

SOROPTIMISTS IN ACTION

Western Canada Region – Summer 2023

2023-2024 Board

Governor:

Suzanne Heron
(SI Victoria Westshore)

Governor-Elect:

Chari Grant
(SI Tri Cities)

Treasurer:

Susan Barber
(SI Chilliwack)

Secretary:

Shirley Stewart
(SI Langleys)

Member-at-Large:

Shelley DellaMattia
(SI Langleys)

Parliamentarian:

Joan Jackson
(SI Victoria Westshore)

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Public Awareness:

Feezah Jaffer (Surrey Delta)

Fundraising:

Anna Der (Edmonton)

Program:

Colleen Schmidt (Abbotsford-Mission)
Melanie Kenny (Saskatoon)

Celebrating Success:

Megan Eastwood (Tri Cities)

Advocacy:

Janneke Lewis (N&W Vancouver)
Carrell Wingrave (Canada West Online)

Friendship:

Darlene Jameison (Surrey Delta)

Conference 2024:

Dana Martin (Chilliwack)

Newsletter Editor:

Colleen Penrowley (Tri Cities)

Governor's Message

Our Region Road Map for 2023 - 24

Our Federation is not quite 2 years into our Big Goal: invest in the dreams of half a million women and girls by 2031. Working together, we can bring about that tsunami of change. To do that, let us as a Region:



- Give 10% more LYD Awards - 67. This past year we increased by an incredible 20%, to 61 Awards, giving us a third Region award from the Federation!!
- Bring 25% more girls to DIBI. Let's get every club involved.
- Initiate 10% more Dream Accelerator projects. We don't have final figures for this year, stay tuned.
- Increase our Region membership by 10%, or 32 new members.
- Add 3 new members to each tiny club(<10 members).
- Send 1+ member from each club to the Soroptimist Leadership Institute workshops (bonus if she's an intern!).
- Retain 85% of the members in all clubs.
- Produce Region media releases & blog posts attached to 12 UN Days through the year, for clubs to share
- Produce a bi-monthly Region newsletter from September to July
- All participate in social media, sharing from the Region and Federation, using SIA branding.
- Participate 100% in Club Giving and Founder's Pennies to support LYD & DIBI programs throughout our Federation.
- Produce a sponsorship template for all clubs to use.

How to accomplish these goals? By **Stepping Out Of The Box!** Who can you approach to sponsor another LYD Award? What fun idea brings members together? Where have we not looked for new members? How can we tweak a community program so that it counts as a Dream Accelerator?

Every club: look at what you are doing with a critical eye, with an eye to our mission, with an open, creative mindset, and see what you can do to invest in the dreams of more women and girls.

Did You Know?



World Day against Trafficking in Persons is held on **July 30th** each year, and is an annual event. People trafficking and modern day slavery is a massive worldwide problem with very few countries immune to human trafficking, and the event by the United Nations is to raise awareness and increase prevention of that.

The campaign for World Day Against Trafficking in Persons 2023 aims to raise awareness of disturbing developments and trends identified by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and calls on governments, law enforcement, public services, and civil society to assess and enhance their efforts to strengthen prevention, identify

and support victims, and end impunity.

Global crises, conflicts, and the climate emergency are escalating trafficking risks. Displacement and socio-economic inequalities are impacting millions of people worldwide, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers. Those who lack legal status, live in poverty, have limited access to education, healthcare, or decent work, face discrimination, violence, or abuse, or come from marginalized communities are often the primary targets of traffickers.

“Leave no one behind” is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In the context of trafficking in persons, leaving people behind means

- failing to end the exploitation of trafficking victims,
- failing to support victim-survivors once they are free from their traffickers, and
- leaving identifiable groups vulnerable to traffickers.

Word Search by Cathy Waters—Human Trafficking

C	D	E	C	E	P	T	I	O	N	G	U	I	D	N
Y	E	T	E	T	U	C	E	S	O	R	P	Y	O	S
L	T	W	P	L	U	F	N	O	U	W	D	I	U	Q
C	R	I	M	E	Y	Z	B	R	O	E	C	R	Y	N
U	L	N	L	G	D	R	E	M	V	R	V	E	O	O
P	L	A	N	I	W	S	E	D	E	I	I	B	Z	I
N	W	A	L	S	B	N	H	O	V	N	C	X	I	T
S	P	U	F	L	O	A	C	O	P	O	T	S	E	C
R	O	F	R	A	U	D	R	L	M	I	I	N	T	U
I	V	U	Y	T	R	S	H	E	Z	T	M	G	A	D
A	B	Q	U	I	Y	R	V	S	N	A	S	H	C	B
P	R	I	N	O	X	F	R	E	A	L	Y	G	U	A
S	S	S	E	N	E	R	A	W	A	O	U	O	D	J
E	J	E	K	L	S	P	O	T	R	I	V	V	E	X
D	E	X	P	L	O	I	T	E	D	V	S	I	S	K

