



SOROPTIMIST®
Investing in Dreams



**Notes From
The President
By Monica Phillip**

Congratulations on our successful March 7th fundraiser event. The day turned out to be sunny and bright, and everyone attending seemed to be in a good mood.

Our guests and we enjoyed a very good lunch provided by Jimbo's Catering, an interesting and delightful program and Costume Fashion Show given by the Friends of the Milwaukee Rep Theater. Of course, the raffle is always a draw, and I must say that we had some very exceptional items to raffle off this year. I was lucky to win the ceramic musical carousel which makes an excellent addition to my collection of music boxes.

Thank you all for your hard work and contributions.

Remember, we have elections coming up in May, and are looking for officers to serve with our incoming president, Aundrea Price. Ladies, it really isn't that hard, and you will have instruction and help from the past officers, so please consider taking a leadership part in our club. When one of the Nominating Committee members approaches you, please say, "yes".

Soroptimist will be celebrating its 100th Anniversary in October, 2021 in San Francisco. The event is a celebration of the founding of Soroptimist in Oakland, California. Before there were federations or Soroptimist International, there was one dedicated group of women, under the leadership of a man named Stuart Morrow, who came together to network and help other women and girls. Because our current structure didn't exist in 1921, this event is a celebration for our volunteers, Soroptimist members. It is not an SI or a federation meeting. We will be celebrating a "Bright Past – Brilliant Future." We will be bringing Soroptimists from around the world to this celebration. More information will be forthcoming over the next few months.

Again, thank you for your Service and Dedication to Soroptimist.

Monica Phillip, President

Virus Forces Big Changes

Planned SI Milwaukee events have been cancelled or postponed indefinitely due to precautions being taken against the spread of the coronavirus. Lunafest, the film festival by, for, and about women, and the Dream It, Be It program for teen-age girls, are off the schedule for now. The Awards Dinner has been rescheduled as a luncheon at noon, May 23, at Meyer's Restaurant, 4260 S. 76th St., Greenfield. The May 9 business has been cancelled and The Midwestern Region Spring Conference is also cancelled.

Members will be notified by email of any changes.

Elizabeth Lucas, executive director and CEO of Soroptimist International of the Americas, has directed that all club events in the United States and Canada be cancelled or postponed at least through May 11, though she recommends continuing the shutdown until June 1.

Tasty Opening to Fund-Raiser



SI Milwaukee members and guests enjoy the salad course at the at the SI Milwaukee Fundraising event, Saturday, March 7 at Milwaukee Elks Lodge. Following the lunch, winners of a couple dozen baskets of a wide variety of items were announced and volunteer models from Friends of the Rep strutted their stuff in gorgeous costumes from Milwaukee Repertory Theater productions over the years. More pictures inside.



Friends of the Rep dug through their Costume Closet to find spectacular costumes to model at the SI Milwaukee Fundraiser March 7 at the Milwaukee Elks Lodge.



Costumes, created entirely at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater were originally worn in productions of "Dream Girls," "12th Night," "The Front Page," "A Christmas Carol," "Lovers and Executioners," "M Butterfly," "Top Girls," "Sense and Sensibility," "Hedda Gabler," "Lady Windermere's Fan," "Love's Labors Lost," "Over The Tavern," "The Doyle and Debbie Show," "Mill on the Floss," "Precious Memories," "Ain't Misbehavin'," "Paragon Springs," and "The Miser." One costume was of unknown origin but was so beautiful that the Friends decided to include it anyway.

Every part of each costume is locally generated, from initial rendering, through pattern-making, fitting and sewing, jewelry, accessories, headwear and wigs. The lushly embellished tunic and robe above are from "The Miser."



Other theater companies are so impressed with the quality of the intricate costumes that they sometime rent them for their own productions.



All photos are by SI Milwaukee Secretary Avis Haasch and guest Anita Corso



Members and guests wait for the show to begin



Cowboys were not ignored by the Rep.



Here are two of the two dozen lottery prizes



Club Assessment Survey Generally Quite Favorable

“For the size of our club and age group, we accomplish a whole lot—and we enjoy each other’s company.”

Those words from a club member sum up much of SI Milwaukee’s response to the 2020 Club Assessment Tool Survey.

There is one point on which every club member agreed—they all like having regular meetings on Saturdays. And, with a little better than 60 percent participation in the survey, it was almost unanimously favored to continue the present midday meetings including lunch. Just two respondents favored morning meetings and one opted for no meal.

Members were also largely satisfied with one monthly meeting, with only one woman favoring fewer meetings.

