



## Notes From the President

BY MONICA PHILLIP



First and foremost, thank you for your generosity in donating gifts for the children at Sojourner Family Peace Center. They were overwhelmed with the number and variety of gifts. They were also most appreciative of the knitted caps provided by Marge Baron's

daughter Andrea. I was told by Mrs. Claus that the Christmas Party was fun and that everyone enjoyed the "special stories, readings, and sing-a-long".

December 10th is recognized at the United Nations as Human Rights Day. At Soroptimist all four member federations focus on awareness and funds to support the current president's appeal. There are currently three projects supported by the President's Appeal globally: Mwhoko Women Group of Kenya, focused on improving access to agricultural information, clean energy and water; WEWASH (Women's Empowerment Through Water, Sanitation and Health) at Stara Zagora, Bulgaria; and development of rainwater harvesting and filtration systems in Long Tanyit, Malaysia. All three fit under SI President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen's appeal, "Women, Water & Leadership." Our club sent in a donation, however, we were not able to contribute individually at the December meeting, so you will have that opportunity at the January 19th meeting when we pass around the "piggy bank" for your loose change.

The Awards Committee and their judges have come up with a winner and runner-up for the Live Your Dream Award. They are still working on the Virginia Wagner Award. Barbara Collignon will be reporting on the two LYD winners and possibly the Virginia Wagner winner at the January meeting. We will also have more details as to the date and place of the Awards Dinner at that meeting.

Just a couple facts on how the LYD Awards have been empowering and affecting the women who (Continued on Page 4)

## Lynda Conyers Committed to Aiding Women

Women must reach out to women.

That's the philosophy of Lynda Jackson Conyers and the main reason she was attracted to SI Milwaukee. Lynda was inducted into membership at the club's September meeting along with Cindy Price, saying she likes the club's many community activities that reach out to women.

Lynda doesn't just talk the talk of helping women, she walks the walk as an active member of NAACP Top Ladies, North Central Service Club, Delta Sigma Theda Sorority, the Sunshine Rotary Club and a board member of the Franciscan Peacemakers. Activities range from helping African American young girls, providing scholarships, assisting victims of human trafficking, providing information on breast cancer to voter registration.

"I got my commitment to community service from my mother," Lynda said.

She grew up in Milwaukee and graduated in three years from Riverside High School before going on to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls, where she was awarded a degree in Elementary Education and American History, and then to University of Wisconsin-Whitewater where she earned a master's degree in Emotional Disturbance and Autism and became the first African America woman to be certified in Learning Disabilities.

Lynda worked for a time for Milwaukee Public Schools, but after meeting Nathan Conyers her attention was diverted to the world of newspapers and printing.

Nathan was originally from South Carolina, Lynda said, and he learned photography while in the Army, which eventually brought him to Milwaukee. "We met at church," Lynda said. "He was starting a Christian newspaper." The two were married in 1985 and produced daughters Morgan, who works for Milwaukee Public Schools, and Deloris, who (Continued on Page 4)



# Celebrating Christmas



Here are just a few of the toys donated for children at Sojourner Family Peace Center. Below, newlyweds Tim Bailey and Aundrea Price anticipate Valentine's Day with linked candy canes. At left, Mrs. Santa, who sometimes goes incognito as Monica Phillip, president of SI Milwaukee, oversees activities at the club's Christmas party.



Photos by Aundrea Price, above, and Jean Rabe, at left.

## Mrs. Santa Takes the Reins

**M**rs. Santa was able this year to put aside her North Pole duties briefly in order to preside over the annual SI Milwaukee Christmas party.

Nearly 30 members and guests, including five men, joined the festivities Dec. 12 at Meyer's Restaurant and contributed enough children's toys to cover three tables. The toys were loaded into Mrs. Santa's brother's sleigh and delivered Thursday to Sojourner Family Peace Center for the children being housed over the holidays at the domestic violence prevention shelter.

Special thanks go out to the family of Marge Baron for contributing about 30 knit caps to the children. Most of the caps were made by Marge's "niece" Katie Parins and Katie's mother, Mary Parins. Some were created by West Allis-West Milwaukee Intermediate School seventh graders who are students of Marge's daughter, Andrea Baron. The students were just learning how to make the caps this year and Andrea expects there will be a lot more in the future, according to Marge. The caps were created as part of a program for developing and sharing creative abilities.

After dinner, Mrs. Santa, who was filling in for President Monica Phillip, the dear friend she so closely resembles, sat down for a few minutes to explain the reasons for her fatigue. What with having to help hubby and all the elves plus the trampling reindeer and all that cookie baking there is little time for her to enjoy the season, she said. Then, come Christmas, she's left all alone. She's looking forward to the day their son takes over—he is 720 after all!

Myrna Collins read a series of notes from the recipient of the 12 Days of Christmas gifts expressing her increasing dismay at the largess, much to the amusement of those who could not agree more.