Abduction	Laws
Awareness	Legislation
Coercion	Prosecute
Crime	Stop
Deception	Survivors
Despair	Victims
Educate	Violation
Exploited	Vulnerability
Fraud	Women



“That was the best ZOOM meeting in a long time!” was one comment made by an attendee of the 60th Anniversary Celebration of Soroptimist Foundation of Canada (SFC). In the chat, there were many other positive comments:

So inspiring! Thank you so much. Well done SFC!

Well planned and executed!

Congratulations on a great gathering!



On June 11th 2023, SFC hosted an hour ZOOM session to celebrate SFC’s 60 years investing in women and girls. April Neave, Chair of the Foundation, opened the meeting by introducing the current seven-member board and shared a bit about the board members’ work. This work relates to being a steward of funds, fulfilling legal responsibilities of a Foundation, serving as ambassador and promoter; seeking donations, bequests and corporate donors, and networking to grow awareness of SFC. Its efforts are in support of its programs: Grants for Women in Graduate Studies, Live Your Dream awards to women in communities without a Soroptimist Club, and Club Grants to clubs delivering Dream It Be It: Career Support for Girls or other programs related to training for women and girls. This year, SFC disbursed over \$84,000 in support of these three programs.

April concluded her remarks, noting that in the months ahead, SFC will be forging ahead:

- Leveraging social media to bring attention to SFC’s history of investing in women and girls and creating more awareness of SFC, thereby attracting more funds to advance its grant programs
- Revitalizing SFC’s identity and association with Soroptimists, gifting each Canadian club member an SFC branded phone wallet and arranging board member visits
- Reinvigorating an SFC and Soroptimist International of the America’s (SIA) relationship in collaborative efforts
- Investing in more women and girls by growing the current \$2.6 M fund to \$3M by the end of fiscal year 2024.

Following this, Janet Simms-Baldwin, SFC Secretary, offered a variety of highlights and fascinating insights from SFC’s colourful 60-year history. SFC plans to make her presentation accessible on the SFC website. Janet is an authority on SFC history as she is one of the authors of the SFC book “Celebrating 50 Years” available at soroptimistfoundation.ca.

Her anecdotes reflected the energy and passion that has gone into the organization from the outset to present day, from the creative fundraising schemes over the years (greeting cards, weight loss and hair cut sponsorships, purse raffles); to the push-pull relationship between SFC and SIA and as well, SFC’s persistent path towards charitable registration in 1967. Janet mentioned how in the early days, SFC’s “head office” moved around according to where Board members lived, and the tricky circumstances that arose when “at least two members passed away with records firmly in their possession, some under the bed and some locked in a personal safety deposit box”. On the finance theme, Janet noted several generous donations received by SFC both from clubs and indi-



viduals. Through the years, SFC also received a number of generous bequests that comprise the yearly income of SFC along with interest on the investments. She noted SFC celebrated reaching its first Million in 2011, the second Million in 2020, and now, with great enthusiasm, is closing in on the third Million.



