



SIBN News

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Catalyst Ministries | 2 |
| Mark Your Calendar | 2 |
| By-Laws Amendment | 2 |
| New Look | 2 |
| Member Spotlight | 3 |
| SIBN Program & Service | 4 |
| 2021 250 Club Raffle | 4 |
| Holiday Zoom | 5 |
| Lakeesha James-Smith | 5 |
| Sue Young | 5 |
| Friendship/Japan | 6 |
| Hoegger Memorial Fund | 6 |

President

Becky Mentzer

Treasurer

Diana Lewis

Secretary

Sandy Groves, Interim

Fundraising

Lina Wombacher

Membership

Karen Fleming

Program & Service

Sandy Groves

Public Awareness

Sue Young

Newsletter Editor

Sandy Groves

Meetings

Due to COVID-19, Zoom meetings will be held the 1st Monday and 3rd Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m.

E-mail slittle@ilstu.edu to receive a Zoom invitation

Contact Us

PO Box 414
Bloomington, IL 61702-0414

President's Letter – Becky Mentzer

I write this with just one week left in 2020, always a good time to reflect on the year – perhaps even more so in a year mostly filled with a pandemic and all that involved and all those it affected. It could cause one to look back only on the negatives. Today I am reflecting on the positives of being part of Soroptimist International of B-N. I hope you will, too.

In February, we enjoyed a fun and memorable Charter Dinner and Awards Presentation by Melanie with the theme, "Evening with the Stars." Everyone received an award, and it was nice to have several of our LYD and Virginia Wagner winners present to receive their awards. Melanie again used her creativity in March with a new member orientation using a Jeopardy theme. There was a bit of a break as we adapted to the COVID regulations that took us from in-person meetings to virtual ones using Zoom. And we did adapt! We held our meetings, installed our officers, planned our community donations, and continued to volunteer.

Several members volunteered for Catalyst Ministries helping them set up their boutique, weed gardens, rake leaves and do some painting.

In 2020 we donated money, we might have used for in-person programming, to Boys & Girls Club and Western Avenue Community Center. We pooled our individual donations to help two community organizations, Immigration Project and Community Healthcare Clinic. We used SHARE fund to raise \$1000 to provide books representing a variety of ethnicities for District 87 elementary schools. This Book Project was a huge success because of Karen's idea and the help of Diana and Lina and all members who contributed. The highlight of the District/MWR virtual meeting this year was having our own Sandy Groves named MWR Outstanding Soroptimist! Wow! What a well-deserved honor.

In 2021, we can continue our community involvement supporting our mission to



provide women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment – with the continued fundraising efforts that are necessary without our Gift Wrap funds. It is important to keep selling tickets for our Club 250 Raffle.

We ended 2020 with a good discussion about things to consider in 2021, including inviting speakers from Western Avenue Community Center, the YWCA, and the Westside Bloomington Revitalization Project (to learn about microlending being done locally). We will look for ways to continue to support Boys & Girls Club, as well. Lots to consider. Please be part of the discussion by joining us on Zoom.



Catalyst partners with local churches and other groups to provide hope for women 18 years and older (frequently single mothers) and children victimized by human trafficking. Their 3 goals are (a) Raise Awareness; (b) Rescue; and (c) Restoration.

Call or text Melanie Alwes at 309-275-3876 or email at m_alwes@yahoo.com to indicate when you can help, or with any questions!

In the Winter, Work at “The Farm” Continues...

Until spring arrives and we can have workdays, Soroptimists can continue to support Catalyst Farms through different types of donations. Check your garage, attic, tool shed, closets, or basement to see if you have any of the items below to donate. To coordinate donations from Soroptimists, contact Melanie Alwes (text or voice) 309-275-3876.

For the Garden: 2-3 hand trowels, 1 pair garden scissors, 2-4 garden kneeling pads, 1-2 handheld pruners, 3-4 vegetable cages, 4-6 large planter pots, garden twine, 2-3 shovels, 1 garden hoe, plastic bird house

For the Multi-Purpose Room: 4-5 yoga mats; exercise bands with handles (5, 10 and 15) & dumbbells (2's, 3's, 5's, 8's 10's), stability balls, 2 long folding tables, square cubbies or drawer storage for sewing and jewelry supplies

For Self Care: Mani/pedicure items – nail polish, hair dryer(s)

For the Training Center: Coffee table; smart TV, large bulletin board and push-pins OR large white board and Expo dry erase markers

For the Kitchen: K-cup coffee; cutting board

Other Ways to Help: (1) Become a Monthly Impact Partner providing monthly financial support for the mission of Catalyst Ministries or (2) Provide a One-Time Gift honoring a loved one as a one-time financial donation. Please note on check or donation form that this is a contribution (for which you can receive a tax deduction). Catalyst Ministries is a 501c3 tax-exempt organization.

SIA Bylaw Amendments Approved

Ballots from 603 Clubs were submitted for eight proposed amendments to SIA Bylaws. In a January announcement SIA indicated all proposals were approved with a 2/3 majority vote. Our Club voted affirmatively on proposals 2-8 but voted “no” on Proposal 1 which removed the reference of “social” empowerment from the mission statement. The approved amendments go into effect immediately.

