



## Notes From the President

BY MONICA PHILLIP

This has been an exciting year for our club so far. I am looking forward to a successful event with Lunafest on March 19th, and thankful to Aundrea and the Marquette staff and students for assisting us in bringing this event about to help our Dream It, Be It Program.

I think this is an opportunity for others to really get to know who and what Sorooptimist is all about. Also, I am proud of our club's involvement with The Cathedral Center and Sojourner Family Peace Center...we really do make a difference in the lives of women and girls with these two programs.

Our big fundraiser is coming up on Saturday, April 6, 2019 at Elks Lodge, 5555 W. Good Hope Road. Keep inviting people to attend, it is going to be a great program, and a little different than the usual style show. Of course, those who have attended in the past are looking forward to our fantastic basket raffle and silent auction. Hopefully most of you will be available for setup on the Friday evening before and able to join in for fish fry before setup.

### SIA'S Big Goal:

At the 45th Biennial Convention in Yokohama, Japan, Sorooptimists engaged in small group discussions about our 2021-2031 Big Goal: Invest in the dreams of half a million women and girls through access to education. Here is what we learned.

Our Strengths: Members -- Our members are passionate, committed, talented and professional.

Fundraisers -- Our fundraisers are creative, innovative and successful.

Live Your Dream Awards -- Our award transforms women's lives and is well known.

Collective Impact -- Our focus creates unity,  
(Continued on Page 5)

## Welcome, Mary



Mary Leach-Sumlin is flanked by SI Milwaukee President Monica Phillip, left, and sponsor Barbara Collignon after being installed as the club's newest member on March 9. Mary is Associate Director of Franciscan Peacemakers.

## SI Women Reaching Out

*Editor's Note: To Martin Luther King Jr., life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others? To many of the members of SI Milwaukee, the answer encompasses more than their membership in the international organization that helps women and girls live their dreams. This is the first of what I hope will be a series of stories about the volunteer work some of our members are involved in outside our club.*

-----

Milwaukee Birthright Inc. is one of the causes dear to the heart of SI Milwaukee President Monica Phillip. The nonsectarian organization's goal is to give women contemplating abortion support and encouragement to choose life instead.

Members of the all-volunteer group are trained to listen with empathy and compassion, give crisis counseling and offer referrals to agencies in the community. They can provide help ranging from determining whether a young woman is really pregnant, through the pregnancy and after the child is born. Milwaukee Birthright can also provide clothing and other needed supplies.

(Continued on Page 2)

# Reaching Out

(Continued From Page 1)

“Every Tuesday, is my day at the Milwaukee Birthright clinic,” Monica said. “I look forward to these days, because I know I will be helping women in their pregnancies and with their other children to make a better life for themselves and their families by encouraging them to take the support and



**Monica**

supplies we provide to help them through their present situations and know that someday they will be in a position to give back to others in some way. I always want to make the women feel good about themselves and the help they

were brave enough to seek out. We are there for them, not to judge them, but to fully support them and their families in any way we can.” Monica added, “We not only provide clothing and baby supplies, but we are there to provide information to them on housing, education, food pantries, jobs, etc. We are there to listen to their needs and make them feel good that they have come forth for support and information. We follow up with the women we serve, and encourage them to come back every three months for any help or products they may need. We want them to feel good about choosing to give birth to their babies. We also have some fathers involved with our services, and this may be because they are unemployed at the time, or they are single parents to their children and need extra help. I always compliment them on keeping the family unit together.

“We also encourage them to get involved with their churches, no matter what their faiths or beliefs may be. We believe this gives them that extra spiritual support all of us need.”

The Milwaukee Birthright mission statement says the group was “founded on the principle that it is the right of every pregnant woman to give birth and the right of every child to be born.”

A 24-hour helpline is available and confidential.

Milwaukee Birthright  
Address:  
2025 W. Oklahoma Ave.  
Suite 125  
Milwaukee, WI 53215  
24-Hour Helpline  
(414) 672-5433  
mail@milwaukeebirthright.com



**Aggie Ressel, left, Marge Baron and Janet Nortrom show off just a few of the kitchen towels collected for women moving out of The Cathedral Center and into independent living.**

## Club Hears How Giving Helps The Cathedral Center

The mops and pail, towels and kitchen supplies SI Milwaukee members donate to The Cathedral Center really do make a difference for the women who are ready to leave the emergency shelter to create a life on their own in safe housing, according to Ana Treptow.

Home kits, purchased and donated supplies are delivered monthly by Aggie Ressel and JoAnn Kauth.

Ana, who is volunteer and development coordinator for the shelter, brought her message to the club at its March meeting.

She said the shelter can house 32 women and 8 families (including men) for overnight stays. Women referred to the shelter might be facing temporary financial problems, abuse, mental health and addiction issues and more.

