



## **Soroptimist International Edinburgh news notes anecdotes**

### **SIEnna 223 February 2024 President's Message**

This edition of SIEnna is published as we approach the annual celebration of the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women on International Women's Day March 8<sup>th</sup>.



I am delighted that in this edition we are able to showcase and share the achievements and news from our Friendship groups from around the world. I hope you enjoy seeing the range of different activities and inspirational action taking place.

A particular mention must be made of the courage and tenacity of our friends in Ukraine. A message from them is included below. We wish them all, and other women worldwide in war torn areas and environments impacted by extreme weather, the strength to continue in these exceptionally challenging times.

On February 21<sup>st</sup>, several club members attended the Round table event, organised by UNHouse Edinburgh interns, "Mainstreaming the Eradication of Child

Poverty – a human rights perspective" held at the Scottish Parliament. This is the third in a series of events, they have organised, with a focus on poverty as a human rights issue. It was a well-attended and informative event. The panel speakers provided a range of perspectives about the issues including referring to recent data that indicates that there are now 1 in 3 children in the UK, living in poverty and that there has been a marked increase in the number of children under the age of 18 who are involved in "forced criminality".

A report of the event will be collated and published. In the meantime, the write up of the previous round table is available and can be found by following this link or pasting it into your computer browser

<https://www.unhscotland.org.uk/post/eradicating-poverty-in-scotland-a-roundtable-for-change-report>

Following our highly enjoyable and thought-provoking workshop run by the Edinburgh College of Art textile department, SIE are excited to be able to announce that we are setting up an annual prize for work that is considered to demonstrate the most innovative ideas for development of sustainable fabrics. Further detail is below. The launch of the award will be on International Women's Day as part of our celebration of women's educational achievements. The first prize will be presented at the Art College degree show this Summer.

### **Happy International Women's Day!**

Liz  
President 2024



### **Minutes of SIE Business Meeting**

**February 14th 2024**

**Welcome – Liz welcomed Victoria who is studying in Edinburgh. She is from just outside Vienna where her mother and grandmother are Soroptimists.**

**Vision & Mission - read by Nikki**  
**Apologies- Irene, Kathleen, Pat, Chris, Clephane, Alison**

**Matters arising from 8<sup>th</sup> November**

- Leaflet to explain sextortion: Liz has found a leaflet produced by Inequ (an organization to help navigate/explain on-line abuse for parents and children) ACTION : Dorothy and Judith to review document and consider whether suitable to place on our FB/Website pages. Liz will check re any potential Copyright issues.
  - Streamlining SIE email communication: more to do and so will defer to next meeting
  - 16 Days/Eradicating Violence Against Women: Posters re On-line abuse have been distributed by members and Liz has made contact with Edinburgh College (awaiting a reply)
  - Friendship Link approach from Kirkintilloch: Liz has spoken to the Club and they will come back to us.
  - Domestic Homicide: Judith was looking into and will provide update for SIEnna.
- Minutes of last meeting proposed and seconded.

**Key items:**

**SIGBI Conference in Edinburgh 1-3 Nov 2024.**

Liz met with SIGBI President Ruth to discuss any support from SI Edinburgh/Scotland South Region.

There is no requirement for a 'Welcome to Edinburgh' speech or any stewarding. There might be a requirement for some help with guiding people to seats to ensure maximum useage.

Conference theme will be Soroptimist purpose – Standing up for women and girls – education, empowerment, enabling.

Liz ran through several requests received from Ruth and Club made decision on each.

- 1) Can we approach a few local cafes and suggest they offer a discount to delegates?  
Yes, Liz and Nikki
- 2) Can we suggest dinner options for clubs? Yes (provide a list and advise to pre-book)
- 3) Any ideas for local or country wide tours? Suggest the Committee speak to Tourist Information Edinburgh or Scottish Tourist Board
- 4) Can we offer home hospitality? No – not as part of the conference publicity.
- 5) Any ideas about suitable Scottish music to accompany the parade of flags? Suggest a female piper. She will be best placed to recommend a suitable tune
- 6) Any thoughts on a suitable venue for Conference dinner on the Saturday night? Suggestions included Heart of Midlothian Football Ground, Dynamic Earth, Murrayfield Rugby ground, Edinburgh Castle. ACTION: Gari has contact in Visit Scotland who may be interested in helping identify a venue. Gari to contact. Recommend a Ceilidh and Dinner
- 7) Could we recommend a Man with a Van to drive to Stockport and back? No – plenty advertised. (note Emission Zone charge from June)
- 8) Have we a contact for Smalls for All they could approach re a collection? Yes – Lindsey can provide contact address for Smalls for All
- 9) Meet and greet at airport or station? No – not practical unless offering onward transport to city centre/hotels etc. Could possibly provide details of options to get from Airport/Train station

Conference website will be open 1/4/24. Current Rector of Edinburgh University, Debora Kayembe to open Conference.

