

S.I.M.E.R. News

Soroptimist International

Midland East Region

www.soroptimist-gbi.co.uk/midland-east

Soroptimist International is a vibrant, dynamic organisation for today's professional and business women.

We are committed to a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.



Autumn 2010 edition

President's message



As I write this message the rain is beating against the window and it certainly feels as though the summer is over. My year as President is also drawing to a close as we all look forward to meeting at the Manchester Conference where Midland East Region will welcome President Elect Jasmit into the hot seat! I know we are in for an exciting year with a very enthusiastic leader at the helm. I also know that she will be supported as I have been throughout my year by a dedicated team without whom our jobs would be impossible. I want to pay a particular tribute to our two secretaries, Lynda Clifford, Region Secretary, and Sheila Bennett, Minutes Secretary. These are not the most high profile or glamorous roles but they are absolutely essential to the running of our Region activities. Thank you to you both.

The theme of my year has been women creating peaceful communities and two events stand out which have encapsulated the reason for my

choice. The first was our visit to Beth Shalom, the Holocaust Centre, on 19 June 2010. The day itself was made unforgettable by the afternoon speaker, Dorothy Fleming, who told us her life story from the comfortable, middle class life in Vienna of her early childhood with her cosmopolitan parents, to the horrors of the last few months before she left, aged 10, on the Kindertransport with her little four year old sister. It was the small human details that had the most impact on me, the autograph book in which her best friend had written warm wishes, only to shun her on the teacher's instructions a year or so later. The way the children were left to look after themselves on the long train journey to the English Channel, and how she put her little sister to sleep in the luggage rack.

The story culminated in marriage to another Kindertransport child and a long productive life in England. This was echoed for me just a few weeks later when I chanced upon an exhibition in Windermere while I was on holiday, entitled From Auschwitz to Ambleside. This was the story of another group of Jewish children, welcomed into a Britain plunged into austerity by six years of war but still determined to help where she could. These children had been liberated from the concentration camps. It was another fascinating story of brave people surviving unimaginable suffering and going on to contribute to society.

The second event which made a huge impact on those who were there was the story telling performance by Roisin Murray at the Region meeting on 11 September 2010. Roisin is a story teller by profession. The story she told us was of her visit to Israel in 2008 with a group of story tellers, there to support various organisations who are working to bring peace between Israelis

and Palestinians, Jews, Muslims, Christians and secular people. She told us of the meetings between Jewish and Muslim women, who through telling the stories of their cultural traditions began to recognise what they had in common. She enthralled us with the stories of the King who by carelessly dropping honey off his rice cake, caused a war; the red squirrel who was emptying a loch, by dipping his tail into the water and shaking the drops off at the top of the hill; and most of all the daughter in law who grew to love her mother in law by massaging her with oil every day (too long to recount here, ask me if you want to know more). After we had been inspired by her performance we had a chance to tell each other something of our own stories, and we all agreed the chance to be listened too in that way was something which happens all too rarely in modern life.

I notice from the Beth Shalom website that James, Stephen and Marina Smith who founded the Holocaust Centre in 1995, were all given honorary doctorates by the Nottingham Trent University this summer and I am sure you will all join with me in congratulating them on this well deserved and unique honour.

Yours in Soroptimism

Claire



Dorothy Fleming signing a copy of her book for Christina Elvin, along with her daughter and granddaughter. Both Dorothy's daughter and granddaughter said that it was the first time they had heard Dorothy speak, and that it had made them very proud. Thanks to Christina for sharing this story with us.

Obituary

Eileen Crain a former Treasurer of SI Lincoln & District died January 2010, aged 86. An active Soroptimist for over 45 years she had previously been a member of Sutton Coldfield and Nottingham Clubs.

SIMER Charter Dates 2010-11

- Chesterfield Sunday 6th March 2011
Lunch (tbc)
- Nottingham 18- 20th March 2011
Charter weekend
- Mansfield Sunday 9th October 2011
Charter Lunch
- Leicester Saturday 12th March 2011
Charter Dinner

If your club is not listed above please let Lynda Clifford know your Charter plans for this year.

SIMER Web Seminar



The Region web site day was held on July 3rd. A dozen Soroptimists met up at the George Spencer School, Nottingham to hone their skills in a hands-on session. Although the skill level ranged from beginner to experienced, everyone felt that they had gained considerably from the day. Linda Clifford served an excellent lunch including her special brownies.

Irene Brown, SI Nottingham

Dear friends,

The sixteen young women who attended our 2010 camp session are now safely home and returning



to their lives, where the difficult work of peacemaking begins. They came from kibbutzim in the north of Israel, from the Tel Aviv area and villages in the south on the border of Gaza, from the West Bank cities of Ramallah and Nablus, with excitement, anticipation, and fear.

The challenge was convincing them to voice their pain and anger in dialogue and art. Their anthem was 'Trust the process,' an impersonation of the words of our staff, which they spoke with a mixture of sarcasm and hopefulness.

While preparing for our public event in Santa Fe the inevitable breakdown occurred. In 12 camp sessions we have learned that there is no breakthrough without this collapse. Jewish girls separated from Palestinian girls and the war of words began, in perfect simulation of the Middle East conflict. With the help of the 14 skilled women on our camp staff and the wisdom of the girls themselves, they rose to the occasion, putting aside their differences to read their writings about peace for an audience of 250 people. Afterwards, they felt proud and empowered, while still recognizing the issues to be addressed between them.