General satisfaction with the club and its activities was high, though there were a variety of responses to the questions involving Volunteer Activity Importance. Rating of highest importance were “Providing valuable Soroptimist mission-focused services that directly help women and girls,” which tied with “Ensuring that the mission-focused activity helps the local community where I live.” Close behind was “Offering opportunities for all ages to participate.” Members, however, were not all about business, with this response tying with “Incorporating a sense of fun into activities.” Next in the ranking was “Raising funds for various Soroptimist mission-focused projects.” Least-favored was the idea of involving the children and families of members.

Four questions tied for the top spot in the Satisfaction With Your Club portion of the survey, with respondents indicating that the club is something they truly enjoy, that it gives them a sense of pride and satisfaction and that it makes them feel they are doing something positive to help others.

Questions about recommending the club to others, feeling that it is an important part of their lives and gaining satisfaction with the rewards received for the time and money spent all garnered high positive responses. Despite this, the fewest points went to the questions of whether they feel they have a real



influence on the club and whether they plan to be an active member for the foreseeable future.

The survey itself came in for some strong criticism in the portion reserved for comments, especially regarding the Meeting Satisfaction and Evaluation of Your Club sections. Members

pointed out that there was much repetition and that many of the questions required yes or no answers, though the 1-6 ratings were the only options available. Some members left some of the questions unanswered because they were deemed to be irrelevant.

How officers conduct the meetings, provide necessary information, consistently deliver minutes and treasurers reports, and how they interact with guest speakers all showed considerable satisfaction. Low ratings were given to the questions of how interesting and varied the programs are and to whether they feel their time is respected and used wisely.”

By far the lowest score of the survey went to the question on cliques within the club, which immediately followed the question on whether the club is welcoming and makes them feel as though they belong, No. 2 in the positive response category. Few were looking for the club to provide networking opportunities for advancement in their careers nor was there much demand for individual rewards for a job well done nor a desire to involve children and family of members.

The biggest frustration in the Wishes/Frustration portion was with the size of the club. Also cited was a desire for mentoring.

Framing of the questions sometimes left some of the members confused as to how to reply. For example, “Sufficient protections exist to ensure club funds are used properly.” Is that a wish, or a frustration? Does it imply that this is not now the case? Or, “The leaders of my club allow me to be as active in the club as I desire.” Wish? Frustration? Simple statement of fact? Who knows?

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Assessment

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Whether the club should be more technology friendly, drew responses swinging from a top-rated 6 to a bottom-rated 2 and one abstention. One respondent pointed out that increasing the use of technology could broaden the cast of potential speakers beyond just those who can show up in person.

Involving club members in more community events, aside from sit-down meetings and banquets, was suggested by one member as means of self-improvement. It would also offer the opportunity to mix with other clubs, she wrote. It was also noted that the club needs to keep in mind that SI Milwaukee is part of a much larger organization with national and international goals, and these should be kept in mind. That the club needs more and younger members was cited several times on survey forms along with the request for guidance as to how to accomplish this. At the opposite end, it was noted that many of the older members are hesitant to drive at night and would prefer luncheons to dinners for events such as the Awards Dinner and the Christmas party. The same respondent also pointed out that midweek dinners are difficult for many of the award recipients, who are still in school. She suggested Saturday or Sunday options.

Overall, the club assessment revealed a good deal of satisfaction on the part of club members, but recognized the need for improvements.

Friar Finds Path To Brighter Future

This look at a brighter future, by Fr. Richard Hendrick, Order of Friars Minor, Ireland, was submitted by Barbara Collignon

Lockdown

Yes, there is fear.

Yes, there is isolation.

Yes, there is panic buying.

Yes, there is sickness.

Yes, there is even death.

But, They say that in Wuhan after so many years of noise

You can hear the birds again.

They say that after just a few weeks of quiet

The sky is no longer thick with fumes

But blue and grey and clear.

They say that in the streets of Assisi

People are singing to each other

across the empty squares,

keeping their windows open

so that those who are alone

may hear the sounds of the family around them.

They say that a hotel in the West of Ireland

Is offering free meals and delivery to the housebound.

Today a young woman I know

is busy spreading fliers with her number

through the neighborhood

So that the elders may have someone to call on.

Today Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and Temples
are preparing to welcome

and shelter the homeless, the sick, the weary

All over the world people are slowing down and
reflecting

All over the world people are looking at their neighbors
in a new way

All over the world, people are waking up to a new reality

To how big we really are.

To how little control we really have.

To what really matters.

To Love.

So we pray and we remember that

Yes, there is fear.

But there does not have to be hate.

Yes, there is isolation.

But there does not have to be loneliness.

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Brighter Day

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Yes, there is panic buying.
But there does not have to be meanness.
Yes, there is sickness.
But there does not have to be the disease of the soul
Yes, there is even death.
But there can always be a rebirth of love.
Wake to the choices you make as to how to live now.
Today, breathe.
Listen, behind the factory noises of your panic
The birds are singing again
The sky is clearing,
Spring is coming,
And we are always encompassed by Love.
Open the windows of your soul
And though you may not be able
to touch across the empty square,
Sing.