(Liz has written to her inviting her to meet a few Edinburgh Soroptimists in advance) We suggested that an Orange Café is organised for the Friday morning as Edinburgh is where it started! They will consider idea.

### **Scotland South Region -PAMM update on new operating model.**

Check-in meeting held in January with all new team leads. All teams established with sufficient volunteers from Clubs. Positive response to new way of working and sharing of responsibilities. PAMM team continue to oversee set-up and help resolve any issues that hadn't been anticipated. 2 Short-life teams set up 1) to consider future of 3S fund and 2) to establish Regional meeting rhythm. Both will disband when task completed.

**Update from 3S team:** Trustees and a number of Club members with experience of the Fund. Summary of email/report :The 3S Fund was started in 1990 with the aim of ' Supporting projects which improve the lives of women and girls to achieve their potential in line with the objects of Soroptimist international'. This aim has been achieved over the years with over £65,000 having been disbursed to successful candidates. The fund account presently holds just under £4,865. Team identified issues re the continuation of the Fund – impact of COVID and associated restrictions, organisations that supported applicants have closed, less Clubs to contribute money to the Fund, and escalating costs of support requested it concluded that the fund is insufficient to make a real and effective impact.

The current balance will be donated to the Soroptimist International Foundation (as it has similar objectives) ACTION Nikki to get clarity on the objectives of the SI Foundation and whether similar 3S applicants would be eligible.

**Art College Prize :** Colette from the Art College met with Alison and Liz to discuss the possibility of us committing to an annual award over next 5 years. She was

delighted at the suggestion. Proposed £300 per year for 5 years. The prize will be awarded to one student each year, for creative and innovative work linked to sustainability projects/products. So that it also ties in with SI goals the aim will be to enable education and empower women in their final year of undergraduate studies. Suggest we start from this academic year. The award will be identified as donated by SI Edinburgh and we have been asked to be involved in the selection of the winner and to attend the prize giving and degree show. Need to think of a name – current thinking 'Soroptimist Sustainability Award-funded by SI Edinburgh'

Unanimous agreement to proceed with this initiative. ACTION: Colette is drafting a brief for our consideration.

### **International Womens' Day :**

Significant resources provided by IWD. Slogan 'Inspire Inclusion'. Suggested activity for SIE – 1)do a 5 day count down to 8/3/24 on our FB page – celebrating womens achievement.2) launch our Art College Award 3) attend the Scottish Womens Convention event at Holyrood on 2/3/24 (booking now closed but email and register to be on the waiting list) 4)look at using the IWD email signature sign-off 'block' from now until the end of March ACTION : Nikki to share the 'block' to be downloaded by individuals.5)consider attending SI Dunfermline's meeting at the Carnegie Centre 7pm 7/3/24. ACTION : Liz to contact Eva and get details – post meeting note - it is the 14<sup>th</sup> March.

**Orange the World :** Liz suggested a small sub group to make recommendations as to how we continue this initiative – reference Equally Safe Scotland – plan our approach for next period. ACTION : Anna, Elaine, Liz and Judith volunteered to form planning team.

**Big Plastic Count campaign :** opportunity to count how much plastic is recycled during week 11 – 17<sup>th</sup> March. To be done on individual basis but we can promote our participation on FB. ACTION :

register by emailing [help@thebigplasticcount.com](mailto:help@thebigplasticcount.com) (document circulated with meeting invite)

**Campaign to overhaul Police Scotland**  
– initiative by Scottish Womens Equality and the Scottish Womens Convention, to address racism and misogyny in Police Scotland. (documents circulated with meeting invite) Agreement that as a Club we would partner with SWE and SWC plus ask all members to consider signing to the petition on an individual basis.  
[https://www.womensequality.org.uk/police\\_scotland\\_open\\_letter](https://www.womensequality.org.uk/police_scotland_open_letter)

### Other Updates Programme Action

**The Welcoming** (support in Edinburgh for refugees) conversation group  
Dorothy and Elaine attended recent conversation café at The Welcoming. High %age of males in attendance but they understand there is a female only café on a Tuesday. The Welcoming said if we wished to set up our own café then they would publicise it for us.  
We would need to consider which area? What else is available in the area? How many people? Actual venue? ACTION : Elaine is to visit the Out of the Blue Drill Hall on Leith Walk and see what they are offering. She will also attend a Tuesday café at the Welcoming to do some more research.

### Membership - Anna

Anna has been in touch with all 4 potential members and will continue to invite them to relevant events and share meeting details with them. Nikki is following up on another possible member.

