

2025-2026 Club Year

Founder Region Newsletter



Putting the Puzzle Together



SOROPTIMIST®
Investing in Dreams



Elise Baltgley, Governor

Issue 6 Volume 2

Governor's December Message

I had the privilege of attending a SIA Region Leaders meeting by Zoom last week. I am going to use some of this space this month to tell you about some things you need to know.

There was much discussion of the upcoming SIA Convention in Incheon, South Korea in July. The theme for the convention is "Inspiring Dreams." The mandatory convention fee is due from each club by March 15, 2026, to SIA. Invoices will be sent out to the clubs on January 1, 2026. Those fees cover the general business meeting, convention expenses, and registration for one club delegate. On January 2, 2026, there will be a Relief Application released. The criteria are the club's financial difficulty in paying the fee. A final decision will be made on the Relief Applications by March 2, 2026, and clubs will be notified. After March 16, 2026, there will be a 10% late fee applied. As of April 1, 2026, any club not paying the fee (after review of any Relief Application) will be in danger of losing its charter. Do not let that happen to your club.

In January 2026, new region bylaws templates will be released. The next step will be for the region to review the templates and make any updates to our bylaws which may be necessary. This will all need to be completed by June 2028.

Club bylaws templates will be released by mid-2026. There will be adjustments requested to each club's bylaws following that. More is also forthcoming on the Code of Conduct.

We are 28% of the way to accomplishing the SIA Big Goal of reaching 500,000 women and girls by 2031. Let's keep up the excellent work in Founder Region. There will shortly be a survey to assess what new ideas should be started to help toward reaching the Big Goal, what efforts should be stopped, and what new ideas should be tried.

The efforts are continuing on SIA's new technology. Again, patience is the word!

Hopefully, this brings you up to date on some new information. A very happy holiday season to all of you from the Founder Region Board and especially me, **Governor Elise**.





PILLARS



Fundraising- Joy Swank, Chair

Holiday Greetings My Fellow Soroptimists,

As you scurry about with Christmas shopping may I suggest a gift for yourself. Buy yourself a [Laurel Society membership](#). Consider being a monthly donor as a Stargazer and before you know it you will have your Laurel.

As Laurel members we are helping women and girls across our regions and around the world. Yay us!
I wish you all good health, peace of mind, and a lovely holiday season.

Warmest regards, Joy Swank

Membership-Angie Haramoto, Chair

Holidays sure came up very fast. We have almost reached the half point, and I hope all is well with everyone. SIA has reactivated the [Membership Introduction Form](#) on our 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.

As outlined in my role responsibilities as well as my committee (the District Directors), particularly “*supporting the new member inquiry process by ensuring prompt follow-up with prospective members by local clubs.*” we will need your help to ensure these inquiries receive timely and welcoming responses after your club has received the information from your District Director.

We have already received and addressed several of the forms. If any of them pertain to your club, I would hope that contact has been made, if you need assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

The best of the season to all!

Program- Jackie De Vries, Chair

Wishing you all a joyful and sparkling holiday season! I hope you’re able to find moments to rest, recharge, and enjoy the magic of this time of year.

Thank you to all of the club LYD chairs for this big end-of-year push. I know how hard you’re working to get your applicants judged and your winners submitted to your District Reps by January 15 (for the early ticket-drawing deadline) or by the official February 1 deadline.

Just imagine the joy on the faces of the winners, not only receiving a cash award but also knowing that we believe in them and their potential.

As we wrap up the year, it’s also time for Violet Richardson judging. This is always such a challenging task, as our clubs choose among incredible young women who are doing extraordinary work for their communities. Remember to send your club winners to your Violet Richardson Reps by February 1st.

Remember to keep submitting your Big Goal Accelerator projects!

Wishing you peace, cheer, and a bright start to the new year!- Jackie

Public Awareness- Sue Pretzer , Chair

It's December... an excellent time when Clubs around the Founder Region are recruiting new members, hosting holiday get-togethers (which is an opportune time to invite potential members as guests), and planning attention-grabbing campaigns to attract new members:

JOIN SOROPTIMIST TODAY AND CHANGE THE WORLD FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS! When you join Soroptimist International of (Club Name), you have the opportunity to help women and girls in your community and beyond achieve their dreams. To learn more about Soroptimist, please visit our webpage or, better yet, join us at our next meeting to meet an incredible group of talented and energetic women!

SIA has customizable flyers; visit their webpage for additional ideas: [Soroptimist International of the Americas, Inc.](#)

Happy Holidays to all! Keep up the great work and share everything you do so others will want to join in the fun!