Salute to Suffragettes

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, giving women the right to vote, and the role Suffragettes played in its passage, SI Milwaukee's very own poet laureate Barbara Collignon composed this poem. It can be recited or sung to the tune of "Jesus loves the little children, little children of the world. Red and yellow, black and white, they are precious in his sight."

Vote, vote, vote and work for justice,
education and for health.
We are equal, we are smart.
We are armed with all our art.
We will vote and make a better world
--that's right!
Vote, vote, vote your conscience, Ladies.
Take your neighbor to the polls.
Red or yellow, black or white,
we can exercise our right
now we've won the right to vote
and play a role.
Vote, vote, vote your conscience, Ladies.
Don't forget to register to vote.
Take your ID, take your coat.
You don't want to miss the boat
to make a difference in the world
and do what's right.

Suggestions Could Help Women Under Stress

(From the Live Your Dream Blog)

Women in today's workplace are under more stress than ever. Workers are often given too many tasks to complete on short deadlines. People spend more time at the office than they do at home. On top of this, working women often feel even more overwhelmed due mainly to issues that stem from sexism and familial responsibilities. Society also conditions women to say yes more often, according to the Live Your Dream Blog. It offers up these suggestions to help avoid some of the stressors:

1. Look the Part

Often women are asked to look the part in their workplace. They must be cheerful and friendly, even when they don't want to be. It's well-known that men often tell women to smile if they are not. This is just one example of the simple fact that many men, willingly or not, internalize a specific idea of how a woman is supposed to look and act and push that on the women in their lives. Women often feel the need to style their hair and do their makeup before work. If they don't, many women report that men assume they're tired or even sick. To combat this, women can build their self-esteem by finding the morning routine that works for them and sticking to it no matter what anyone says. Feel free to ditch the heels for flats and forget the eyeliner.

2. More Expectations at Home

In the past, it was rare for women to hold jobs, as their role was to maintain their households. With their husbands at work, they cleaned the house, cooked meals and cared for their children.

Now, many more women are employed. Unfortunately, women still often feel a sense of responsibility for the people around them. After work, they have to pick up their children, make dinner and tidy up. All of this creates an immense amount of stress on top of the anxiety that comes from their jobs. Women should not feel
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Stressed

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responsible for this—instead, they need to ask for help, from inside or outside the family.

3. **The Pressure to Take on More**
From a young age, women are told to be pleasant and roll with the punches. With that comes saying yes, even when they'd rather not. This is the case in nearly every aspect of a woman's life. At work, women continuously agree to take on last-minute projects or stay after hours to help clean up. Bosses jokingly say they can't trust Jim or Mike to do this task, so it's up to you. As a result, the performance and well-being of the women in an office are put to the test more often. So many women are afraid to say no, but it's important that women keep this word in their arsenal in order to feel stronger and less overworked.

4. **Consistent Low Wages and Positions**
It's no secret that there's a wage gap—women are more likely to earn less money than men, even when they perform the same duties. Then, if they cannot make ends meet, they often have to turn to part-time jobs and other employment on top of everything else. Doing so creates an incredible amount of pressure and anxiety. Combine low pay with high workplace expectations, and you have a recipe for disaster. This isn't to say men have it easy, but it should be noted that women consistently have more on their plates. Women must be able to advocate for themselves, especially when the time comes for a raise or promotion.

5. **Looking on the Bright Side**
If you find you're dealing with one or more of these workplace stressors, do your best to turn the bad into good. Most situations won't resolve themselves overnight, so make an effort to see the best in things. Crack a joke or divert conversations to more comfortable topics. Practice saying no and learn how to defend yourself, so you can take on a suitable amount of work and improve your well-being. Practice self-care and remember that you can always ask for help. Don't be afraid to speak up. Your experience matters.

SIA Director Has Some Ideas for Downtime



Elizabeth Lucas

In a communication focusing on the need for all Soroptimists to keep abreast of the latest developments in the coronavirus pandemic, Elizabeth M. Lucas, executive director and CEO of Soroptimist International of the Americas, offered some suggestions for making use of the downtime.

"We encourage you to create new ways to communicate with your club members, your community and your supporters," Elizabeth wrote. "It is imperative our mission continues and our communities and supporters know our Dream programs will continue to provide the services they have come to expect and treasure.

"We encourage you to rethink your club year for 2020. Use this time to take planned activities in April, May and June and move them farther out to a time when it becomes apparent group gatherings are allowed in our respective areas."

Elizabeth added, "We are grateful for your continued demonstration of professionalism, dedication, and compassion as we work through these challenges together.

"Continued best wishes to you, your families, and your communities for good health and resilience in the weeks to come," Elizabeth concluded.