



President's Message

Soroptimist projects are in full swing at this time of year. I appreciate everyone's strength of purpose as we move forward to achieve our goals. February was Heart month which we recognized by wearing red while hosting our annual Valentine Day Auction, raising \$545. The auction had everything from jewelry, to home movie night, to picnic basket, to delightful rum balls and cinnamon rolls (which I won)! The auction was further highlighted by song and dance from the Oregon Cabaret Theater ensemble for Kick'n the Clouds Away. The month's programs ended with a discussion about what happens inside the foster care system as young women try to transition to permanent homes or jobs. SI-A member, Susan Hollandsworth, spoke to the success of our Soroptimist Strong Girls Strong Women program, which provided us insight and made us all aware that through this program, we are making a difference in the lives of these girls.

The SI-Ashland Strategic Plan outline was introduced to club members and board earlier this month. The intent is to follow the SIA/Federation template, but take club member input to make the Plan "our own." We took input this past meeting, an "out of the ordinary" meeting in that we all took time to talk to each other and express the reasons we became involved in Soroptimist. I found it interesting that many members joined club thinking they could be of service to the local community, use their time effectively, and connect with other locals, but soon discovered a much more diverse organization than they were originally even aware of.

Throughout the discussion, you could see where the depth of membership increased as each became aware that "one person" could make a difference in our community; and 'collectively' contribute to international understanding/friendship; and could advance human rights for all people and, in particular, the status of women. Finally, it was evident that the spirit of friendship was important as well as maintaining high ethical standards in our lives, club, and professions. It was the kind of meeting you walk away from and really think about.

If you have not done so yet, please rank your top 6 reasons for why you are a Soroptimist and send to me. This input is important because knowing what you see as the benefits to membership is the best opportunity we have to shape our club culture, help others lead, and attract community members with mutual goals. Our values express the manner in which we choose to pursue our mission and so we need to agree on what is important to us.

This past month's activities and discussions make me remember the poem, Desiderata. It reminds me that it is worthwhile to stay on good terms with people, listen to what others have to say, enjoy your achievements as well as your plans, and to be yourself.

Check out the calendar for March - it is packed with opportunities in networking, education, community interface and a Garden Party where for each \$25 coupon you purchase, \$5 comes back to club. We are also forming a theater night to the Cabaret (group rate): all are invited and are welcome to include family and friends in the group.

Laugh and be happy!

Debbie, SI-A President

COMING ... This Month

Calendar table with columns for date and time, and event details. Includes events like Business Meeting, Lunch Buddies, A "Spirited" Evening, International Women's Day, JoAnna Shaw poster winners, MADFW Awards Reception, Cabaret Theatre "Kickin' The Clouds Away", Meditation Training, Board Meeting @ Debbie's, and Garden Party.



Vodka Tasting

Don't miss A "Spirited" Evening sponsored by the SIA Education Committee with Organic Nation/Cascade Peaks and Lillie Belle Chocolates. This will be an evening of responsible indulging on cocktails, appetizers, and chocolates. Organic Nation will provide a lecture and tasting of their organic gin and vodka products. Tickets are \$20 each or \$35 for two which includes a raffle ticket for a bottle of vodka plus more. Silent auction items will also be avail-

able to bid on including a non-alcoholic item. This will be a social event for SIA members and their

friends. Barbara Stout has graciously provided her house on Otis Street for the event. Send your

friends the eFlyer (above) and come have a great time. Sally and Amanda have tickets.

10th Annual Empty Bowls

Buy a bowl and fight hunger!

Hunger is an issue in Jackson County. Some of our children are going to school hungry. This year is the 10th annual Empty Bowls Project for Hunger sponsored by SIA. We've given food agencies over \$25,000 over the past 9 years. Thanks goes out to all SIA members for this total club project.

By now, everyone should have a part to play in the event on March 3rd, 5-7 p.m. If you don't know what your responsibility is, please check this month with Amanda and Sally.

Another important part

that everyone plays: GET THE WORD OUT! If you need more cards/flyers, please let us know.

If you have never been

to Empty Bowls, it is a lovely event, with hors d'oeuvres and music by Joel Handley. Plan to buy a bowl--or two or three! Let's do as much as we

can to combat hunger in our community.

Live Your Dream Poster Contest



At our March 11 weekly meeting, we will recognize our local elementary school winners of the Live Your Dream Poster Contest. They are: grades 2-3, Kadya Marker-Hamer and Ellie Carter from Helman; grade 4, Myla Norvell from Wil-

low Wind; grade 5 Kyle Weinberg and Karen Bach from Bellview Elementary.