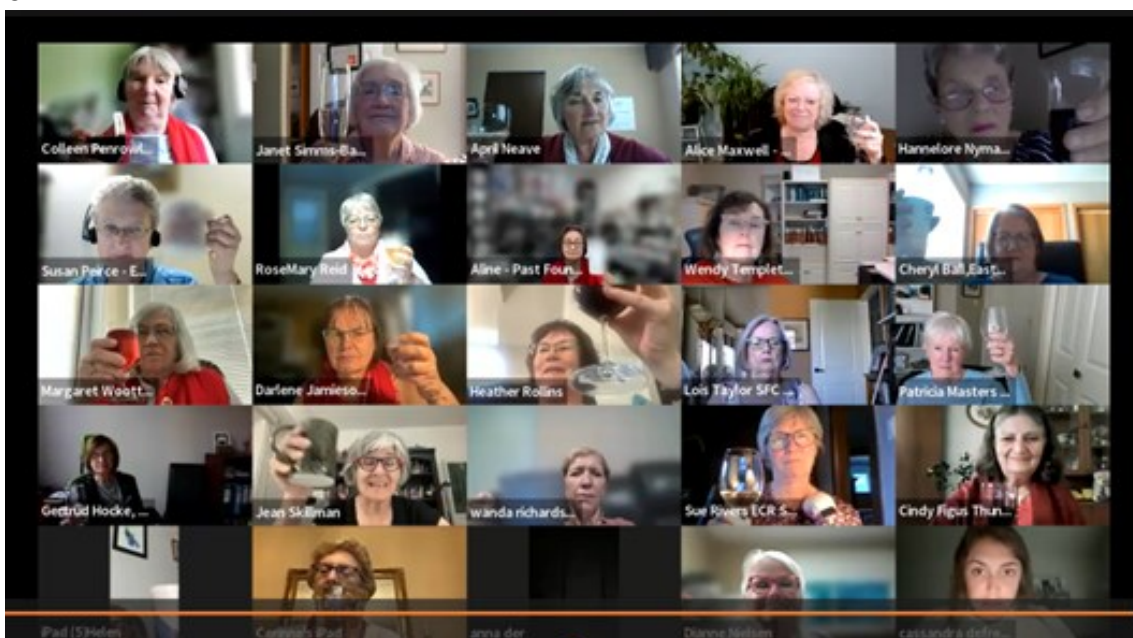
With all this as background, two dynamic guest presentations followed, Desiree de Jesus from Eastern Canada Region, and Vivian Tsang from Western Canada Region, both 2018 Grants for Women recipients. The women spoke about their studies, careers and the impact of receiving the SFC Grants. SFC anticipates sharing their inspiring words and experiences at the Annual General Meeting and other upcoming opportunities.



Alice Maxwell, SFC Treasurer, spoke next, addressing SFC current financial status, how Soroptimists can participate in investing in women and girls, and offering a reminder about deadlines for grant programs.

Before closing the meeting and encouraging the ZOOM guests to mingle, April asked guests to join her and raise their glasses in a toast *“to Soroptimists, past and present, who have given their time, their talents and their resources to build the Foundation over the last 60 years, and to future Soroptimists who continue the tradition of philanthropy and volunteerism to ensure the Foundation thrives for the next 60 years.”*

It was a wonderful celebration and a tribute to Soroptimists and to SFC history, its past, present and an exciting future!



Join us in welcoming our newest members to Western Canada Region!

Submitted by Brooke Gordon

The Soroptimists of Dundas, Ancaster & Flamborough (DAF) had a vision to transition to an online club as far back as 2017 but with AV technology not advanced as it is now, plus challenges with recruitment and retention during the pandemic, that dream finally realized this past month. The 5 remaining members of DAF made the difficult decision to disband the club in June 2023 and each transferred her Soroptimist membership to our Canada West Online Club.

Chartered in May 1987, DAF had focused on issues such as domestic violence, poverty, lack of adequate childcare, sexual harassment, inequities in the workplace, and other challenges unique to today's women. The members strived to raise awareness and serve the needs of women and girls in the rural-urban communities surrounding Hamilton, Ontario. They had hosted major fundraisers, done service work with local organizations, and supported several initiatives of other organizations. The highlight for all the members had been celebrating the Live Your Dream recipients each year.

Jane Oulton joined Soroptimist as a charter member of the Dundas Ancaster club in 1987 (now Dundas Ancaster Flamborough). One day when she walked with her daughter in a stroller on the main street in Ancaster, the owner of one of the shops approached her about Soroptimist. Eager to meet new friends and do some volunteer work in the community, she signed up. Since then, Jane has held several positions including club President, Secretary, Treasurer as well as Secretary on the Eastern Canada Region Board. Jane now resides in Vancouver.

Barb McCoy was looking for a volunteer service club who supported women & girls in the community. What she found was a club comprised of dynamic and caring women, who are passionate about helping women and girls, locally, nationally & globally. Fun fact - Barb fell out of a hot air balloon in Switzerland in the winter ... and survived. She joined DAF in 1991 and held the role of President pre-and post-pandemic. Barb resides in Hamilton.

Shirley McCoy appreciates being with like-minded women who assist other women with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment. She is proud to be a part of a global voice for women, and sees the many opportunities for leadership development and professional growth. She has been an active member of Soroptimist since 1989, and served as club president, Governor of Eastern Canada Region and on the SIA Board of Directors. Shirley resides in Ancaster.

