

SOROPTIMISTS IN ACTION

WESTERN CANADA REGION NEWSLETTER

FALL 2021

2021-2022 Board

Governor:

Suzanne Heron
(SI Victoria Westshore)

Governor-Elect:

Chari Grant
(SI Tri-Cities)

Treasurer:

Donna Duvall
(SI Abbotsford-Mission)

Secretary:

Jayne Carre
(SI Edmonton)

Member at Large:

Susan Barber
(SI Chilliwack)

Parliamentarian:

Colleen Schmidt
(SI Abbotsford Mission)

2020-2022 Chairs

Program:

Lynda Easler

Dream It Be It:

Colleen Penrowley

Live Your Dream:

Lynda Easler

Public Awareness:

Shirley Stewart

Fundraising:

Heather Rollins

Membership:

Linda Cunliffe

Celebrating Success:

Anna Der

Advocacy:

Janneke Lewis

Friendship Link:

Darlene Jamieson

Governor's Message for the New Soroptimist Year

My life changed on July 23 when I learned that my husband Dolf has terminal prostate cancer that has spread throughout much of his skeleton. This is complicated by one tumor compressing his spine so that he is mostly paraplegic. Since then I've spent much of my time in hospital as he decides to live, undergoes surgery and radiation, gets pain under control, begins to get strength back, and now - today, as I write - goes into rehab to seriously rebuild his muscles to be able to manage in a wheelchair.



I say this to share what I have learned in the last 2 months, and I believe these notes are relevant for our Soroptimist clubs:

There is no more room for ego. We have a few to several years left. These are for living, enjoying, loving. There is no more room for - I'm right - do it my way - you bug me - I'm a failure - regrets - or any other defensiveness, blaming, or disapproval. No more, "Yes but," and instead, "Yes, and . . ."

Gratitude and kindness make the world go round. Dolf's made it his mission to spread joy amongst the hospital staff, to always say 'please' and 'thank you,' express constant gratitude and reach out to them. In return, his food tray always has extras, his legs always get pumped and massaged, he is visited night and day by those not assigned to him; in short, they love him and will do anything for him in spite of being short staffed.

Embrace the new reality. Okaaaaay, wheelchair, a whole new technology to figure out, a whole new set of challenges to address. Problem solve, think outside the box, research. He's looking at a cool wheelchair called the Mountain Trike which should be perfect for Lasqueti Island, where we live and are determined to continue living.

Ask for help. This is new for both of us. For Dolf, to realize that if he is going to need some pain control before being hoisted into the chair, or rolled around in bed to have his back dressing changed - to ask for it. To ask for help in spite of knowing the unit is short staffed.

For me, to ask my Board, my Region Chairs and others to take on tasks that I might have done. And every time he or I ask, people step up in spades. Asking for help prevents pain and burnout.

One more thing. One of Dolf's best care people just broke up with his partner. One is caring for a father with cancer when not at work caring for people with cancer. As I have shared Dolf's news, people have shared their situations. Women all around are quietly waiting for a result of their husband's test - giving extra care to a spouse just out of hospital for one serious thing or another - mourning the loss of a family member or friend. We have no idea what another person is carrying.

We do know we have a sisterhood of Soroptimists, and that is a kind of safety net not just for the women and girls we serve, also for each other.

Warm wishes for a wonderful Soroptimist year!
Governor Suzanne

Have you “met” SIA President Kazuko Morita and her Board?



In the recent edition of *Best for Women*, we were introduced to SIA President Kazuko Morita. On the SIA website you can also get to know the rest of her Board.

Kazuko Morita is serving a one-year term as president of Soroptimist's international board of directors. As president, Morita oversees strategic planning and program development for the organization. She will also lead Soroptimist's efforts to increase its collective impact in helping women and girls around the world to reach their full potential.

A member since 1985, Morita has held several leadership positions at all levels of the organization, including district director, club president, vice president, and secretary.

“On October 3, Soroptimist will turn 100 years old,” says Morita. “As we celebrate our bright past and the thousands of lives we’ve touched in our first century, we also look forward to our brilliant future and the opportunity to create even more positive impact.”

“We are committed to transforming the lives of half a million women and girls through our Dream Programs over the next ten years.” She added. “There are hundreds of thousands of women and girls still waiting for the opportunity to pursue their dreams - through education and we are willing to help make that dream come true.”

Morita, a nationally licensed pharmacist, graduated from Kyoto Pharmaceutical University in Kyoto, Japan, with a bachelor's degree in pharmacy.

To learn more about the SIA Board and staff: <https://www.soroptimist.org/about-us/index.html#our-board>

Does your club have social media questions that you could use a some help with? Feel free to contact Jaclyn who is working with the Region on our social media revamp.