Around **THE** District

District I- District Director Laura Koehler

As 2025 ends, I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of the clubs in District I. You have done such amazing work this year, and it is truly a pleasure to work alongside such dedicated volunteers who are helping women and girls live their dreams. Thank you for all that you do.

District II- District Director Dana Holve

During this season of light and reflection, I am deeply grateful for each of you and the powerful impact your clubs make every day. Through Live Your Dream, Dream It, Be It, and club BGAPs, as well as your many local projects, you bring opportunity and hope to women and girls who need it most.

Please take time to recognize and celebrate your accomplishments, nurture connections within your clubs, and care for yourselves as you care so generously for others. May this holiday season bring you peace, joy, and renewed energy as we continue our mission together.

With heartfelt appreciation,
Dana

District III- District Director Nancy Koski

District III clubs are celebrating the holidays AND planning for Winter & Spring events:

- SI/Mendocino-Sonoma Coast wrapped presents for Project Santa end of Nov – beginning of Dec. 2025, ensuring gifts for children & families in their community.
- SI/Napa is hosting FINKO! On Dec 17, 2025: Bingo at the Fink!
- SI/Santa Rosa is preparing for 6th Street Playhouse performance of “Mary Poppins” on Feb 5, 2026.
- SI/St. Helena is planning their 49th Annual Crab Feed, a 2-day event Feb 6-7, 2026.
- SI/Sonoma Valley is gearing up for their Annual Southern Boil on Feb 7, 2026.
- SI/Calistoga is holding their Annual Crab Feed Mar 7, 2026.
- SI/Windsor is having a “Windsor Walk for Women” on Mar 28, 2026.
- SI/Novato is organizing their 43rd Annual Spring fundraiser on Apr 19, 2026.

District IV- District Director Crystal Arbuthnot

Greetings from the coast in Mendocino County. For being a small club in a remote area, SI Fort Bragg continues to provide support to women and girls in their community. They hold an annual craft fair during the town’s Paul Bunyan days on Labor Day Weekend that brings in much needed funds to help with dream awards. We also provide Academic, Business, and Continuing Education Awards. They originally started the Whale Run, held in March, which brings in a lot of people who support the town while there.

A small club, doing great things. Great job SI of Fort Bragg!

District V- District Director Teri Lynn Sato

Soroptimist International of Maui's Angie Haramoto, also our Region Membership Chair and on the Legislative Advocacy Committee has also been busy on the Valley Isle working to empower women and girls! She received the State of Hawaii, Maui County Committee Status of Women (CSW) 2025 Unsung Hero Award, "Maui's Wahine Mana" (Maui's Powerful Women) for behind-the-scenes service, with the theme of celebrating women up-lifting future generations. This year's theme is: "*Ka Holomua Laulima! Nā Wāhine Ho‘oulu Hanauna*" (Moving Forward Together: Women Educating and Inspiring Generations). **Congratulations Angie!**



Program Updates

Dream It, Be It- Jackie Arnold-Chair

Season's greetings to everyone! This has been such an exciting month, and I am thrilled for all the clubs that have already completed their Dream It, Be It programs. You continue to amaze me with your creativity, energy, and the wonderful ways you bring this program to life for the girls in your communities.

As a reminder, if a school already has an event planned, you can often add a Dream It, Be It program to the day with approval from the teacher or advisor. It's a fantastic way to connect with an existing group of girls without having to start from scratch.

Wishing each of you a joyful and peaceful holiday season with your families. I look forward to connecting with you all soon and hearing more about your wonderful programs.

Live Your Dream- Maida Herbst-Chair

Clubs that get their #1 winners to their District Representatives by January 15 will be included in an incentive program. All final reports are due on February 1.

If you need more applications, now is the time to request them. Please contact your District Representative or me and we will assist you.

All clubs must review each of their applications to be sure the applicant is eligible. If you are transferring an application, you need to determine eligibility before the transfer. You can find the eligibility guidelines on the SIA website under the LYD section here: <https://bit.ly/3MIOff4>

If you have any questions about an application, you can ask your questions through the application system or you can email or call the applicant to get your answers. If you use the application system, the application will leave your dashboard until the applicant goes on-line and answers your question.

SIA asks us to remind clubs that they must give a CASH AWARD to an eligible applicant! Unless she requests otherwise, the funds must be given directly to the applicant.

ANYONE who reads applications, including club members and judges, must have signed a confidentiality agreement which the club should retain in their records.

SIA has eligible applications from areas where there is no Soroptimist club. If your club is interested in non-local applications, let me know because every woman, whether she's in your backyard or across the country, deserves a chance to have her application evaluated so she can live her dreams.

Thank you all for helping women achieve economic empowerment through education.