Generational poverty plays a role and a lack of a support system makes recovery much more difficult. The shelter can supply basic needs for up to 90 days plus one-on-one support, with the emphasis on need, Ana said.

According to the center’s web site: “The Cathedral Center is more than just a place to sleep – it is an entry point to the social services system for many (Continued on Page 4)

# Farewell to Polly, She Never Gave Up



She was a tiny woman with a huge heart and a will of iron. On Jan. 25, Pauline Sharkey Christensen, our beloved Polly, succumbed to the cancer that she had been battling for a long time.

**Pauline "Polly" Christensen** Polly had been a member of SI Milwaukee for nine years, just one of the activities she involved herself in after retiring from the job she took on with the unexpected death of her husband, Walter, when he was 54 years old. She once said she was a mother of three children, two of them in private colleges, she was still paying the mortgage, had no job, no insurance and no income and a second son in the throes of serious mental illness.

"I didn't know anything about running a business, but there it was. I didn't have a choice, it just slapped me in the face," Polly said. So she set about learning the ins and outs of supplying products to kosher bakeries.

She kept the clients and the business until retiring 25 years later, kept her wicked sense of humor and kept her love of travel.

"She wanted to see everything and traveled every chance she got," her son, Paul, said at the memorial service for her on Feb. 1.

Polly had seven grandchildren, Grace, Michael and Colleen Christensen, the children of Paul, and McLean, Charlotte, Miles and Leo Purcell, children of daughter Francine Purcell. She was preceded in death by her son Walter Jr.

Polly attended DePaul University on a part-time

basis and did modeling as well, as she had during her years at Catholic high schools in Chicago.

The Christensens married in 1957 and moved to Milwaukee in 1968 where Polly's main focus was on caring for family and home and entertaining. When her older son became ill, Polly became very involved with NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness). That is where she met SI Milwaukee Secretary Avis Haasch, who eventually led her to the Soroptimist organization.

"I stayed active there for a long time, I tried to help families and individuals," she said. "Mental illness can be a terrible, terrible cross to bear, but he (Walter) seems to be happy in the life God has given him. He's very loving," she said last year before Walter Jr.'s death.

In addition to work and family, Polly was involved in a variety of volunteer projects. Her favorite was serving as a docent at the Milwaukee Art Museum.

Polly enjoyed playing bridge, doing needlework, traveling, going to exercise class, golfing and following investments.



**A Soroptimist yellow rose and candle formed a silent tribute to Polly Christensen at the club's February meeting.**

## *District Notes*

*Here are a few words to SI Milwaukee from District I Director Susan Frankel:*

Just a reminder that Spring Conference, in Columbus, Ohio, is just around the corner and you should be planning to attend. At Spring Conference you will meet members from all over our Region, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin, members who believe in our mission and want to help in any way they can. You will find out how other clubs schedule events, find help in other clubs or partner with organizations to help them “GET IT DONE”. It is a time where you connect with other members outside your club to help you increase your desire to become more involved with the Soroptimist Vision.

Please think of this event as a growing part of being a Soroptimist. I believe if you come with the desire to learn and embrace the spirit you will not be sorry. Let your President know that you want to attend and mark your calendar. Registration is due by March 31, 2019.

The conference is Friday to Sunday April 26-28, 2019.

Hope to see you all there!

*Susan also sent the following reminders:*

- Acorn Guild: Your \$100 (or more) donation to the Acorn Guild will help fund the Midwestern Region’s own Virginia Wagner Award investment account. This account was established in 2018 to assure that the award can be funded at the regional level. Members can join the guild and make donations at the Spring Conference. The Virginia Wagner Award is unique to the Midwestern Region.
- Team Soroptimist tee shirts are being offered for the conference in long-sleeve and short-sleeve, scoop-neck and v-neck styles. Photos of the shirts, along with ordering information, are to be found on pages 6 and 7 of the March edition of the The Vision.

**Find The Vision on the SI-Milwaukee.org web site in the Media section.**

## **Cathedral Center**

(Continued From Page 2)



**Ana Treptow**

women and families. We combine emergency shelter with case management services, assistance with employment and education, housing placement and flexible housing options, access to benefits and other social services to help women and families transform their lives and achieve their goals...fulfilling our mission to end homelessness, one life at a time.”

Ana said volunteers also go out of their way to make the stays as pleasant as possible, especially for the children, by throwing a monthly birthday party, including cake and wrapped presents. “A 5-year-old who is having a birthday in a shelter is still a 5-year-old who wants to get birthday presents and cake,” she said.

Volunteers play a huge role in the success of the shelter, with different groups donating, preparing and serving dinner every night of the year. Other projects also are waiting to be tackled.

The Cathedral Center is nonsectarian and operates on funds from state and local grants, foundations and individual donations.

