

# SOROPTIMISTS IN ACTION

WESTERN CANADA REGION NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2021

## 2020-2022 Board

### Governor:

Roseanne Ham  
(SI Langleys)

### Governor-Elect:

Suzanne Heron  
(SI Victoria Westshore)

### Treasurer:

Donna Duvall  
(SI Abbotsford-Mission)

### Secretary:

Jaynee 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::

Janneke Lewis

### Live Your Dream:

Lynda Easler

### Public Awareness:

Shirley Stewart

### Fundraising:

Chari Grant

### Membership:

Linda Cunliffe

### Celebrating Success:

Anna Der



## Welcome to Spring!

To me, one of the wonderful things about living in our amazing country is enjoying our different seasons and celebrating the change they bring for each of us.

Watching my garden transition from fresh green shoots to the vibrant array of colours that bring me joy and hope is one of my favorite things about spring. And I can officially tuck away my winter shoes and wear my flip flops as much as I like!

As we enter into yet another summer of limited movement and ability to conduct "business as usual", I am proud of the work that our clubs continue to do during these frustrating times. Your creativity and commitment to our programs and the women we serve is not surprising and is a testament to the resilience of women.

Our 2021 Virtual Conference is only weeks away on May 15 & 16th. I look forward to seeing many of you during the weekend. We have put together a wonderful agenda featuring:

- Keynote Speaker Emmy Skates who will share with us the challenges facing non-profit organizations and how she has led her team to continue to provide for their community
- Jackie DeMartini, SIA Secretary-Treasurer, Federation Speaker
- A salute to 100 years of Soroptimist
- A Road to Equality President's Appeal update by SI President Sharon Fisher
- A presentation by Janneke Lewis about Human Trafficking and its global impact

Until next time, I hope you are able to put your feet up, enjoy your garden and yard with family or those in your personal bubble. One thing that this past year has reminded me is that we should never forget how important those we cherish are to us - and that we should always let them know.

*Governor Ro*





## *88<sup>th</sup> Annual* WESTERN CANADA REGION VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

May 15 & 16, 2021

### **Club Presidents and Treasurers:**

By now all Region members will have received the Call to Conference that was sent out by Secretary Jaynee.

Once again this year, Clubs are required to pay a **Club Registration Fee of \$350**. We also ask that clubs make a donation of \$75 to the Growth & Development Fund. The Registration Fee will allow for Club Members to attend without a cost to them.

Forms that Presidents will need to complete and submit can be accessed via links found in the Call to Conference.

Fees may be paid by e-transfer or by cheque, please make cheques payable to **SI Western Canada Region** and send them to the Region Treasurer. Please reference either with "2021 Region Conference".

Mail: Donna Duvall  
8936 Dewdney Trunk Rd  
Mission, BC V2V 6Y1

Email: [dduvallsoroptimist@gmail.com](mailto:dduvallsoroptimist@gmail.com)

Please ensure you submit the names of your Delegates and Alternates as soon as you are able. There will be an orientation session the week before Conference hosted by Parliamentarian Colleen, so we don't want to miss anyone!

### **Region Club Members:**

We hope you will join us for the Conference on **May 15th & 16th** (from the comfort of your home!). Members are able to participate for no cost as your Clubs will pay a registration fee that covers as many as wish to attend.

Let your Club President know as soon as you can that you'll be participating so you can receive the link when it is sent out.

**Reminder to Region Board Members and Pillar Chairs** - please have your pre-recorded report to Emma (our oh so patient, talented technical support for Conference!) by **April 15th**. They should be sent to: [emma@phenotype.ca](mailto:emma@phenotype.ca).

See you in a few weeks!!!



### **Program Notes from Chair Lynda Easler**

[Program@wcsoroptimist.org](mailto:Program@wcsoroptimist.org); [lyd@wcsoroptimist.org](mailto:lyd@wcsoroptimist.org)

Hello to all my fellow Soroptimists. March has come to an end and with it, we are hoping for spring weather to brighten our days.

I hope you are all staying safe, healthy and doing the best that you can in these challenging times. Despite not being able to meet in person, I see great interaction on social media.

It has been a busy start to the year for programs. Live Your Dream applications have now been submitted and winners both at club level and region level have been determined.

Way to go Western Canada Region - we had all clubs in our region participate in our signature project, meaning we have helped many women and girls.

