURE: Enjoy what you do; have fun

POWER: Authority, strength; ability to act

PROSPERITY: Successful or thriving condition; especially financially; good fortune

RECOGNITION: Acknowledgement of achievement, service, or merit

SELF-EXPRESSION: Opportunity to express and assert your personality

SELF-RESPECT: Proper regard or esteem for the dignity of your character

SPIRITUALITY OR RELIGION: Belief in the nonmaterial or the divine

STABILITY: Sense of order; structure and security; predictability; be in control

VARIETY: Diversity in work tasks, experiences and environment; change

PART TWO: Partner with one person. One partner relates a frustrating experience in 3 minutes or less to the other partner. The second partner must only listen. No interruptions or questioning.

PART THREE: The second partner must describe a time she felt very happy, in 3 minutes or less to the first partner. The first partner must only listen. No interruptions or questioning.



[Simone Outteridge \(MAPP\)](#)

Connection (continued from previous page)

PART FOUR: The second partner must relate to the first partner whatever values she determined were important to the first partner.

PART FIVE: The first partner must relate to the second partner whatever values she determined were important to the second partner.

RESULTS:

- Fosters effective listening, that focuses on greater understanding of your own values, and your partner's values.
- Validates each partner's rating of core values, which fosters understanding.
- Provides an opportunity for sharing with someone who is not already your friend, which results in greater understanding.
- Creates more effective collaboration, due to greater understanding of values.



We hope you are just as excited as we are about our [48th Biennial Convention](#) being held in Bellevue, Washington, USA, July 24-27, 2024! — SIA Board



Midwestern Region Board

Governor – **Christine Fowler Shearer, SI Cleveland**
(simwrgov@gmail.com)
Governor Elect: **Audrey Jarvy, SI Fond du Lac**
(audreyjarv@gmail.com)
Secretary - **Sheila Zingler-Gilbert, SI Fond du Lac**
(sheilasifdl@gmail.com)
Treasurer - **Linda Alpers, SI NE Suburban Franklin County**
(lsa6976@gmail.com)

District III

District III Director - Kellie Klingel, SI Flat Rock Area
(ktklingel@yahoo.com)
District III Secretary - Gail Hutra, SI Monroe
(gahutra1960@yahoo.com)

Soroptimist Websites

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



SOROPTIMIST®
Investing in Dreams

SIGP's PUBLIC AWARENESS COMMITTEES

WEBSITE: grossepointesoroptimist.netLori Schumann
or <https://www.grossepointesoroptimist.net/sigp-calendar-.html> for calendar

Submit photos, club information, news, upcoming events, and dates to this e-mail so the information
can be accessed by all public awareness chairs.

E-MAIL: grossepointesoroptimist@gmail.com Nancy Solak

SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS:

FACEBOOK: facebook.com/soroptimistgrossepointe.....Geri Pleva

INSTAGRAM: [soroptimistgp](https://instagram.com/soroptimistgp).....Geri Pleva

NEWSLETTER & MEDIA: *THE POINTER*

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

Deadline for photos and articles is the 28th of each month.....Nancy Solak