



February Governor's Message

News and Congratulations! SI/Rio Vista is celebrating their 70th anniversary. SI/The Marianas is celebrating their 40th anniversary. These are impressive milestones. Both of those clubs have an impressive history of service and advancing the Soroptimist mission.

Early registration is open for the SIA Convention in Incheon, South Korea, in July. Register by March 15 to take advantage of the early registration. Make sure your club's Mandatory Registration Fee of \$825.00 is paid by March 15. There will be another notice sent to your club email on February 15. If this is not paid, your club could be found not in good standing for Founder Region Conference in May. On February 18, tune in to the SIA webinar "Together in Giving: How Clubs Strengthen the Soroptimist Mission". Join the Virtual Tea Party on March 18 and learn more about SIA's global impact. Make sure to get your club grant applications in by April 1. Think about attending the Leadership Round Table on June 23. Of course, we also have our Founder Region Conference May 1-3.

Why do I tell you all these things? I tell you because I want you to know the full menu of what Soroptimist has to offer and how wide its impact can be. Think of them as options -you don't have to do them all, but maybe one sparks your interest. First, I want each of you, as individuals and as clubs, to take a deep breath. Then, say "I am doing what I can, when I can, how I can."

Sometimes Soroptimist can feel like an overwhelming bureaucracy with ever increasing demands for time and money. It doesn't have to be that way. Remember that part of the induction ceremony for new members- "We will never make you feel guilty." Whatever time, money, resources you contribute, that is enough and is appreciated.

It is enough because your contributions and your club's contributions are part of a worldwide organization working toward the same goals. Together, our contributions combine and make the dreams of women and girls throughout the world come true. Together, we make a bigger impact than any one of us or any one club can on its own. The "paperwork" is simply to keep ourselves organized.

I hope this is encouraging when things seem overwhelming. We are all here to support one another. Let me know if I can help.

Governor Elise

Link to Governor's [February Blog Post](#).
FYI Blogs are posted on the First of the Month.



Are you going to the SIA Convention in South Korea?

If you are planning to attend, please email Jackie at soroptimistjackiedv@gmail.com by **March 10**. Founder Region is in the early planning stages of a special Region get-together, and once we know how many members will be attending, we will have a better idea of the size and scope of the event.

The Convention has set aside time for Region gatherings on **July 23 from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**, and we hope many Founder Region members will be able to join us!

Important Dates

- **March 1** – "S" Club Outstanding Senior Award application due
- **March 10** – Call to Conference distributed
- **March 15** – Mandatory Convention fee due
- **March 24** – Call to Caucus (virtual)
- **April 1** – Club Grant Applications due (note new deadline)
- **May 1-3** – Region Conference, San Ramon Marriott
- **June 6, 13, and 26/27** – Leadership Training (see flyer in this newsletter)
- **June 14** – Memorial Grove Service

PILLARS

Fundraising- Joy Swank, Chair

A big thank you to all the club members who assisted SI/Sonoma Valley with their fundraiser on Feb. 7. I know they appreciated the support as they honored Pres. Colleen. I am so grateful for your kindness, fellow Soroptimists.

Fundraising for our region remains my main goals. I'm sure you continue to support Laurel Society, Club Giving, Stargazer monthly giving as well as Fellowship. Do what you and that is always good enough.

Thank you. Hugs to all of you during this month of love. Your lovely Fundraising Chair, Joy

Membership- Angie Haramoto, Chair

Aloha Founder Region,

SIA has reactivated the Membership Introduction Form which can be found on SIA's website. With this form now live again, we are once more receiving inquiries from prospective members who are interested in learning more about our clubs. In fact, we have received several potential members, which I have forwarded to Region Chairs for follow-up.

Thank you in advance for your support and dedication to strengthening our membership efforts. Please let me know if you have any questions or need further information.