Brooke Gordon had a friend invite her to dinner in 2007 and she really enjoyed getting to know other women who were passionate about gender equality and making a change - only to learn after that it was a club meeting. She was honoured to attend the UN NY Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) with a Soroptimist delegation on Violence Against Women and Girls. She also receives so much joy from opportunities to provide mentorship to young women in high school through our Dream It Be It program. Brooke resides in Waterdown, Ontario and also in Montreal.

Janet Barnard was invited to a meeting by a colleague in 2009 and was drawn into a group of welcoming women helping other women and girls. She's enjoyed new friendships and liked the fact that we were all working towards making a difference in other women's lives, most particularly in our community. Janet enjoys cooking, sewing, gardening, reading, and traveling with her 5th wheel trailer. Semi retired as a bookkeeper, she enjoys being able to travel and can continue to work from wherever she is, which is most often Mount Pleasant, Brant, Ontario.

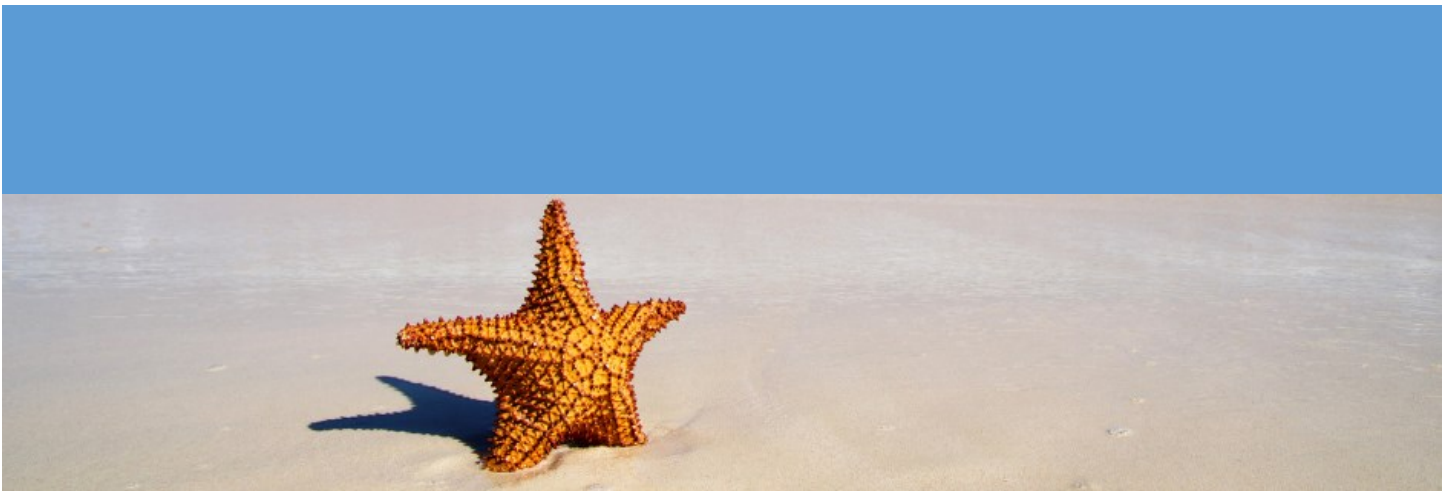
Submitted by Janet Barnard

We thought our SIDAF club would send you our last hurrah – this year before disbanding, our SI Dundas Ancaster Flamborough club's Live Your Dream winner August Parotta went on to be the Eastern Canada Region winner (that is 2 years in a row for our little club). I wanted to share an article and pictures of August in her graduate gown along with her picture receiving her award from SIA President Stephanie.



August is enrolled in the Practical Nursing Program at Niagara College. Her goal is to continue in the nursing field and obtain her RPN/RN degree through the online nursing program offered at Nipissing College. August believes with her nursing education and experience; she will be able to give back to the community. She is a mother of a premature boy who survived early complex medical needs and now is a happy and healthy 6-year-old. August received that incredible nursing care in the birth and continued care of her son during his early years. She truly wants to make a difference.

August was extremely excited and grateful for the award she received from our club and was thrilled to receive our region award where she spoke at our awards ceremony and shared her story and her achievements. August will now go on to the next level for an opportunity to receive an additional award at Soroptimist International of the Americas. As always, our Soroptimist Dundas Ancaster Flamborough club members are thrilled to be able to provide a helping hand for women, and we are sending positive thoughts that we will see August receive the next level award at Soroptimist International of the Americas.