### Treasurer - Dorothy

In view of update re 3S fund Dorothy will arrange for the existing donations of £27.60 for 3S to be added to the donations received from members for the Soroptimist International Foundation  
International Women's Day event  
Dunfermline 14.3.2024 at 7pm

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF DUNFERMLINE

**INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY**  
**"INSPIRING INCLUSION"**

**Come along and hear our speakers  
talk about their own experiences.**

Louise Evan-Wong  
Katrine Muirhead  
Maja Denisiuk

Round table discussion on how  
we can "inspire inclusion"

**THURSDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> MARCH AT 7PM**  
**CARNEGIE CONFERENCE CENTRE,**  
**DUNFERMLINE**

This event is free and we ask that those attending bring a pack of girls or ladies pants to donate to Smalls for All.

Places **must** be booked by the 8<sup>th</sup> of March by emailing  
[secy.sidunfermline@gmail.com](mailto:secy.sidunfermline@gmail.com)



## Human Rights and the UN HOUSE SCOTLAND Elimination of Child Poverty Roundtable

UN House Scotland sends a special note of thanks to SI Edinburgh and Soroptimists from other Clubs in Scotland for their support and attendance at the Roundtable on Human Rights and Child Poverty in Scotland.

The event at the Scottish Parliament on Wednesday 21 February drew attention to the lived experience of being in poverty, policies for the eradication of child poverty and research into the criminalization of children who experience lives of poverty.

A Report will be forthcoming and will be on the UNHS website shortly.  
[www.unhscotland.org.uk](http://www.unhscotland.org.uk)

**PLEASE NOTE; THERE IS NO MEETING ON WEDNESDAY 28 FEBRUARY.**

## **FRIENDSHIP LINKS!!**

### **Soroptimist Friendship Links**

These links are an opportunity to build friendships across the globe, share insights and information and learn first-hand about different cultures.

Friendship is fundamental pillar of Soroptimism and our international spread provides us with many opportunities to make new friends and learn.

To help facilitate building friendships and connections between clubs (internationally and locally) Soroptimist International has the Friendship Link 'framework' – not rocket science and in many cases not required when genuine friendships are established between individuals and groups of Soroptimists, at Conference. These then develop into their own clubs connecting.

However the 'framework' does enable unconnected clubs to connect, build a relationship, learn about, and with, each other, and the work we do, find ways to support a local project and perhaps even work on a joint project.

In SI Edinburgh we are fortunate to have established a number of Friendship Links over the years and we remain in contact with the clubs through our designated 'correspondents' - many thanks to those who maintain contact and keep us connected through newsletters, seasonal greetings and general updates.

### **Our current Friendship Links and Correspondents:**

SI Caldwell, Idaho, USA: Irene & Chris

SI Cockermouth, England: Pat  
SI Kiev, Ukraine: Winifred

SI Riverside, California, USA: Anna

SI Sioux Falls, Dakota USA: Clephane

SI Maribor in Slovenia: Lindsey

SI Madurai, India: Pat and Gari

We also have an informal link with SI Western Canada after Darlene's visit to Edinburgh with her husband. Anna will send our newsletter and correspond with them with any special news.

Nikki

### **KIEV**

Update from Winifred re Friendship Link with SI Kiev)

I had Christmas Card from Kiev but they said nothing about the current situation.

I hear regularly from the Dnipro Club. There are about six active members who do what they can for people who are worse off than themselves. My contact works at the university and there many problems in teaching and in trying to achieve the right standards

The air raid sirens are heard many times a day and many children are showing anxiety symptoms as one might expect.

### **SIOUX FALLS**

Our link with SI Sioux Falls in South Dakota is well established and Irene was the link person for many years. She is still in touch!

I now receive regular newsletters via email, (and thence on to SIE members) which provide an insight into SI in the USA.

They are obviously an active club and being able to see photos of members creates a more personal contact, which is reinforced by snippets of virtual conversation with President Carol.

I'm always impressed by the energy and links to organisations in the city and beyond.

And enjoy their monthly calendar for its list of local and national events as well as a few quirky items! Clephane and Irene





Introducing the Soroptimist International Foundation: In December, our Sioux Falls club donated \$75 to the International President's Appeal, as we have in the past.

With the establishment of the Soroptimist International Foundation, SI funds directed to the President's Appeal will go to the Foundation.

The SI President will lead the Foundation, raising awareness of projects and promoting fundraising.

The Foundation can apply for grant funding and receive donations from outside our membership without incurring taxes on those donations. Clubs, Regions, National Associations, Countries and Federations can propose projects for funding that meets the Objects of the Soroptimist International Foundation.