Programs- Jackie De Vries, Chair

WE DID IT! Another successful Live Your Dream season is in the books, and what an incredible effort it has been. Our club chairs truly rocked, our District Representatives were amazing, and our beloved LYD Region Chair Maida worked tirelessly behind the scenes keeping all of us organized with her legendary Excel updates. Most importantly, thank you to every club member who rolled up their sleeves to raise the funds that make these awards possible - garage sales, lobster feeds, seafood boils, bunco, bingo... whatever it took, you made it happen. Soroptimists are among the most generous and kindhearted people I have ever had the privilege of knowing.

We will share final numbers with you next month, but in the meantime, be sure to **SAVE THE DATE** for the celebration on **Sunday, May 3**. As a special highlight, a former Live Your Dream award recipient - now truly living her best life - will be joining us to share her inspiring story.

A heartfelt shout-out as well to the clubs continuing the tradition of presenting **Violet Richardson Awards**. These remarkable young women will be honored at conference alongside our other award recipients.

Conference always reminds me why our work matters so deeply. From Friday night Fellowship honoring women completing PhDs, to our resilient Live Your Dream awardees returning to education, to our inspiring Violet Richardson winners already making a difference at such a young age - we truly span generations with one unifying message: **Education is Empowerment**.

And don't forget our **Big Goal** — you did a fabulous job last year! If you reported a project previously, please remember to resubmit it, as you are now serving different women and girls. Every project counts as we work together to invest in the dreams of half a million (500,000) women and girls through access to education by 2031.

Public Awareness- Sue Pretzer, Chair

Happy February



Looking ahead to March, Women's History Month, which celebrates women's contributions to history, culture, and society. March is a great month to bring awareness about Soroptimist and invite prospective members to learn more about your Club and the important work you are doing. [Here is an example](#) of a flyer to customize and post on your website. Invite others to volunteer!

Save the Date! 5th Annual Virtual Tea Party, March 18th, 5:30 pm (PST).

SIA will host the fifth annual virtual tea party for International Women's Day on March 18. The event will also serve as a virtual parallel event within the United Nations [Commission on the Status of Women's](#) Non-Governmental Organization forum. SI of the Delta will host a gathering for all its members. Will we see your Club there?

Around the District

District I- District Director Laura Koehler

Please check out and support events in District I! On 2/28/26, SI/Martinez will be having a **Bunco Party** at IBEW Hall in Martinez from 2:00-6:00 p.m. In March, SI/Benicia is having their **Party for a Purpose** on 3/14/26 from 6:30-10:00 p.m. at the Benicia Clocktower. Tastings will be available for wine, whiskey, beer and mocktails. The following day, on March 15, SI/El Cerrito is having their **British Teatime** event from 1:30-4:30 p.m. at the Berkeley Business Club. Please join them for a lovely tea, live music, silent auction and enjoy a lecture on the life and work of Julia Morgan, architect and engineer.

District II- District Director Dana Holve

SI/Vacaville is launching a comprehensive anti-trafficking and domestic violence initiative. The club is assembling emergency backpacks stocked with essential items for domestic violence victims upon rescue, giving new members opportunities for immediate, tangible community impact. Partnering with Vacaville PD, SI/Vacaville is also developing anti-trafficking prevention brochures addressing online safety and situational awareness for younger students, filling critical gaps in current 7th, 9th, and 11th-grade California mandates. Traffickers often target younger, less aware children who fall outside these education requirements.

At their recent Galentine’s membership event, the family of Joanna Hunter shared their powerful story. Joanna, a domestic violence victim, died under circumstances that were prematurely ruled a suicide without proper investigation. Her mother and brother helped pass *Joanna’s Law*, which requires thorough investigation of suspicious deaths to prevent misclassification. SI/Vacaville plans to partner with Joanna’s Law advocates and the Sacramento Regional Family Justice Center.