Club News—SI Saskatoon

Submitted by Melanie Kenny and Colleen Murphy-Beresh

SI Saskatoon receives \$10,000 from Affinity Credit Union Community Grant Program



This past club year, Melanie Kenny, committee chair of No Barriers. Period, contacted Saskatoon City Councillor Hillary Gough to inquire whether Saskatoon City council had money for period products that could be placed in our public libraries, as per the decision of the WCR No Barriers Committee.

Councillor Hillary was supportive but explained there was no budget at the city council level to support this. Melanie contacted the Chair of the Saskatoon Public Library Board to request permission to make a presentation on No Barriers. Period. The Chair was extremely supportive and a zoom meeting was organized with the Director of Public Services to discuss a pilot project. The library was keen to implement a project where products would be placed in washrooms, monitored for refills and to contact Melanie when more product was needed. Funding was the missing link.

Melanie contacted several people for funding ideas. Councillor Hillary suggested the Affinity Credit Union Community Grant and SI Saskatoon president, Colleen Murphy-Beresh applied for the grant. Our club was notified this past week that our project was accepted. Next steps will be to work with the main public library to begin the program in the fall and to achieve public awareness in our city/province about this program. In the future, we hope to prove to the city and the province, the need for such a program providing dignity and menstrual security to those in need. Hopefully, a budget would be created and they would be willing to permanently take on the cause.



We wish to thank those Soroptimists who have paved the way for us by creating many written articles and responding to requests for advice which helped immensely in our wording for the pilot project and the grant application. The \$300 seed money provided and the time spent as a region helping each other through the mandate of No Barriers. Period has proved to be invaluable.

Member Profile - Linda Diane Braun

Submitted by Colleen Murphy-Beresh

Linda Braun worked in the food industry for 40 plus years promoting and advancing many Saskatchewan food products including pork, pulses, mustard, flax, oats and wild boar.

Born at Lampman Sask., Linda was a 1976 graduate from the College of Home Economics at the U of S. She later participated in the Canadian Agricultural Lifetime Leadership Program and the Agribusiness Entrepreneurship Program. In 2016 she was inducted into Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame.

Following University Linda worked as a consultant for Sask Pork where she coordinated pork promotion throughout the province. With the birth of her first child, Allison, she left the pork industry

and initiated Braun-Lloyd Consultants which operated until 1988 when she and Barb, with two other home economists formed Food Focus Saskatoon Ltd- an agri-food consulting business servicing a client base of commodity groups, providing professional resource materials, demonstrations, operating a food preservation hotline responding to concerns of local consumers, and presenting food articles for the Star Phoenix and Bridges.



In 1997, Linda became sole owner of Food Focus and Saskatchewan Flax Development Commission became a major client. As Executive Director, (1997-2014), she participated in development of a health claim for flax seed; authored Everything Flax cookbook; co-ordinated flax research program as well as managing the Commission's finances. With flax, Linda had the opportunity to travel to numerous countries like China and Mexico showcasing flax seed and fibre for Saskatchewan flax growers.

Linda played a key role in the development of Crop Production Week and later a founder of the annual CropSphere Conference.

Passionate about serving food producers, she has used her skills as a home economist for the betterment of producers and consumers in this province.

Linda has always been active in both her professional home economics and volunteer groups. Currently she is a director of the Saskatchewan Agricultural Hall of Fame; member of Praireland's Youth Leadership Committee, and an active member of Soroptimist International of Saskatoon. With SI Saskatoon, Linda has used her skills to organize and execute fundraising events like "Home Town Heroes" which recognize women who contribute significantly to the well being of families in the community; steak nights; and applying for grants to conduct programs like LYD and DIBI. She and the team are currently partnering with Hope Restored Canada for two programs: a Home Town Hero fund raiser and A Food and Nutrition Class for Hope Restored Canada's safe house residents.

Being a Soroptimist for about 10 years "is challenging, interesting, and fun" says Linda. "Having the right circle of women, especially friends, around you is honestly the best thing going".

Linda and her husband Murray live in Saskatoon. They like to travel, play golf and especially spend time with their family: Nicole and Matt; Alli and Ryan and the grandkids Carsyn and Cade.



SI Saskatoon members celebrating the club year

Club News—SI Victoria Westshore

Submitted by Sandra Sterling-Weicker

On Saturday May 27, 2023 SI Victoria Westshore celebrated the 10th Anniversary of Anney's Closet.

The 3-hour party was hosted at Westshore ULock Mini Storage, the home of Anney's Closet. Thanks to some great PR, including a radio spot President Sandra did on CBC and an article in the Times Colonist newspaper, the event was well attended by the public and SIVW members, present and past.