The evening was capped off with a community sing of "Weatherman Blues" sung to the tune of "Jingle Bells" and created by SI Milwaukee's poet laureate Barbara Collignon.

*Read Barbara's jaunty jingle on Page 7*



**Sisters Avis Haasch, left, and Barbara Collignon frame the Christmas tree.**

(Photo by Andrea Baron)



# Lynda...

(Continued From Page 1)

graduated from the University of South Carolina with a degree in Business Management and will complete training to become a registered nurse in August.

“She loves the action, the pace and the stress of the emergency room,” Lynda said.

After the death of Nathan earlier this year, Lynda decided to put her newspaper/printing operation, The Milwaukee Times, on the market and retire.

“I’ve had inquiries, but digital media has had a major effect on print. I’m afraid it’s just a matter of time for community newspapers,” she said. “I’m old school. I like touching paper, both newspapers and books. No Nook for me.”

She will miss working with families to create life stories of their loved ones who have passed on. “Everyone has a story,” she said.

Life in the newspaper world has given her the opportunity to meet and interact with everyday people who can really surprise you, up to governors and mayors and many celebrities. “Ossie Davis’ voice is just as resonant and wonderful in person as it sounds on film,” she said.

One of her few regrets in life is that caring for her ailing husband made it impossible to get in on the ground floor of Barak Obama’s bid for the presidency. “I was invited to help three times, but I just could not at the time.” She said she hopes to meet up with Michelle Obama when she comes to Milwaukee in March.

As her farewell event at The Milwaukee Times she plans to put together a cookbook featuring her mother’s recipes. “Every year at Christmas I send some of my mother’s recipes to friends and I love it when they call and tell me how well their dishes turned out.”

After retirement, Lynda plans to tutor children in second through fifth grades in the public schools. “I see too many adults who cannot read or write. I can help provide a good foundation for the children,” she said.

During her spare time Lynda gets enormous pleasure from going to the theater, especially in Chicago.

“I got a chance to see ‘Hamilton.’ It was WONDERFUL!” Also ‘The Color Purple’ and then ‘Dreamgirls,’ which was spellbinding.

Lynda also enjoys traveling. “I’m not interested in Europe until I have seen all 50 states. I still have quite a few to go,” she said.

One trip she’s already planning is to New York City, just to see the museums. “None of the other tourist stuff, just the museums.”

Lynda is happy doing what she can do and caring for those she can help.

“I have learned to enjoy what I have. Chasing money is worthless, because the money stops here. It doesn’t go into the coffin with you.”

# President...

(Continued From Page 1)

receive them. They have increased their self-esteem by 93 percent, and 86 percent have completed their education and increased their standard of living.

Aggie Ressel and JoAnn Kauth have set up a regular routine on the delivery of "Move-In" baskets for the Cathedral Center project. Remember, if you are willing to contribute, we will be collecting dish towels for these baskets at the January meeting. Here is just another place where a small group of women have a big impact on the lives of women.

Wishing each and every one of you a Blessed Christmas and Happy and Healthy New Year. You are very special women, with much compassion, generosity, and heart. I am proud to be a part of your group.

*Yours in Service and Appreciation,  
Monica Phillip, President*

## Dates to Remember

**Saturday, Jan. 19, 2019, 11 a.m.** — Soroptimist business meeting at Brass Key, 4925 W. Forest Home, Milwaukee.

**Sunday, Jan. 27, 2019**—Chocolate Fantasy, Fond du Lac (SI Fond du Lac fund-raiser).

**Thursday, March 28 and Thursday, May 30, 2019, 8:30 a.m.**--Healthy Dating Youth Summit, Sojourner Family Peace Center.

**Saturday, April 6, 2019**—SI Milwaukee fund-raiser, Golda Meir presentation.

**April 26-28, 2019**—SIMWR Spring Conference, Columbus, Ohio.

**July 18-21, 2019**—SI International Convention, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

# Healthy Dating Youth Summit Gives Teens a Good Foundation

For a young teen, socializing and dating can be a tricky business.

What is okay and what is not? Is this too far? Will I be ridiculed or left out in the cold if I say no? Am I being too aggressive, too sensitive? Is this action protective and caring or controlling and abusive? Does my identity depend on another person?

These and other personal growth questions are among those addressed in the many Healthy Dating Youth Summits held throughout the school year sponsored by Sojourner Family Peace Center and Verizon.



Four members of SI Milwaukee, Monica

Phillip, Avis Haasch, Kathy Endrizzi and Myrna Collins, were on hand at the Nov. 15 session to help out with non-professional tasks. This is the first of three sessions in which SI Milwaukee members will be participating through the end of the club year.

About 50 students from Manitoba School and Maryland Avenue Montessori School, both Milwaukee public schools, participated in the Nov. 15 event, though private schools and schools outside Milwaukee also participate. This group was among the more than 600 young people who go through the program each year at Sojourner. "If you count those who are involved in summits held in schools and in single-topic summits, we peak to about 1,000 teens each year," said Lisabeth Marquardt, Director of Community Education & Strategic Program Initiatives.