District III- District Director Nancy Koski

It’s still winter, but Spring is definitely in the air! District III clubs are in high gear with fundraising (support your sister clubs if you can):

- In January SI/St. Helena Sunrise hosted 220 Bingo players, raising nearly \$8,000!
- In early February SI/Sonoma Valley held their Annual Southern Boil fundraiser, this year adding a Comedy Show to the event!
- The first Friday & Saturday in February SI/St. Helena held their extravagant two-day 49th Annual Havana Nights Crab Feed & Auction!
- SI/Santa Rosa held its annual 6th Street Playhouse, “Mary Poppins,” on Feb 5th.
- On March 7th, SI/Oakmont is holding its Annual Afternoon Tea.
- Also on March 7th, SI/Calistoga is hosting its Crab Feed in the evening.
- SI/Novato is preparing for its Annual Spring Luncheon on April 19th.

District IV- District Director Crystal Arbuthnot

Greetings from SI Noyo Sunrise on the beautiful pacific north coast along Highway 1 in Fort Bragg.

We are very excited to welcome Kate O’Connor back as a returning member. The club has been busy promoting the **LYD** and **VRA** awards and has an applicant for both. Our S club is currently active thanks to the leadership of Stephanie Graves.

We are currently planning the upcoming Whale Run which we partner with SI Fort Bragg to be held on March 21st. The club took a short holiday break between Thanksgiving and New Year’s. We capped off the season with a fun and festive Christmas party at the Noyo River Grill and enjoyed sharing the celebration with members of the Fort Bragg club.

As we move forward, we’re focusing on strengthening attendance and supporting our members as we continue to grow together.

District V- District Director Teri Lynn Sato

District V is pumping with their fundraisers to fund our Live Your Dream, Violet Richardson & Ruby Awards. Looking for some fun? Here are a few! SI/Northern Mariana Islands is having their LYD 2026 Award Ceremony on Feb. 21, 2026, in Saipan. They would love to have your support! SI/Honolulu is having their L.O.V.E. (Living Our Vision Every Day) Gala on Feb. 28, 2026, at the Alohilani Resort Waikiki Beach on Oahu. SI/Waikiki Foundation, Inc. is having their Rock the Runway Gala For International Women's Day on March 7, 2026, at the Pearl at Kalauao on Oahu. Join the fun Island Style! We hope to see you!

Conference Baskets

From Fundraising Chair Joy- Treasurers, you will receive opportunity drawing number logs in early February from your District Directors.

We are using number logs this year due to popular demand. All details will be sent to you with the logs.

The Theme is The Fabulous Fifties- Have fun with it!





Save the Date

Founder Region 50th Conference

May 1st through 3rd in San Ramon.

Look for the Call to Conference being sent in early March.



Conference Highlights

- Friday – Legislative Advocacy Presentation on Women’s Mental Health
- Friday Evening – Fellowship Awards
- Saturday – Voting for Founder Region and Fellowship Boards
- Saturday Evening – Installation Ceremony & 50’s Dance Party
- Sunday – Memorial Service
- Sunday – Awards Presentation: Live Your Dream, Violet Richardson, and “S” Club Awardee

Program Updates

Dream It, Be It- Jackie Arnold- Chair

Not sure where to start with your Dream It, Be It project, or need a few fresh ideas? I'm happy to help! There are so many fun ways to gather a group of kids together and make this project meaningful. I'd love to hear what you're planning, and remember, you still have plenty of time!

Live Your Dream- Maida Herbst- Chair

LYD judging is taking place right now. Award numbers will be posted in the March newsletter. Your District LYD Rep. will be in contact with presidents for the results of the judging. Governor-elect Jackie will be sending instructions to the President of the district winner so that arrangements can be made for their participation at conference. Reach out if you have any questions.

“S” Clubs- Dawn Shepherd- Chair

Hello Founder Region! Happy February

Friendly reminder that March 1, 2026, is the deadline for applications for the “S Club Outstanding Senior” award! Please share this information with your “S” Clubs if you haven't already. Seniors who are members of an “S” Club are eligible to apply to win this \$500.00 Award.

If you need “S” Club pins, please reach out to our founder Region Treasurer, Holly Hyashi, email: frtreasurerholly@gmail.com. The pins are \$10.00 each. They will also be available for purchase at Conference. Liaisons, it is always good to meet with your “S” Clubs periodically. Your “S” Clubs will appreciate your support and guidance, and you will be impressed by their ideas and creativity.