Mayor Tobias presents Donna Fraser with an appreciation plaque on behalf of SIVW.

View Royal Mayor Sid Tobias presented a beautiful plaque to Westshore ULock on behalf of SIVW in recognition of their support over the past 10 years. From the start, Donna Fraser and the team at Westshore ULock offered a home for Anney's Closet. They have donated locker space since the beginning in 2013 and if you do the math, you'll realize that it's a huge chunk of change that they have invested to ensure Anney's Closet has a home!

Delicious refreshments of barbecued hot dogs and burgers, soft drinks, and cake were generously provided by ULock and cooked up by ULock staff. Local musician, Peter McMaster, provided toe-tapping entertainment. And just to add to the fun, we had a peacock join in from the roof of an adjacent home and he seemed to speak up at the most inappropriate times. It was a hoot!

Erika Stenson, Executive Director of United Way Southern Vancouver Island attended the event and spoke to the strong relationship we've built and the amazing contribution Anney's Closet makes to the community. Thanks to United Way funding, we have been able to expand the services we offer at



Left to right: Donna Fraser, Westshore ULock Manager, Sandra Sterling-Weicker, SIVW President, Sid Tobias, View Royal Mayor



The Honourable Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development, and the Westshore ULock staff.

Anney's Closet and to achieve our goal last year of assisting 100 women and their families. We are so incredibly grateful for their support!

The Honourable, Mitzi Dean, Minister of Children and Family Development, closed out the event with a few words and presented a bouquet of flowers to Donna.

Support for Anney's Closet continues to pour in! Following the event, we received a \$5,000 donation from Keycorp Developments and Mayor Tobias has adopted Anney's Closet as his "charity of choice" and has set the wheels in motion for a donation from the Town of View Royal.

These donations will ensure we can continue to provide the much-needed services that Anney's Closet provides.

Here's to another 10 successful years at Anney's Closet!

Wrapping up the Club Year—SI Victoria Westshore

On June 21st, SI Victoria Westshore welcomed our 2023-2024 Board of Directors to be led by incoming President Suzanne Mandy with a fun ceremony including crystals selected by Rhona Beaumont for each Board Member that represents their personalities and their roles.

We look forward to getting back into the swing of doing what we do supporting women and girls locally and internationally.



L to R: 2023-2024 SI Victoria Westshore Board of Directors: Suzanne Mandy, President; Sandra Sterling-Weicker, Past-President; Lia Ashbrook, Treasurer; Janet Stitt Corresponding Secretary; Janet Gilmour, Recording Secretary; Erin Weber, Director Delegate; Loreli Urquhart, Director Delegate; Karen Kirby, Director Delegate; Pat Masters, Director Delegate.

Wrapping up the Club Year—SI Chilliwack

That's a wrap. On June 21 we had our final meeting of the year. We had our AGM and installed the new board. We celebrated each other, the great year we had and we laughed. So many laughs. Soooooo much great food. It was a lovely evening. See you in September.



Hannah is the club's first DIBI Scholarship winner.

Wrapping up the Club Year—SI Tri Cities

SI of the Tri Cities held our AGM and installation of officers on June 7. It was a scrumptious potluck at Janice's lovely home. We welcomed our new board, and new members, thanked the past board, and are looking forward to another year serving others in our communities!



L to R: Past-President Colleen Penrowley, Co-Presidents Meaghan Relkie & Alison Berg, VP Joan Turner, Secretary Darlene McCann, Directors Maryam Ostadi & Linda Kozina, WCR Governor-Elect Chari Grant. Treasurer Catherine Fast was unable to attend.



Our club's first intern, Vanessa Asaad.



Membership co-chair Joan Seaton welcomes new members Connie Small & Karen Laforet.

Dates For Your Calendar



It's official! The 2024 WCR conference will be in Kelowna. If you liked this year's conference, you will LOVE what's in the works for 2024. It's BIGGER, and BETTER. Put the date in your calendar NOW so you don't miss out.

SIA 48th Biennial Convention

Bellevue, WA, USA, July 24-27, 2024



SOROPTIMIST®
Investing in Dreams

Follow and share convention news with hashtag #SIAConv2024

Check out [the video](#).

Submission deadlines for upcoming issues:

October 18th, 2023

December 13th 2023

February 21st 2024

April 17th 2024

June 26th 2024—all our AGMs and board installations!

As many of you know, I'm pretty soft on deadlines. If you have something to include but can't meet the deadline please tell me and I'll work with you.

— Colleen Penrowley cpen@telus.net