JACLYN
VAN DEN BERG
Creative Solutions
jaclyn@jaclynvandenbergh.com

WE'RE LOOKING FOR NEWS!!



The Region Newsletter is an opportunity for clubs to share the great things they are doing! Please feel free to send items to be included in upcoming issues.

If you are able to keep items to 500 or so words that's great – I understand sometimes reports need to be longer so we can work with that! Here are the deadlines for upcoming issues:

Winter 2021 issue: Submissions received by November 19
Released by December 1 or 2

Spring 2022 issue: Submissions received by February 18
Released by March 1 or 2

Send articles and photos to Public Awareness Chair Shirley Stewart (mrmackb64@gmail.com).



A GLOBAL VOICE FOR WOMEN

100

FOR ONE HUNDRED YEARS

Soroptimist International has an exciting array of activities and sessions planned, for October 1-3, which you won't want to miss! Additional event speakers, content and celebration activities will be announced as they are finalized, but the following is the programme as it is defined to date:

DAY ONE:

- Opening Ceremonies
- Hear Our Global Voices
- Our Bright Past – 100 Years of Memories
- Breakout Session One – Make new friends and connect with old friends!

In this facilitated session, you'll have opportunity to socialize with members from around the world in your chosen language. This interactive and engaging session will provide a space to share stories, develop contacts and resources, and learn what is happening in our global network of Soroptimists.

DAY TWO:

- Our Global Impact
- Keynote Presentation
- Closing Celebration
- Breakout Session Two - Our Brilliant Future

In this session we'll lean into the key messages shared by our keynote speaker, and share ideas on how we as Soroptimist members and clubs can leverage those learnings to move our organization into the next century, while standing up for women to move the world closer to the goal of gender equality.



Reminder: There's still time to register for our virtual Fall Retreat!

Date & time: Saturday October 16, 9:30 AM to 2:30 PM

Registration cost: \$25 per member.

E-transfer Donna Duvall at: dduvallosoroptimist@gmail.com
(Auto-deposit has been enabled, so no password required)

Link to Register: <https://forms.gle/P2uKmr3De3KKCZq6A>
A Zoom link will be sent to registered participants before the event.



Who's it for?

Fall Retreat is for EVERYONE! Whether you're a first-timer or a long-timer, Fall Retreat has something to offer to every Soroptimist.

What to expect:

Executive coach Darlene Huff will share her wisdom on leadership, with a focus on having "courageous conversations" when the going gets tough.

Social media expert Jaclyn Van Den Berg will offer her insights and answer your questions about building your club brand and attracting members and sponsors through social media.

Soroptimist International President Sharon Fisher will give us an update on her President's Appeal – The Road to Equality

Governor-Elect Chari Grant will share some observations on "crummy meetings" and how to avoid them. We'll get some tips on best practices for our Four Pillars from clubs with award-winning Celebrating Success submissions!

It's going to be a jam-packed day, and we can't wait to see you all there!
Questions? Email: sorop.wcr.conference@gmail.com

Dream It, Be It Program

Report Submitted by Chair Colleen Penrowley (SI Tri-Cities)

I hope you have had a good summer. I'm relieved the rains have returned to the west coast and will douse any remaining fires, but it seemed like a very sudden end to summer! We're into the fourth wave of COVID and not sure what to expect over the next few months. But did you know that three clubs in our region held DIBI events last year in spite of the pandemic? Congratulations to SI Vancouver, SI Edmonton, SI Victoria Westshore and SI Chilliwack! Let's aim for all 15 clubs participating in 2021-2022.

"Although all girls face barriers because of their gender, we prioritize working with girls who have additional obstacles including poverty, unstable home lives, living in foster care, or teen motherhood. Soroptimist clubs work in partnership with girls in small groups or a conference setting to provide them with the information and resources they want and need to be successful." The SIA website has many resources for us to use. Check them out!

<https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/program-resources/dream-it-be-it-club-resources/index.html>

I have contacted all our clubs, attempting to learn who is planning a DIBI event, and the name and contact info of the club's DIBI chair. So far four clubs have responded: SI Langleys, SI Victoria Westshore, SI Saskatoon, and SI White Rock. If you are the DIBI chair in one of the other clubs please let me know.

Our Virtual Career Library has some technical challenges to solve before it's ready to use. We need volunteers to help with video compression. This is not difficult, just time-consuming. So if you and your computer have some time to spare please tell me.



Western Canada Region Needs Your Help to Make Our Social Media the Best it Can Be!

The WCR Board has begun work to create a more effective social media presence. The Region is working with *Jaclyn van den Berg Creative Solutions* to review its current SM accounts and provide a fresh approach to reaching amazing women in our communities.

We're asking clubs and members to help us accomplish our goals. It's simple - and many of you are probably already doing your part.

How can you help?

FOLLOW - visit the platforms below and be sure to follow the pages.