New Look!



Please begin using the new Soroptimist 100th Anniversary logo on all communications effective immediately.

Mark Your Calendar!

JANUARY 2021

- 1/8 - First 2021 CLUB 250 Raffle drawing
- 1/15 – Virginia Wagner Educational Award Application deadline
- 1/20 – Zoom Business Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Christie Germanis, speaker

FEBRUARY 2021

- 2/1 – Zoom Working Meeting, 5:30 p.m. 2021 Projects Discussion
- 2/5 - Club 250 Raffle drawing
- 2/15 – Virginia Wagner winner to District
- 2/17 – Zoom Business Meeting, 5:30 p.m.
Bevin Choban, speaker
- 2/26 – SIBN Newsletter Deadline for Mar-Apr

Member Spotlight In My Own Voice



Barb Adams joined Soroptimists 7 months after the Bloomington-Normal Club was Chartered January 1988. She served as President, Secretary, Treasurer and on numerous committees over the years. Barb has always been highly involved in SIBN's fundraising activities e.g., fashion show, garage sale in addition to all 31 Gift Wrap for Charitys since its inception in 1989. She is from Princeville, IL, has 5 siblings, and is an ISU alum (PE),

Her immediate family includes husband Scott, three adult daughters Stephanie, Mollie and Lindsey . . . and a wonderful granddaughter Olivia. After working 42 years in banking (Trust, Asset Management) Barb retired from Heartland Bank in 2017. Her passion for all things historical has found her providing 12 years of leadership for the Route 66 Lincoln Festival, being an active member of D.A.R., including interest in genealogy. She exercises regularly/virtually with her "Boot Camp" and is always working on a jigsaw puzzle.

Larissa Armstrong, is the daughter of long-time Soroptimist member Nancy Armstrong and started volunteering at the annual Gift Wrap for Charity in the 1990s as a teenager. When she had the time to commit to community service, she joined Soroptimists in 2015.

Originally from Bloomington-Normal, Larissa left a few times for college and graduate school, but kept finding her way back home. She is a proud "townie" and married one too! Larissa and her husband Zach live in Bloomington with their two cats. She is currently Assistant Director for the Ecology Action Center. Larissa's primary role in that position is serving as a community educator for all things solar. She also runs the Center's Yard Smart program educating the community on environmentally friendly lawn and garden practices.

Larissa's community engagement does not end with Soroptimists and her work for the EAC. She is an active leader at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington-Normal where she currently serves on the board and is an advisor for the Youth Group. She has also served on the West Bloomington Revitalization Project board for the last 4 years and will serve as the board president in 2021!

In her spare time, Larissa enjoys practicing yoga, going for walks and hikes, baking, and spending time with her family and friends. She is passionate about her community, and wishes we lived in a world where everyone had access to clean air, clean water, healthy food, comfortable shelter, and education. She tries to make those visions a reality through her career path and community engagement.



Soroptimist Vision and Mission

VISION

Women and girls have the resources and opportunities to reach their full potential and live their dreams.

MISSION

Soroptimist is a global volunteer organization that provides women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.

CORE VALUES

Gender Equality;
Empowerment;
Education; Diversity & Fellowship

SIBN Program & Service Report – Sandy Groves, Chair

The judges for the *Live Your Dream Award* have been turning in their results for 8 completed applications. The scores are being tallied with plans to send our Club winner to District before January 12th. With a January 15, 2021 deadline, we have responded to 18 application requests for the *Virginia Wagner Educational Award*. We just received our first completed application package from a student at Lincoln Christian University. With grades from Fall semester being available, there should be an influx of applications after the first week in January.

SLACK, the Regions new communication platform/work space has been a great resource for Program and everything else going on for Soroptimists in the Region. SLACK Guru Alex Coon will be providing help with the new SIA Soroptimist Digital Toolkit starting in January. Here is her post on the SLACK Announcement Channel:

“Alexandra Coon 2:50 PM

Hello SIMWR Members! I am going to feature facets of the Soroptimist Digital Toolkit each week, starting in January, that will help familiarize you with ALL the amazing content available and EASY to find! There are awesome suggestions and links to online fundraising platforms, social media assets, logos, sample press releases, info on the 100th celebration, and more! So, be sure to join the #public-awareness channel to stay abreast of the tools from the toolkit I'll be highlighting for you! <https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/digital-toolkit/index.html>”

ANOTHER NEW SLACK FEATURE: As a result of the posting for the passing of 2017 MWR Outstanding Soroptimist Jody Clark, (SI-Fremont), a Celebration of Life channel was just added to SLACK. Logged on to the District meeting recorded session on Program by Christine Fowler Shearer and got latest news which I was able to report in the minutes regarding Club Grants and changes to the Live Your Dream Awards. As a result got on to SIA's SOROPTIMIST FORWARD site to explore all the digital tools available for the Club Program Chair.