### **A Chuckle From Kathy**

*Kathy Endrizzi shares the following thought, which made her laugh:*

A bright eye indicates curiosity; a black eye, too much!

## Dates to Remember

**Tuesday, March 19, 3:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. —**

Lunafest, Todd Wehr Building at Marquette University, 1414 W. Clybourn, Milwaukee.

**No business meeting in April.**

**Saturday, April 6, 2019, 11 a.m.—**SI Milwaukee fundraiser, Golda Meir portrayal by Jessica Michna. Milwaukee Elks Club, 5555 W. Good Hope Road, Milwaukee.

**Tuesday, April 23, 2019, 5:30 p.m.—**Awards Dinner, Meyer's Restaurant, 4260 S. 76<sup>th</sup> St., Greenfield.

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

**Saturday, May 11, 2019, 11 a.m. —**Soroptimist business meeting at The Brass Key Restaurant, 4952 W. Forest Home, Milwaukee.

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

## President's Notes

(Continued From Page 1)

cohesion and organization.

Mission and Focus -- Our mission and focus makes us unique.

Dream Programs -- Our programs unite and define our organization.

Our Opportunities:

Member Recruitment -- We can share the joys of membership with more women.

Non-Profit Partners -- Partners can help us reach more women and girls.

Public Awareness -- We need to raise our profile locally and globally.

Local Projects -- We can leverage our strong community connections.

Schools -- We can find beneficiaries for our programs by working with schools.

Teamwork -- Clubs, regions, and members around the world can work together.

Conclusions:

Overall, members, the board of directors, and SIA staff agree about our strengths and opportunities. As we work to achieve our next Big Goal, we will continue to focus on these areas:

Dream Programs -- Through our focus on our brand-unifying Dream Programs, we will reach more women and girls and be more widely recognized for our work.

Membership -- Our existing members are our biggest asset, and recruiting new members is our biggest opportunity.

Partners -- Engaging new partners to help us grow the reach of our Dream Programs and help us to be more widely recognized.

Fundraising -- Making SIA our charity of choice to increase resources for our Dream Programs.

Local Projects -- Leveraging relationships created through local projects can help clubs grow their Dream Programs.

I know I will see most of you before, but I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone of you a Blessed and Happy Easter.

*Yours in Service,*

*Monica Phillip, President*

## Inspirational Messages Take Us to the Real World

*Aggie Ressel delivered this inspirational message from Mother Teresa at the club's February meeting.*

People are often unreasonable and self-centered. Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of ulterior motives. Be kind anyway.

If you are honest, people may cheat you. Be honest anyway.

If you find happiness, people may be jealous. Be happy anyway.

The good you do today may be forgotten tomorrow. Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have and it may never be enough. Give your best anyway.

For you see, in the end, it is between you and God. It was never between you and them anyway.

-----

*This inspirational message presented by Myrna Collins at the club's March meeting is from a speech Martin Luther King Jr. delivered to a group of junior high school students in Philadelphia in 1967:*

Be a bush if you can't be a tree. If you can't be a highway, just be a trail. If you can't be a sun, be a star. For it isn't by size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are.

## Midwest Region Adding Clubs

Soroptimist Midwestern Region is growing. With the recent addition of SI Tri State Club and the anticipated charter of SI Cleveland in April, the Midwestern Region will have 31 clubs and be close to its goal of 767 members, Membership Chair Roseanne Horne reported in the March, 2019 edition of *The Vision*.

**The complete March edition of *The Vision* newsletter can be accessed on the SI-Milwaukee.org web site in the Media section.**

## *Dance Into Spring*



## *Does This Sound Too Familiar?*

*Janet Nortrom came upon this prediction which she thought could at some time affect each of us, so she happily forwarded it.*

## Welcome to the Golden Years

They weren't in my pockets. Suddenly I realized I must have left them in the car. Frantically, I headed for the parking lot. My husband has scolded me many times for leaving my keys in the car's ignition. He's afraid that the car could be stolen. As I looked around the parking lot, I realized he was right. The parking lot was empty. I immediately called the police. I gave them my location, confessed that I had left my keys in the car, and that it had been stolen.

Then I made the most difficult call of all -- to my husband: "*I left my keys in the car and it's been stolen.*"

There was a moment of silence. I thought the call had been disconnected, but then I heard his voice. "*Are you kidding me?*" he barked. "*I dropped you off!*" Now it was my turn to be silent. Embarrassed, I said, "*Well, come and get me.*"

He retorted, "*I will, as soon as I convince this cop that I didn't steal your d@#n car!*"

# *Lunafest*

**Tuesday, March 19  
3:30 and 6:30 p.m.**

**Todd Wehr Building  
Marquette University  
1414 W. Clybourn**