LIKE - when posts are made, read them over and let people know you "like" them.

COMMENT - if you have an opinion or comment in relation to the post - jot it down for others to see!

SHARE - does the topic of the post speak to you/your club? Please share the post and don't forget to add a few words to explain why you are sharing the post.

Where to find WCR social media accounts:

<https://www.facebook.com/wcsoroptimist>
<https://www.instagram.com/wcsoroptimist/>
<http://www.linkedin.com/company/wcsoroptimist>
<https://twitter.com/wcsoroptimist>



If all our clubs and members join us in promoting our organization who knows where our word will spread!

Exciting News!!! A New Region Program to Announce!

I'm so excited.



Menstrual Equality - We are still looking for a name to brand this as our own.

The FreeMason's of British Columbia and the Yukon have donated in excess of \$13,000 to British Columbia and the Yukon Soroptimist for promoting education among women and girls.

A team has been formed with Rita Mackenzie as chair to spearhead this new program into reality.

More to come as we learn the details!

Anyone that would like to be a part of this new program is welcome to contact Rita.
(d.r.mackenzie2003@gmail.com)

News from SI Edmonton

Here are a few photos taken on August 14th, 2021 which kicked off a Human Trafficking awareness raising fundraiser called *Joy in Motion*.

This was a month long cross Canada event of the Joy Foundation facilitated in partnership with the Running Room.

A few SI Edmonton and GLAS members & friends walked an area of Edmonton known to be a location where vulnerable people have been exploited and gone missing.

We engaged in conversations with interested public we met along our journey and distributed SIA's Soroptimist "Slavery's New Face" info cards, SI Edmonton club brochures and placed red sand in sidewalk cracks.

The #Red Sand Project is to be mindful of those who are vulnerable to exploitation. May they NOT fall through the cracks of our communities. Prayers were given to us by a neighboring pastor who approached us after reading the messages on our signs which we borrow from CEASE. (Centre to End all Sexual Exploitation).

We offered our own prayers near one of the sites where a future memorial garden is to be developed by the community in honour of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples.



The PCEPA Project Update

Submitted by Lois Taylor, SI North & West Vancouver

At our Western Canada Region conference in April we were privileged to hear a presentation from Janneke Lewis, lawyer, former WCR Governor and longtime expert on human trafficking. She explained that by enacting **PCEPA (the Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act)** in 2014, the Canadian government prohibited the sale of sexual services and all economic interests associated with the sexual exploitation of others. Since 2014 Canadian law enforcement agencies have been required to charge purchasers of sexual services rather than those selling the sexual services. This was a landmark decision because prostituted women would no longer be treated as criminals. The government also announced \$20 million in funding to help individuals exit prostitution.

Janneke explained that since the enactment of this Act or Bill 36, there has been little information about the implementation or the effectiveness of the PCEPA. There has also been speculation that some law enforcement agencies are not implementing the new law. As well, the federal government is due to review the PCEPA to determine its efficacy, and possibly its continuation. The PCEPA advocates and many feminist organizations are concerned that the results of the PCEPA review may be skewed because the Act has not been fully implemented.

To see Janneke's presentation visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rQGZM6zzifY&t=10s>

Following Janneke's presentation the WCR conference membership voted to launch The PCEPA Project. We will follow up with law enforcement agencies to collect information about their implementation of the PCEPA.

Soroptimist interest in the PCEPA Project has also been generated in Eastern Canada. Estatira Shirkhodae, President of SI Toronto, wrote a proposal to appeal for federal funding to carry out the PCEPA Project. Although the results of the appeal for funding will not be known for a few months, the PCEPA Project can begin as soon as the Soroptimist clubs organize our approach. This project would be a dynamic avenue for Canadian Soroptimists to collectively address sex trafficking and violence against women.

More information about the PCEPA Project will be forthcoming shortly. In the meantime please discuss this important issue at your club, and find a member to work with the PCEPA Project committee. Who wants to learn and advocate? Contact Janneke Lewis at lewis.janneke@gmail.com



Annual General Meeting, Saturday, October 23, 2021

Our AGM will be on zoom again this year, October 23rd **11:00 am Pacific time**. Each club has one voting delegate and the voter credential form must be sent to Secretary Dianne Nielsen secretary@soroptimistfoundation.ca by October 9th.

This form and the agenda was sent to all club presidents in August. If you need it sent again just email Dianne.

ALL Soroptimists in Canada are welcome and encouraged to attend. The Board has been busy over the past year with several new things to announce including three new Board members. Here is the link to register: <https://tinyurl.com/3rd7r26m>

I hope to see many members from WCR there!
Colleen Penrowley

Friendship Links...How...Who...What and Why

Submitted by Darlene Jamieson (SI Surrey/Delta), Friendship Link Chair.