Your Club should have a line item in your budget for “S” Clubs. Your Club determines the amount. Consider an amount that would cover purchasing “S” Club pins, providing pizza or twice a year to your S-Clubs and maybe a \$50.00 - \$100.00 start-up allowance for “S” Clubs that do not have any money in their budget. Another cost out of your budget should cover some sort of “installation” event for the incoming “S” Club Board.

Have a fantastic February!

SIA Information

SIA Key Deadlines for 2026

- **March 15, 2026 (11:59 p.m. ET):** Deadline to purchase **early registration tickets** at the discounted rate.
- **March 15, 2026:** Deadline for clubs to pay the **mandatory convention club fee** of \$825.
- **May 17, 2026 (11:59 p.m. EDT):** Regular registration rate closes.
- **May 18, 2026:** "Just in Time" registration rate begins.
- **April 23, 2026:** Official "Call to SIA Convention" sent to all clubs.
- **June 23, 2026:** Leadership Round Table (Virtual event).
- **July 22–25, 2026:** 49th Biennial Convention held at the [INSPIRE Entertainment Resort](#)
- **July 26, 2026:** Soroptimist Leadership Fellows Program in Incheon.

Leadership Round Table

Mark your calendars! Join us on June 23 for SIA's Leadership Round Table, a virtual event designed to strengthen your leadership skills and expand your impact. Stay tuned for more details—and get ready to grow, connect, and lead with confidence.

Technology Roadmap

We're making steady progress on two major initiatives—a centralized Member Resource Library and a more robust marketing platform—each designed to improve access to resources and deliver more personalized communications. To learn more about our approach and next steps, please visit our [full update on the blog](#).



FELLOWSHIP REPORT

“Solving Puzzles by Degrees”

Greetings Founder Region,

February is **Fun for Fellowship** month! February is a great month to invite your Fellowship Director to a club meeting to explain what Fellowship is all about. You can also download the [Fellowship calendar](#) from our website to see ways that you can raise funds to send to Fellowship to help us reach our goals. Please note that we have changed the calendar to be used “Any Month” and not just February, so the fun can last all year! This can be a fun and easy activity to do anytime with your club to donate to our region’s identifying project.

Fellowship is currently in the process of selecting the awardees for our Fellowship grants. We are currently reviewing the applications and we will decide which applicants we will interview and how many awards we will give. Our ability to give these awards depends on **YOU!** Without your generosity, we would be unable to give these awards to well-deserving women in the final stages of their doctoral degrees. And we truly appreciate your generosity to Fellowship.

A great way to contribute to Fellowship is through our Conference puzzle games. Your Fellowship Director has puzzles to sell. Puzzles are \$90 each and each puzzle holds 9 pieces for a chance to win a Fellow in nine different games. Participating in the Fellowship games is an easy way for members to win a Fellow or level up and your participation in these games allows Fellowship to award our grants at Conference; donations from our membership are key to awarding grants. So please, contact your Fellowship director to purchase a puzzle directly from her.

We will have our new President’s pins, milestone bracelets, and our beautiful T-shirts available at Conference or through our store on the Fellowship website. You can contact your Fellowship Director to purchase or you can check out [our store](#) on the “Home” page of the Founder Region Fellowship website.

Again we ask you to please consider signing up for monthly giving. This is a relatively easy way to bring your donation to \$1,000 for a new Fellow or level up. Forms are available on our website or scan the QR code on this page.

Please contact your Fellowship Director with any questions you may have. She is always ready and willing to help.

Happy Valentine’s Day!

President Vicki



Fellowship Board

President—Vicki Ham

Treasurer—Danelle Tegarden

Fellowship Directors

District I—Amelia Benko

District II—Kay Kelley

District III—Laurie Gallian

District IV—Tess Albin-Smith

District V—Cindy Rasmussen

[Website:](#)

www.founderregionfellowship.org

[Email:](#)

vickiham01@gmail.com

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OUR MISSION:

To advance the Soroptimist mission by awarding grants to outstanding women in the final phase of their doctoral program within Founder Region.