In surveys conducted after each summit, 95.4

## A Surprise in the Waiting

Here's a thought that's especially pertinent as we are about to embark on a new year and set new goals for ourselves—let's call them New Year's resolutions. They originated with the prolific inventor Thomas Edison:

*If we did everything we are capable of doing, we would literally astound ourselves.*



Myrna Collins, left, and Kathy Endrizzi prepare to hand out materials for the Healthy Dating Youth Summit Nov. 15. Below is the summit's logo. Photos by Avis Haasch.

percent of the participants said they would recommend the summit to a friend and 77 percent said they had learned more ways to be safe while dating. Another 72 percent indicated that they had learned something new about healthy relationships. Future opportunities for SI Milwaukee member participation are March 28 and May 30, 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

*In anticipation of Thanksgiving, Marge Baron delivered the following inspirational message at SI Milwaukee's November meeting.*

Be Thankful

Don't ever forget to be thankful  
For every blessing you find on your way;  
Each small happiness is a measure  
That weighs in for you day after day.  
Hold onto the blessings you gather,  
Fill your mind with the joy that they give,  
Your whole life will take on new meaning,  
Build on love and you truly will live.

*By Lola Neff Merritt*

## REMINDER

SI Milwaukee members have been asked to bring dish towels to the January meeting for donation to The Cathedral Center. They will be included with the donations of cleaning products procured by Aggie Ressel and JoAnn Kauth and given to women as they are ready to leave the center.

# For Rosalind Metcalf, Her Mission Is Very Personal

Rosalind Metcalf tested the knowledge of SI Milwaukee members on human trafficking when she spoke at the club's November meeting and she was impressed by what she discovered. SI scored 100 percent on the yes-no exam distributed to members.

Rosalind specializes in domestic and sex abuse and prevention and is herself a survivor of abuse as a teen. "When I was 15 I was kidnapped and held for 10 to 11 months," she said.

Questions covered a range of matters, including such basics as the very fact that victims of trafficking often do not understand that they are being victimized. And that those victimized cover a wide range of the social strata. Many are not



homeless or from backgrounds of abuse, poverty, drugs or alcohol, but have fled lives of physical comfort

in affluent areas because, for them, something is missing in their safe homes.

"It can happen to anyone at any time," Rosalind said. "For me, my mother was a teacher and my dad in the military. I was the kind of person this 'doesn't happen to'."

The trafficked person can have started by consenting to be sexually trafficked or to be used for panhandling or shoplifting or any number of other for-money activities.

They can make more money in human trafficking than they could at McDonald's, Rosalind explained. They wind up being blindsided because they never understood the long-term effects," she said.

"It's a crime that happens in plain sight, and it happens to boys as well as girls."

Rosalind spoke of the need for adults to make their children aware of human trafficking so they can recognize and avoid it.

Malls are one of the prime locations for slick conmen to approach vulnerable-looking young people and lure them into the life, according to Rosalind.

Prosecuting abusers can be difficult. Often there is no evidence of abuse and victims are reluctant to talk out of fear or embarrassment or the belief that what they have is what they deserve. Many of the people walking the streets have addictions that control them, she said.

We hear much today about human trafficking, but, according to Rosalind, there is not really a whole lot more of it going on than there has been in the past, it's just that there is so much more awareness of it now.

Rosalind tells the story of her own journey to healing and passes on educational information in her book "Smoking Out the Shadows," available through her website [www.healingstartstoday.com](http://www.healingstartstoday.com).

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Rosalind defines the mission of her Healing Starts Today Foundation this way: It is to end human trafficking, to prevent violence and to empower our community with the tools to achieve health, personal growth, wellness and awareness through rescuing, education and by helping individuals to development productive life skills.

*The following amusing tale was recounted by Aggie Ressel after running into one of the quirks of the English language*

## Homophones Anyone?

### The Elevator

As I was entering an elevator I pressed the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor button. Other people entering also pressed the same button. That's when I remarked "you're going to to to? (to two too), instead of saying "are you going to the second floor also?"

We all burst out laughing.

## Weatherman Blues

(Sing to tune of “Jingle Bells”)

Breaking news.  
Winter blues.  
Blizzard on the way.  
Jet stream blast  
and wind forecast  
result in frigid day.

Oh! Winterize!  
Weatherize.  
Bundle up today!  
Shovel snow.  
Wind doth blow.  
The plows are on their way.

Alberta Clipper dives.  
Snow arrives and flies.  
Lake effect surprise  
freezes hands and eyes.  
Jet stream from the north.  
Winds blow back and forth.  
Time to spread the salt.  
I swear it’s not my fault.

Oh! Winterize!  
Weatherize.  
Bundle up today!  
Shovel snow.  
Wind doth blow.  
The plows are on their way.

*By Barbara Collignon*