We have 2 region winners - 1st place and 2nd place and they both have been submitted to SIA for judging. Who are they, you ask? Well how about we let you know when you attend the region virtual conference. The suspense right?

Celebrating Success winners have been submitted to the region and these will be announced at the conference. Dream it be it program, has been challenging due to Covid and in person programs cannot be arranged. However, a few clubs in the region have completed a virtual event. I attended 2 virtual events and both were very well done and very successful.

I am encouraging clubs who have not yet considered a virtual dream, be it event, to look at doing so. Please do not forget that the region has a virtual library at your disposal that has amazing content.

We have Western Canada Region Governor Roseanne and SI President Sharon as members in our region. I would like to challenge each club, if you have not already done so, to participate and hold a DIBI event. I believe this would show great support to these 2 amazing leaders in our region...ALL club participation.

Til conference....

In Soroptimist friendship

*Lynda Easler*



### **IMPORTANT UP DATE FROM TREASURER DONNA DUVALL**

[dduvallsoroptimist@gmail.com](mailto:dduvallsoroptimist@gmail.com)

I am updating the Region Dues form which will be sent out to all club Treasurers and added to the website forms.

Prorated dues and \$9.00 Personal Insurance are currently due till May.

***All new members need to be in before April 14 to be included in the Isobel Gillespie Membership Award.***

Thankyou  
Donna





## Club Spotlight ~ SI Courtenay

Submitted by Alma Naranjo





## **Celebrating Success Submission Reminder - Chair Anna Der**

[anna.der@siedmonton.org](mailto:anna.der@siedmonton.org); cell 780-903-0426

You'll recall I sent a quick note to clubs a few months ago regarding the Celebrating Success Awards. I had noticed only 8 clubs sent in entries last year! In addition, only 3 clubs won from each of four priorities for Soroptimist of the America's priorities!!! One of our basic tenets had only 1 entry so guaranteed to win!! It is not a strong representation of all the good things we do in WCR!!

By tasking a Club Member to be responsible to help your executive to brag about your club you involve more members!! Plus by writing down your successes it reminds members of your quality projects under SIA guidelines!!

**Application deadline to have your submissions to me is July 1, 2021.**

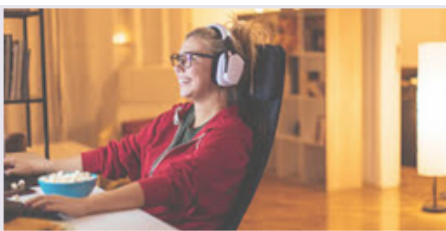
The most current form is found on the SIA website! If you have questions please contact me at anytime.

Anna Der, Past-President,  
Soroptimist International Club of Edmonton



## *Host a Soroptimist Social*

Many clubs have made the shift to operating and holding business meetings online. But have you participated in a virtual social event, with no official business at hand? Consider scheduling a regular social, perhaps on a monthly basis. This can be hosted on Zoom or another teleconference platform, or even by conference call. Take the opportunity to "get together" online with other Soroptimist members. In these socials, consider trying some of the following to make each virtual gathering fun and unique.



### **Play a Game**

Host a virtual scavenger hunt and send your club members searching for specific items at home. Or, [use an app](#) to create a trivia game and put your club's knowledge to the test!



### **Celebrate!**

Don't let your club members' anniversaries, birthdays or other exciting milestones slip by! Set a fun dress code—wear funny hats, pajamas, dress elegantly, or wear matching colors—and celebrate!



### **Share Recipes**

Spend an evening cooking together or enjoying the same meal. Members can share their favorite recipes, or even sign up to take an online cooking class together!

For more information visit:

<https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/digital-toolkit/membership/member-engagement.html>





## Membership Moments from Chair Linda Cunliffe

[lindacunliffe14@gmail.com](mailto:lindacunliffe14@gmail.com) Call/Text: 604-313-9522

A notable Soroptimist quote:

*"Two things are clear to us in the midst of the bewilderment and distress of these present days. One is that as a band of women whose aim is the furthering of international understanding, we must stick together and keep in active working order our Soroptimist organization, the value of which is greater than ever before. The other is that when we emerge from this nightmare and the struggle is over, we must be stronger than ever to see that all our influence is cast on the side of a just and lasting peace."*

Some Soroptimist History:

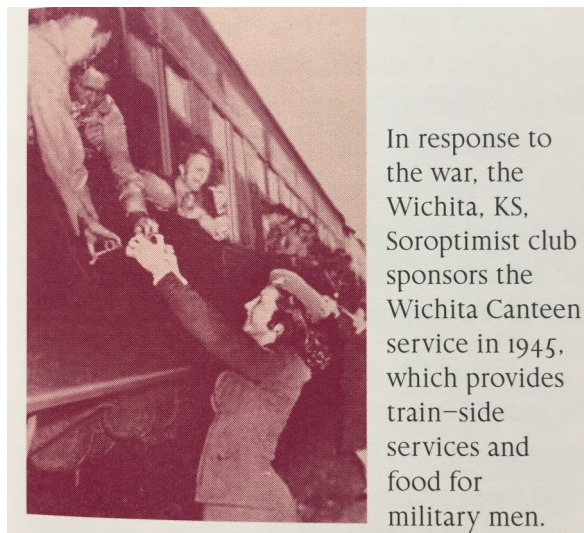
This quote was not written in response to our global COVID challenge – it was written by the Editor in the October 1939 issue of the British Soroptimist magazine in response to their challenge during World War II.

The article continues, *"During and after the First World War, woman had achieved greatness. However, the Second World War was to show them at their very best. There is little doubt that in many countries it was the women who 'battled on' to relieve suffering, hunger and perform tasks normally carried out by the men of their nations."*

Following the end of WWII: *"The American Federation had, in 1944, chose as its biennium theme 'All Past is Prologue.' Perhaps a more fitting title for this history, since a prologue to a play, or piece of work sets the scene, and hopefully puts us in the right mood for what is to come."*

*As we look back over the years of World War II it is evident that Soroptimists achieved a great deal of success in many areas of service. That the organization was still alive and very active at the end of this terrible war is truly remarkable.*

So what does this bit of history have to do with our challenges today? The passage goes on to say: *"To-day different problems face the organization in its struggle for survival. Yet members are still capable of standing together in the face of change and pressure, considering what might lie ahead and preparing for these eventualities. What we do today may well be the setting for those who are to follow."*



In response to the war, the Wichita, KS, Soroptimist club sponsors the Wichita Canteen service in 1945, which provides train-side services and food for military men.

Now it's time to meet this challenge as an organization. We are facing a daunting challenge with COVID, and to various degrees we are COVID-fatigued. We are losing faith or motivation to continue our Soroptimist work. We are faced with learning new ways to do things to achieve our goals. As an organization serving women and girls, we are experts at encouraging, motivating and inspiring them to "be their best." We provide resources and tools to help them navigate their challenges, and we constantly remind them that they are women of value who can achieve anything they desire. We need to step up and show the women and girls we serve that we will not allow this challenge to prevent us from being our best. Because if we give up now, what kind of message is that sending to those we serve? To those we tell everyday that they can overcome their challenges?

We talk a lot about our collective impact, and it is usually referencing the women and girls we serve. Why can't we turn that collective impact inward to help our members navigate the challenges WE face? We CAN rise to the challenge with our innovation, our commitment to serve our community, and our unwavering dedication to ensure that we can continue to support the women and girls who rely on our service and assistance. We can help our members who may be uncomfortable using Zoom to attend meetings by phone or with another member. We can keep in touch with our members who feel isolated or miss our social interactions by a simple check-in care-call.

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*Continued from page 5....*

We can send a card by mail to let our members know they are valued. I don't have all the answers, but I am confident that each of you has an idea that you could share with us to make our members feel valued until we can resume "normal" activities. Let's brainstorm and share; let's use our problem-solving skills, our passion, and our ingenuity; let's turn our collective impact into workable solutions.

And as we welcome new and younger members into our club, we also welcome their fresh ideas, their passion, and their commitment to helping us remain the best OF women as we carry out our mission to be the best FOR women. We want to continue to grow, to accept change, and to be open to new possibilities and challenges. We must be ready and willing to address the changing needs of our community, our members, and the women and girls we serve.



U.S. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt is the honored guest and speaker at a weekly luncheon of the Washington, DC, club in 1943. She speaks to Soroptimists and guests about the responsibility of women during the war. Pictured (from l to r): Rose Robinson Cohen, program chair; Harriet P. Tyler, president of the American Federation of Soroptimist Clubs; First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt; and Mildred C. Clum, president of the Washington, DC, club.