CLUB 250 Raffle-Out with the Old... In with the New

Our Club 250 Raffle for 2020 went out with a BANG with our \$500 winner being Tiffany Groves, Fred and Sandy Grove's granddaughter living in Normal. The ticket had been part of Tiffany's 2019 Christmas from her grandparents. It's "In with the New" for our Club 250 Raffle for 2021. The first raffle ticket pulled on January 1st for \$100 was from Beverly Beyer. Bev has been a longtime volunteer for Gift Wrap for Charity. When solicited to buy a ticket in lieu of volunteering to wrap, she bought a ticket. Bev is Senior Associate Director of the Stevenson Center for Community and Economic Development at Illinois State and manages Peace Corps and AmeriCorps programs.

As of January 4th, 207 Raffle tickets have been sold with sales at \$10,767. We've broken even and have about \$5100 towards our awards!! We'll continue to sell the remaining 43 tickets. Suggested is to sell them at a discounted rate subtracting a \$1 for every week a drawing is missed, e.g., ticket sold after 2 weeks would be \$50. Additional sales will be important as the Club will be responding to an SIA request to increase the number of *Live Your Dream Awards* because of need due to the pandemic. For *Live Your Dream* this year the Club decided, in addition to the 3 larger awards, to provide smaller awards to all applicants determined by the judges as worthy of funding.

Remove Me

No longer wish to receive emails from B-N Soroptimist? Email slittle@ilstu.edu to be removed from our master mailing list. You may be on more than one list and we will do our best to remove you from all.

Holiday Zoom Social Soroptimist Style

From the annual ornament exchange, oh, excuse me, ornament sharing to Joanie's wassail, we pulled it all off virtually. That's how we roll – always flexible and going to find a way.



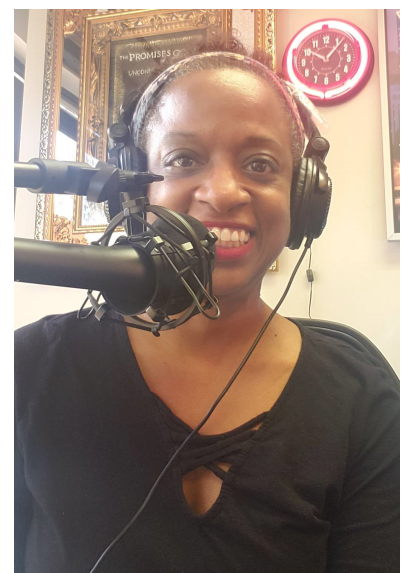
Lakeesha James-Smith Co-Authors National Presentation

At the November 2020 Gerontological Society of America's Annual Scientific Meeting-Online, Soroptimist Lakeesha James-Smith was one of three co-authors for a poster presentation entitled "Stress, Hope, and Depression Among Older Adults Living in Public Housing". First author was Mignon Montpetit, Associate Professor of Psychology at Illinois Wesleyan with Amy Gourley, an Honors student at IWU as the third co-author.

The study explored how hope impacts the relationship between stress and depression in adults (aged 51-90) years. Results suggest that hope may be important in helping mitigate the impact of life stress on vulnerable individuals. Lakeesha is pursuing graduate work part-time at the University of Illinois.

It's Sue Young and Soroptimists on JPRG Radio, Atlanta, GA

On the Friday after Thanksgiving several Soroptimists were able to catch Sue Young talk about Soroptimists on JPRD Radio from Atlanta, GA. Sue took her role as Public Awareness Chair to heart sharing with the JPRD Atlanta audiences about the local and international mission of Soroptimists AND a pitch for SIBN Club 250 Raffle. She gave a shout out to all the Atlanta area Soroptimist Clubs, as well. The radio show was a family affair with members of Sue's family serving in host/deejay roles with the station, including Xrsty Draper. JPRG is a universal listening channel – playing Smooth Jazz, Pop, classic R&B, and Gospel.



Reconnect with Friendship Link Club – Asahikawa, Japan

President Becky announced receiving a 2020 holiday greeting from the Soroptimist Club in Asahikawa, Japan to whom she responded. This international relationship was new to Becky, as it would be for any B-N Soroptimists joining after 2012. That was our last communication with Asahikawa. SIBN has formal SIA Friendship Link agreements with two Clubs, SI of Asahikawa, Japan established in 1992 and SI of Bernie, Tasmania established in 2003. Our last contact with the Bernie Club was in 2008. With the contact by the Asahikawa Club, we can reconnect with a long-time friend!

The two Clubs first met when Asahikawa Soroptimist's were delegates for the 30th Anniversary Exchange of the Bloomington-Normal/Asahikawa Sisters Cities program. Both Clubs' members placed their painted handprints on paper which was framed and taken back to Japan. In 2002 and 2012 the two Clubs reunited again as part of the Sister Cities Anniversary Exchange. The Friendship Link's 20th Anniversary was celebrated in 2012 with a luncheon at the new Uptown Normal Marriot with and an exchange of gifts.



Winner SIBN Barb Hoegger Memorial Fund

Laurianne Muyembe

Soroptimist International of Bloomington-Normal Barb Hoegger Memorial Fund

- My future career goal is to complete my associate's degree in art at HCC and continue my career in accounting.
- The scholarship means that there are kind people out there willing to assist me in my studies.
- Thank you for selecting me as a recipient for this scholarship.