On October 3, 1921 the first Soroptimist club was chartered in Oakland, California. Did you know that October 3rd is Soroptimist Friendship Day?

“Friendship is one of the pillars of being a Soroptimist. The many friendships we establish, learning of different cultures, beliefs and philosophies is a way of enhancing our lives as Soroptimists. Why not consider joining us, find new friends and a real purpose—using your voice to support women and girls worldwide.”

I have sent a Friendship Link survey to the current or acting club presidents. I look forward to sharing the results once the surveys are completed.

If you or when you have Friendship Links consider sharing them on social media, on your websites and FB etc. It is a great way to attract potential new members, to share and learn about different and similar local, national and international projects.

Have you checked Google or searched to see if there is a city with the same name as your city. I/we recently connected with SI Surrey Hills UK. We will be attending zoom meetings, learning about their projects particularly during Covid and the 100th Anniversary Celebrations.

Please let me know if you need help connecting with a club in one of our five Federations.

The **Extension and Membership Director Soroptimist International Africa Federation (SIAF)** was pleased to receive my email about potential friendship links between Canadian and African clubs. They suggested links with new clubs like Khartoum SI Club (the first club in Sudan), Embu SI Club in Kenya, Lekki SI Club and Makurdi SI Club in Nigeria. But all other clubs in Africa would be proud to be especially linked to Canadian clubs. SIAF is happy to help coordinate with them.

SI Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) created easy guides about the what, how, why and stages of Friendship Links.

<https://sigbi.org/members/files/Easy-stages-guide-to-friendship-links.pdf>

<https://sigbi.org/members/files/EasyStagesFriendshipLinks.pdf>

At the bottom of this link <https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/federation-information/soroptimist-international.html>, you will find links to:

-The formal Friendship Link Application, federation contacts and countries. This can be a fairly long process.

-Friendship Link Certificate

-Explore Grants of Friendship Worldwide to host a Soroptimist to attend a conference and visit local clubs. A WC Region Friendship Grant will be considered once Covid restrictions for conferences and international travel is safe again.

I welcome your questions, inquiries, ideas and sharing stories about your friendship links.

SI Langleys Happenings!

After so many months of virtual fundraising and events it felt wonderful to be able to feed hungry people, share some laughs and smiles - okay it poured rain and a few of us got really, really wet - but it was a great day.

The Langley Good Times Cruise-In Swap Meet is a long standing community event. Our club was given the opportunity to take admission at the gate, help load in vendors and serve up hot dogs and coffee.

Our amazing Onion Ladies prepped 50 lbs of onions which were fried in our "secret sauce" to entice appetites to follow their nose. The few leftover dogs were donated to the Boys and Girls Club so everyone won!



Don't wait to be asked to join a committee . . .

Submitted by Governor Suzanne, SI Victoria Westshore

In my club, I have noticed over the years that a call on Facebook, "who is interested in helping with . . .?" doesn't generate much response. I think people assume someone else will be more qualified, or SOMETHING. Or perhaps not sure how much time it will take. So often, the people who do things are the people who always do things.

I am asking every one of you to take a moment to think about how awesome you are, and what you are good at, and what you would like to learn more about or get better at. **DO THAT NOW.** Because you are awesome and you have talents and you can make a huge difference to the women and girls in our Region.

And then: step up:

- Ask your Club president what needs to be done, what committees are short on people, what tasks need addressing. For instance, *who would like to learn more about social media by taking on your club's Facebook and Instagram? Sure you don't know about it now, but you can learn.*
- There are some Region initiatives that are super-exciting and can use help. The **Virtual Career Library** is an amazing resource for schools that will help us to
- reach hundreds more girls for mentoring, and count toward the Dream Accelerator projects (doing our part to help half a million women and girls in the next 10 years)
- connect with women in interesting careers, and school counsellors, who may not have heard of Soroptimist

Contact Violet Poruchko (violetp@shaw.ca) to help with finding and interviewing mentors, learn about editing videos (it's easy), bringing it to schools.

A new program around period poverty is being developed. It is super-exciting; again, it will count as a Dream Accelerator program, it will reach into communities where we are not yet active, it will provide huge opportunities for public awareness and membership.

Contact Rita Mackenzie (d.r.mackenzie2003@gmail.com) to find out more, and get involved.

Conference 2023 - we're striking a Region committee for future Conferences. Anyone who wants to get involved - and there are so many aspects - contact me.

Why did you join Soroptimist? To help women and girls in your community? To meet great women and make new friends? **This is your opportunity.** And each and every one of us has talents and knowledge and wisdom and passion to bring. So **don't wait to be asked.**

THANK YOU everyone for all you do

Governor Suzanne

p.s. Sign up for Retreat, it's going to be GREAT!



LEADERSHIP FREAK