We also must acknowledge and honor the wisdom, passion and commitment of our "senior" members who have given so many years of incredible service and leadership that has brought our organization to this point. We learn from each other.

Our 100th year is not looking like we thought it would. We haven't been able to "celebrate" in the fashion we had hoped to. But we will not be deterred. There isn't a virus on earth that can stop a group of determined women to achieve their goals. I am so proud of how our members have stepped up to re-imagine our events and adjust to our new normal. I am grateful for the leadership that our members have shown as we make changes and embrace our challenges with pro-active solutions.

We all play an important role with our Soroptimist community to respond to our changing world with workable and innovative ways of delivering our services. I am proud to serve you as your WCR Membership Chair, and look

forward to leading you into a new year of possibilities. Let's move into our new century with renewed enthusiasm to continue the work we have been committed to for 100 years. Let us write the history of success for the next century of Soroptimists. The women and girls we serve are counting on us – let's not let them down!

I love President's Biden quote: *"We will not lead by the example of our power, but by the power of our example."*

#### **WHAT'S NEXT - POSSIBLE SUGGESTIONS:**

Clubs could hold a special meeting and ask each member to bring a story about how they met a challenge and how they solved it. The older members should have amazing stories to share with the younger members on the incredible history of their Soroptimist journey.

If a Soroptimist is reluctant to come forward, get another member (preferably a younger, newer member) to "interview" a senior Soroptimist and ask her about her Soroptimist journey and the challenges she faced and overcome.

Have a committee or member from each club compile these stories and publish them in an upcoming edition of our region newsletter. This could also prove to be an interesting activity to commemorate and celebrate our 100 years of Soroptimist Service. It would also remind all Soroptimists that we have faced adversity in the past and prevailed.

Acknowledge the frustration, fear, etc. about COVID and how it is affecting our Soroptimist life. MANY are COVID and Zoom fatigued, and feelings matter. If we truly understand how members are feeling or where their fears/frustration are coming from, perhaps we can turn the "putting out the fires" practice to "igniting the flame" of Soroptimist passion?

I am always available to chat or attend one of your meetings. Contact me at your convenience. Looking forward to seeing you all at Conference!

Warm regards,  
Linda



## SI Burnaby-New Westminster Happenings

The members of our newest club never cease to amaze us with their innovative and heartfelt involvement in their communities!



Wonderful Easter Baskets for 15 lucky residents of Charlford House



There's always teamwork involved in fund raising. The hardest part of packaging Purdy's Chocolates after a successful campaign is making sure it all gets where it's supposed to! No "one for you, one for me" in this project!



A Christmas Hamper overflowing with love and support for the mom and daughter from Purpose Society.





## Proper Soroptimist Custom and Protocol

Many of us have been attending club meetings for several years, while some are new to our organization. Regardless how many years you have been a Soroptimist it doesn't hurt to remind us all of our customs and protocol.

- ◆ Begin and close meetings on time; be on time for meetings.
- ◆ Attend meetings regularly.
- ◆ Address the presiding officer as President, Governor or, if the Vice President is presiding, by her title followed by her name, e.g. "Vice President Mary." Address another Soroptimist by her first name.
- ◆ Do business with Soroptimists on a business basis, expecting no favors or special treatment.
- ◆ Pay your own way, unless you're invited as a guest or as a speaker.
- ◆ Invite Soroptimists and others (as deemed appropriate by the President) to business meetings.
- ◆ Welcome visiting Soroptimists.
- ◆ Disagree politely and keep informality within the bounds of fellowship and parliamentary procedure.

Use correct terminology:

- ~ We are Soroptimists — not Sorops.
- ~ We are members — not sisters or girls.
- ~ We are clubs — not chapters.
- ~ We are a federation — not national or federal.
- ~ We attend a club or district meeting, region conference, federation or international convention.
- ~ We elect region officers — not regional officers.
- ~ We believe in Soroptimist — not "Soroptimism."

Use correct names:

- Soroptimist International of (name of your club)
- Soroptimist International of the Americas
- Soroptimist International of Europe
- Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland
- Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific
- Soroptimist International African Federation
  
- Soroptimist International Protocol promotes orderly procedures.
- Personal friendships, likes and dislikes cannot matter in official life.
- Always remember that you honor the office a person holds...not the person.