In the final dialogue, the girls practiced the skills they will need to meet the resistance they will encounter at home. They expressed their deep desire to make a difference for their countries and their world. In October they will meet again at Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salam, an intentional Jewish-Arab village in Israel, to share their struggles and triumphs and to 'refuel' for the long road of peacemaking ahead.

Thank you for supporting these young women and their crucial work. Please know that you are not only enriching lives but also making peace possible.



Dottie Indyke
Executive Director, Creativity for Peace
The courage to lead. The promise of change.
www.creativityforpeace.com

Report from Anne Spence



I am delighted to have been elected to serve as councillor/director for a fourth and final year and I would like to thank you all for your encouragement and support.

I gave a full report to the September Council Meeting it included information on:-

- Yes we Canø
- Review of Federation President's travel
- Loos for Lynnø
- ø75 for 75ø
- General Meeting 2010
- Conference Venues 2013 -2016
- Federation Officers 2010 ó 2011
- Si Long Term Project

Your Region Reps should have a copy of the report so if you need details on any of the above items ask them or contact me.

At the time of writing my report I was not able to give details of the SI Long Term project but you should all have received a letter from Hilary Ratcliffe informing you that Education and Leadership is to be the Long Term project. All we need now are clear details as to how it will be implemented!

Conference is drawing near and in my report I urged you to give clear guidance to your voting delegates on the General Meeting Resolutions which include some major changes to capitation fees and the management of our Federation. Both resolutions require a 75% majority in favour.

Please invite me to visit your club in this my last year of office. I look forward to seeing many of you in Manchester.

Anne
Federation Councillor/Director

Letter from S.I. Bonaberi, followed by a response from SIGBI Programme Director Hilary Ratcliffe:

S.I Bonaberi's adult literacy project has produced its first graduate. We had been teaching 10 illiterate women in our ALP in the past one and the half years. We sent them in for the National First School Certificate Exam in June 2010. All of them passed. These women could not read nor write. But today they can do all these.

WE ARE VERY PROUD of the support of the Midland East Clubs for their support in paying our capitation fees. The Clubs in the nation are proceeding with the same project.

As a National President, I am thanking you all for your support.

Hope to see you in the conference

Best Regards

Ada Kesi

I was so pleased to hear about the success of your literacy project. Will you pass on my congratulations to all your club members. It just shows how good it is to partner with other Soroptimists to achieve our vision and mission. Well done. You should all be very proud of the work that you are doing.

I

In friendship

Hilary

SIGBI Programme Director

**ANNOUNCING PRESIDENT
HANNE JENSBO'S
2010 SOROPTIMIST
INTERNATIONAL
DECEMBER 10 APPEAL:
SOROPTIMISTS FOR
EDUCATION AND
LEADERSHIP**



Soroptimists from all over the world will join together locally, nationally, regionally, and internationally to use our tools of AWARENESS, ADVOCACY, and ACTION to empower women and girls through education and leadership. (As you may already know, 74% of clubs worldwide chose education and leadership as the topic for the new long term project.)

Through your contributions to the 2010 President's December 10 Appeal, we will raise money to award grants to at least five outstanding Soroptimist projects of excellence around the world that empower women and girls through education and leadership and the more we raise the more we can do.

The Appeal will fund Soroptimist clubs in their local work to improve the lives of women and girls in need. For the first time ever in an international project, Soroptimists can directly support other Soroptimists in partnership and friendship while creating a significant positive impact for women and girls across the globe.

Actions Speak Louder than Words!



CLUB NEWS

S.I. Chesterfield and District



(l-r): Margaret Balding, Claire Bell region president, Simone Smith president Chesterfield and District and Jean Horton

At their Diamond Charter dinner in March, President Claire awarded long service awards to members of the club, which represented over 100 years. Those receiving awards were Margaret Balding (35 years), Jean Horton (25 years) and Margery Thompson B.E.M. (45 years), who was sadly unable to be present.

S.I. Lincoln



SI Lincoln and District present a cheque for £210 to 'EVE HOUSE' the new women's aid refuge following their 'Buy a Brick' campaign!

SI Lincoln organised a Philosophy Café at the Dog and Bone pub in Lincoln in aid of SIGBI President's 75 for 75 appeal for Water Aid. The topic was 21st Century Women: Queen of multi-tasking or just spinning plates? The morning was led by philosopher James Taylor-Foster.

A lively debate around the topic of women's role in society including a section on women in developing countries saw the morning pass far too quickly.

As well as most enjoyable, lively, and stimulating morning the event raised £241. There was the also added bonus of some of our guests showing an expression of interest in Soroptimism.

S.I. Peterborough



SI Peterborough celebrated their 60th Charter with a Black Tie Dinner at the Town Hall 12th June 2010

68 Soroptimists and partners from Peterborough and Midland East Region dressed for the occasion in Black and White evening dress.

SI Peterborough members wore black and white fascinators.

At the top table are Claire Bell Midland East President, Sandra Angood President SI Peterborough and husband, Sue Cadman Speaker from the Roly Polys and Judy Barsby SI Peterborough

S.I. Leicester



In June, 12 members of SI Leicester travelled to Skjerm-Tarm in Denmark to strengthen their friendship link.

They were treated with friendship and hospitality and a variety of activities, including a visit from International President Hanne Jesbo, who talked of her recent visits to Rwanda and Kenya.