Erin Wahl, Wendy Ray, Judy Faulkner, Vicki Smith and I chose our local winners. The pictures were sent to Federa-

tion for the larger contest.

There were 4,300 entries to this contest. While none of our “winners” were selected by Federation, it is worthwhile to look at those who were. There are some very impressive artists! And you can vote for the ultimate winner at:

<http://www.liveyour-dreamcampaign.org/>



International Women's Day - March 7



Parade 11:30am—(gather at 11am) Triangle Park to SOU

Celebration and Food Faire 12pm—Stevenson Union, Rogue River Room

You are warmly invited to be a participant in this annual celebration of the victories and challenges of regional, national and global womankind! International Women's Day traces its roots to mid-19th century struggles for fair and just working conditions, and was often associated with organized efforts for peace in the early 20th century. In

1975, the United Nations officially endorsed International Women's Day.

The Rogue Valley community is joining hands with SOU and RCC once again to honor and celebrate women across the generations and across time who tenaciously and joyously work for equality, freedom and social justice.

The day will begin with a fun and pride filled parade from Triangle Park to the SOU Stevenson Student Union where paraders and others will be greeted by a tantaliz-

ing international food fair. The celebration will mix dance, spoken word and music from a full-spectrum of voices of women and girls in our region. From these two hours of celebration, participants of all ages can expect to feel enriched by a deeper understanding of how far women and men have come in pursuit of equality and what vital work continues!

All people join together on March the 7th for our community and for our world!



Making a Difference for Women



Sudy Storm

Sudy Storm has been selected as our club’s award winner for this year. She is a midwife who has done many things that truly make her an outstanding MADW winner, not only at the club level, but at the Federation level as well.

Sudy dreamed of Africa as a child and has fulfilled that dream by making several independent trips, paying all her own expenses, to provide training for local midwives. Her most recent trips have been to Sierra Leone (Project Sierra is our Quadrennial Project). On her last trip in 2008, she lived with a family and really became a part of the community. At that time the Kailahum Medical District Health Management Team ask her to work on a pilot program to improve maternal and infant mortality rates as well as teach them how to gather vital records. She will be working in three very small rural communities in the six months she will be there.

She says that “more important than what I do is how I do it. My priorities are to empower the women I assist with skills and knowledge so they will be self sufficient and able to help themselves and their communities. In other words, work myself right out of a job.”

She has already been successful in doing this as she recorded in a story called “Dancing To The Back Of The Line” which a share in part below.

—Mavis

The first time the Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA’s) excitedly asked us to go to town, I gave them a blank look since the village of Pellie is a loosely-clustered group of mud-walled, thatch-roofed huts. There is no town by a westerner’s definition. They grabbed us by our hands to join the group which began singing and dancing and gathering more and more people as they led the way through the compound. Through body language and gestures I realized they wanted us to lead them. Each time we would attempt to move back they would all slow down or stop dancing un-

til we were once again in the line of lead dancers. Throughout the weeks that followed there were several more trips to town after a day of sitting on hard wooden benches listening and learning in the three-hour midwifery classes. There were additional blissful moments as I discovered the meaning of community, watched women hold a book for the first time, and listened to them answer a question correctly. But it always bothered me that we were perceived as their leaders with an elevated status. On the last day of class we all cried as we shared

our heartfelt feelings about what we had done together. Once again we gathered at the gate and began to sing and dance. There was a wildness and frenzy to their dancing that I had not witnessed before and then a thought came to me. Had they truly learned to be strong and independent? Slowly I danced my way to the middle of the group and finally to the very back of the throng. Tears sprang to my eyes as I realized they had learned the most important lesson of all, that they are not inferior but in fact their own best leaders.

Rogue Valley
Awards Reception
Making A Difference
for Women
March 12, 5:30 pm
Central Point



HUMAN RIGHTS AND STATUS OF WOMEN COMMITTEE SPONSORS A VILLAGE



Our committee has voted to use \$400.00 of our International budget funds to sponsor a village for the Women's Farming CO-OP of Naihun in Sierra Leone. Sudy Storm, our Making A Difference for Women Award Winner, told us about this CO-OP through the Sukuli Project which she has been involved in Sierra Leone. Please read the article below about the Women's Farming CO-OP. The project is asking that we send a picture of ourselves and letters to our sister partners in Naihun. Anyone who would like to write a letter to a woman in this farming cooperative please have them to Kathy Mooney by March 6th and she will get them collected and sent with the money.