Note: Should an occasion arise when you do not know the correct protocol, you will find that a gracious, cooperative attitude is most acceptable.

The correct method of self-introduction is:

- Member's name
- Classification (principal activity of employment)
- Member's title in her firm
- Name of the firm

These practices are as useful in our current virtual meeting environment as they are in face to face meeting situations.

Please see page 10 for best practices and etiquette for Zoom meetings.

We're a year into meeting by Zoom and while we've mastered things like *breakout rooms*, white boards and the like, we may have neglected to hone some of the etiquette that should be followed in our meetings.

These tips are good reminders of how we can use best practice techniques in order to use Zoom as effectively as possible.

## Video and Audio

First, let's talk about video and audio.

- Unless your appearance or background is very inappropriate or distracting, **turn ON your video**. Video is crucial in building engagement in virtual communications. Don't skip this step just because you don't love the way your hair looks today. **Test your video and audio** before your meeting at [zoom.us/test](https://zoom.us/test).
- **Look at the camera**. This takes a bit of getting used to since you want to look at the other participants faces (let's be honest, your own face too), but try to look at the camera when you're talking. This tactic will mimic the in-person feeling of eye contact.
- When possible, try to **use a good quality camera and headset** instead of your computer's built-in ones. Zoom works just fine with the built-ins, but the quality is even sharper with higher quality hardware.
- **Adjust your camera** if it is too low or high. Only your barber wants to stare at the top of your head. Your camera should be at eye level.

When you're trying to look normal on Zoom.



If you can, connect to the internet via an ethernet cable. Zoom works well on wireless but the quality is best on a solid wired internet connection, so wire in when you can. Otherwise, just make sure you have serviceable Wi-Fi.

## **Zoom Meeting Etiquette**

There are some general rules of courtesy for virtual (and in person) business meetings.

- Your **screen should only be turned off if you have to leave your seat**.
- Your **mic should only be turned on if you are speaking**.
- **Avoid unnecessary messaging via the chat** feature - it's disrespectful and distracting for those speaking and listening.
- If you can, **hold off on eating full meals during your meeting**. Imagine how unappealing it would be to watch someone up close slurping a plate of spaghetti on a big screen. If you can, chow down when your meeting is over (or before).
- Even though it's tempting, **try not to multi-task too much**, at least mute yourself if you do.
- You don't have to be overly prepared for a meeting you're not hosting, but **try to be on time**, having glanced at the agenda.
- **Refrain from private behaviour** – i.e. scratching your armpits, picking your nose, stretching. We can see you!

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### **Consider Your Environment**

Your surroundings say a lot about you. Let's make sure that they say the right things.

- **Clean up and have a simple background** (a plain wall, a potted plant, or a bookshelf works perfectly). Zoom provides **virtual backgrounds** to help you disguise even the most recklessly cluttered environments.
- **Position yourself so that most of the light is coming from in front of you** (behind your monitor), instead of behind you. If you have a window behind you, shut the blinds. Otherwise, you will be backlit.
- **Find a quiet space to meet, shut the door, and mute yourself as necessary.**

### **Develop Your Zoom Presentation Skills**

**Use engagement tools!** There is nothing worse than someone droning on for an hour, maybe sharing a dense slide or two. Make full use of everything Zoom has to offer.

Screen share, annotate shared content, send out a quick poll, solicit feedback in chat, split your attendees up into video breakout rooms, send attendees to a website etc.

Do whatever it takes to keep your audience actively engaged.

**Don't get too close.** Position yourself so the camera is seeing you from the chest or waist up, instead of just seeing your face. This is more natural for the viewer (after all, in an in-person meeting you're usually seeing more of a person than just their face). This is especially beneficial if you tend to gesture a lot.

Your best teacher is yourself. **Record yourself and watch the playback** with a critical eye. Did you talk too quickly? Too many ums and ers? Even send the recording to a friend who you know will give you candid feedback.

**Relax!** While we are comfortable in our face to face world, little did we know a year ago that our personal interactions would rely on virtual communications as much as we do. When faced with preparing a presentation or chairing a meeting, remember we're all on the same page (and most of us are happy we aren't in your shoes!).

None of us know how long our virtual meetings will continue; hopefully some of these tips will make it more comfortable for those of us who host meetings on a regular basis.