MaidaRHIA@aol.com

"S" Clubs- Dawn Shepherd-Chair

Season's Greetings "S" Club Liaisons!

This is a very short month for our "S" Clubs, since winter breaks are going to begin soon.

Now would be a good time to remind your "S" Clubs of the "S" Club Outstanding Senior Award. Application deadline is March 1, 2026. Each liaison was emailed the application. It may also be a good time to get your January meetings scheduled with your "S" Clubs.

This may be an opportune time to suggest an easy, yet deeply needed event for this month, such as gathering non-perishable food items for a local food bank or taking new toys to a local organization. There are many local organizations who collect new toys through December 18th.

Wishing you all good health this holiday season. Have a beautiful, fun and cheery December!

SIA Information

Convention Relief Package

Please visit the [SIA Relief Package: Key Information](#) for details on the timeline, eligibility criteria for relief, and frequently asked questions.

Club Grants

Soroptimist Club Grants for Education and Economic Empowerment applications will open January 1! Applications are due March 1. Be sure to review [our resources](#) before you apply! Any questions? Email program@soroptimist.org for assistance.

Together in Giving: How Clubs Support the Soroptimist Mission

Mark your calendars for February 18 from 8-9 p.m. (ET) for an engaging webinar about the measurable difference clubs are making, how generosity fuels our mission, and ideas to celebrate and grow your club's impact. Registration will open soon!

Fifth Annual Virtual Tea Party

SIA's will host its fifth annual virtual tea party for International Women's Day, March 18 at 8:30 p.m. (ET). The party will also serve as a virtual parallel event as part of the United Nations [Commission on the Status of Women's](#) Non-Governmental Organization forum and will feature simultaneous interpretation in all our languages. Registration will open soon!



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](#).

SI & United Nations Updates



SI Voices Blog

Check out the latest SI Voices Blog post, "[Empowering Girls through Education, Protection, Innovation, Global Practices and Norms.](#)"

To learn more, you can visit the Facebook page:
<https://soroptimiststogetheragainsttrafficking.org>

Soroptimists Together Against Trafficking II (STAT II)

A coalition of Soroptimist International of the Americas clubs from Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and Ventura counties who are working collaboratively to end human trafficking



Save the Date
Soroptimist Together Against Human Trafficking
The Many Faces of Prevention:
Online Awareness
January 28, 2026
5:30 pm to 8:30 pm PST

We cordially invite you to our virtual presentation.
Our guest speaker information will be sent out soon

Please click the link to join the
zoom on the day of the event

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83850874210?pwd=XEW2lfiJU8Y2KYCzP4lt7uPLaWvZj.1>

Save the Dates

January – Mandatory Convention fee will be sent to clubs.

January 2- [Relief assistance](#) for Convention Fee opens

January 15- Early LYD submissions due for opportunity drawing ticket

February 1- LYD and Violet Richardson Awards due to District Reps.

March 1- “S” club Outstanding Senior Award application due

March 10- Call to Conference

March 24- Call to Caucus (virtual)

May 1-3- Region Conference-San Ramon Marriott



FELLOWSHIP REPORT

“Solving Puzzles by Degrees”

We are in a very busy time of the year. Clubs are celebrating with holiday parties and bazaars and there is so much joy in the air. Giving Tuesday was officially celebrated on December 2nd, however your philanthropic giving can continue throughout this holiday season. Please consider donating a portion of your fundraising dollars to Founder Region Fellowship.

Our Conference puzzle games can now be purchased from your Fellowship Director. Puzzles are \$90 each and she and will be bringing them to your club meetings to sell. Each puzzle holds 9 pieces for a chance to win a Fellow in nine different games. If you miss your director at a meeting, you can always contact her to purchase a puzzle directly from her.

Fellowship now has beautiful President’s pins for sale. Similar to the SIA pin (which is no longer available), these pins include sparkly gems surrounding the Founder Region logo. The pins are \$35 and can be purchased by contacting Fellowship II Director Kay Kelley. We will also have these for sale at the 2026 Conference, but why wait when they are available now?



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 at the bottom of the page.

Please contact your Fellowship Director with any questions you may have regarding our fundraisers or Fellowship in general. She is always ready and willing to help.

I wish you all the very best in this joyous season!

President Vicki



Fellowship Board

President—Vicki Ham

Treasurer—Danelle Tegarden

Fellowship Directors

District I—Amelia Benko

District II—Kay Kelley

District III—Colleen Ganaye

District IV—Tess Albin-Smith

District V—Cindy Rasmussen

Website:

www.founderregionfellowship.org

Email:

vickiham01@gmail.com

Treasurer Email:

danelletegarden@gmail.com

Address:

3505 Pine Street, Eureka, CA



OUR MISSION:

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