Thanks! Co-Chair Kathy

Women's Farming Coop of Naihun

The hunger time in Sierra Leone begins in August of every year and continues until October

We helped them form a Foods and Agriculture Committee that has since planted a community rice garden that will feed them through the hunger time in the future.

farm. The farm will feed their families and money earned from the sale of their crops will provide much needed income that is almost impossible for the women to earn. All they need is the start up money to purchase the seed and pay to have the land brushed (cleared). Your partnership will help us to provide the funds needed to get them started.

pictures are harvesting the groundnuts that will be shared among them. Groundnuts are one of the few sources of protein available in this lush tropical bush region of Sierra Leone. They are eaten as snacks and pounded into paste that is then put into soups and sauces. It is a labor intensive process and success is dependent on weather, animals, and diseases that might damage or destroy their crops.



when the rice is ready to harvest. This means that there is not enough rice to feed the 200 people who live in this remote village. In September the Sukuli Project received enough donations to buy the 10 bags of rice needed to carry them through.

But these hard working people are not looking for a hand out, they want to become self sufficient and provide for their own needs. The women in Naihun have formed a farming coop with plans to plant a groundnut (peanut) and cassava

The women in these





Garden Party Coupon Sale



It's still winter out there. Cold. Dark. Snow even! But better days are coming soon—warmer and longer days—and to make them even better we will again be selling coupons for Ashland Greenhouse.

It works like this way—

they sell for \$25.00 each and are worth \$25.00 in product-But the Club pays \$20.00 each for them so we earn \$5.00 on each one sold.

You can buy as many as you want, they make great gifts for family

friends and clients, and you'll need several for yourself to freshen up garden beds, add color spots and maybe a couple hanging baskets for the porch!

—Wendy Ray

Cabaret Theatreís iKickiní The Clouds Awayî

A group of Soroptimists and their friends are going to The Cabaret Theater to enjoy "Kickin' The Clouds Away" on Sunday, March 15th. Tickets are \$21 for the performance. The play starts at 8:00 pm; plan on arriving by 7:30pm. If you want dinner, please call the Cabaret at 488-2902 to make your individual reservations.

Wendy Ray needs to know ASAP. Please either respond to this email

or call Wendy at 482-9361 and bring your check (or cash) to Wendy on Wednesday, March 4 (at the Club meeting).

Because of the economic conditions, we need to support our local theaters and merchants when we can. We do not want such "Ashland jewels" as the Cabaret to close their doors. Please consider making this a win/win situation.

—Sue Kurth



Blue Moon in April--SAVE THE DATE



"Save the Date for our Spring Blue Moon Garden Party! It'll be April 29, a 5th Wednesday, so in lieu of a noon meeting, we're going to gather after work at a lovely vineyard home for a fun, casual, restorative time!

The venue is **Thistlecroft Vineyard** out in the Pompadour neighborhood—a

really beautiful setting with wonderful, peaceful views across the vineyard looking toward town and on up to Mt. Ashland. We're planning some winetasting, some hors d'oeuvres, some festivities, some garden and vine touring, and lots of relaxing. Although it'll be a bit of a fundraiser, the emphasis will be on keep-

ing the FUN in fundraising. So, mark your calendar for April 29 and our Garden Party.

—Mel

Valentine's Day Party



Special Guests: Helen Sieber & Virginia Vogel



Silent Auction



from Cabaret's "Kick'n the Clouds Away"

- Jim Giancarlo
- Suzanne Seiber
- John Stadelman
- Mark Turnbull, Guitar

Sylvia Medeiros, Mgr.



www.soroptimistRV.org - redesign



Take a look at our redesigned website. Many of the left tabs have been moved to "sub-tabs" under "Home," providing information about Soroptimist: Who we are, What we do, etc. I maintain links on the Home page to events--for all clubs. Note:

- Home > Area Meeting: Slideshow of recent Area Meeting
- SIAshland > Calendars: I am now maintaining calendars with a calendar tool that isn't as pretty but much easier.
- SIAshland > Empty Bowls & Vodka Tasting: I am adding pages for event marketing--so folks can find us via web.

Your feedback and suggestions are welcomed. —Linda

Soroptimist International of Ashland

meets at noon on Wednesdays from September through June at
 La Casa del Pueblo, 1209 Siskiyou Blvd., Ashland.
 Please contact Debbie Jones at 482-9450 for additional meeting or
 club details or send us an email at siashland@gmail.com.

Our mailing address is:
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 Linda Anderson
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Oh my gosh! This I must have!

From prior year's Empty Bowls.

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