### International Women's Day

It is a global holiday that focuses on the women's rights movement, with attention to women's achievements, but also to issues such as gender equality, reproductive rights, and violence and abuse against women.



### RIVERSIDE

#### MARCH CALENDAR

##### ZERO DISCRIMINATION DAY

5 BOARD MEETING  
12:00 PM on ZOOM

8 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

9 LIVE YOUR DREAM: DREAM IT, BE IT CONFERENCE  
Riverside Community College

10 NATIONAL WOMEN AND GIRLS  
HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY

21 INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR  
THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL  
DISCRIMINATION

26 BUSINESS MEETING  
12:00 PM, Habitat for Humanity,  
2180 Iowa Avenue, Riverside



## STOP HUMAN TRAFFICKING EVENT

January 11, 2024

Civil Rights Institute of Southern  
California

Centuries-Long Trafficking, Missing,  
Murdered and Injustices  
of Native American Women



On January 11, 2024, which was National Human Trafficking Awareness Day, SI Riverside hosted their annual STOP Human Trafficking event. The theme this year was "Centuries-Long Trafficking, Missing, Murdered and Injustices of Native American Women." This was historic in that it was the first time SI Riverside focused on one specific segment of the population.

**MAY 17, 2024**  
**"RHINESTONES,**  
**COWGIRLS & AUCTION"**  
**FUNDRAISER**  
**CALIFORNIA CITRUS STATE**  
**HISTORICAL PARK**

## CALDWELL

A letter from SI Caldwell to our Club:

Dear Irene, I know we have been corresponding for quite a few years and I have enjoyed sharing your letters with my club.

SI Caldwell was chartered in 1946 by SI Boise. Caldwell is in Southwest Idaho with a population of about 60,000+ and growing.

We are now in the new Region of Plains to Plains of SIA. We hold 2 meetings a month, a business and program meeting and a board meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month. Meetings are generally held at noon, with lunch. We have 30 members; we gained some new members but also lost a few. We sometimes have speakers from other organizations.

We generally have several fundraisers a year. We raised about \$15,000 from our annual spaghetti dinner in October and a live auction and silent auction of donations.

We also helped out at a county Health Fair for elderly and disabled people in April, where different vendors give out information and samples; we helped set up and did the registration.

In August we sell programs for the Caldwell Night Rodeo and raise about \$1500; the Rodeo is held outside and is a big event for the Caldwell area.

At Christmas time we sponsor a family at a local women's shelter, buying gifts for the mother and children. We have a fun party with food and games and also do a gift exchange amongst members.

We like to have fun. This year we had a Bunco party (I think this is a dice game), a dance class, and also put together art kits for the shelter.

Depending on how much we fundraise, we give out Live Your Dream Awards; last

year we gave out 2 Awards for a total of \$7,000. We also give to numerous local organizations including 3 women's shelters, an Anti-Trafficking organization in Idaho, YMCA, and Salvation Army. It always makes us feel good to be able to support these projects.

During Covid we held virtual Zoom meetings and were really glad when we could start meeting again in person.

We have done a Dream It Be It program with local high school/middle school girls for the last 2 years; it has been a challenge but we will try again this spring. Being of an older generation this project has been a real learning session for us about young girls and how they think and what they do.

Our officers hold their office for 1 year; sometimes the Treasurer will do more than 1 year.

I will turn 76 in a few days and am among the retired ladies of our club. I have been a member of this club for almost 9 years and previously was a member of another club in Idaho before moving to Caldwell after my retirement. I worked in the potato industry (famous Idaho Potatoes) for over 35 years. I love what Soroptimists do to help women and how we try to help not only our local women but around the world.

Well Irene, I hope this letter finds you well. Keep writing. How long have you been our Friendship Sister? And I wish your club success in the future in these troublesome times. Take care and love from me and all from SI Caldwell.

To Irene and typed by Chris (thank you Chris!)

## MARIBOR

It was lovely to hear from Nada over Christmas - she sent greetings from all the club

members of SI Maribor and some lovely photographs which she has asked me to share with all the members of SI Edinburgh.

They had enjoyed a busy Orange the World and Christmas supper outing though were hit by several of their number going down with Covid or flu.

Nada added some personal news:

"In October, I retired from my job - after almost 42 years of work I felt that I was entitled to life at my own pace. Not that I will have nothing to do: I still have some unfinished supervisions of Master theses at the University (one defence next Wednesday), am on some committees for doctoral defences at the University of Ljubljana, I have also joined a group "Discover Slovenia", which organizes monthly lectures and trips to lesser known destinations in Slovenia, I will have more time for theatre and Opera, reading fiction, friends, walks etc.

Also, I got two invitations for guest lectures in the spring - one in Germany and one in Budapest. So, I am quite happy. And finally something that I was really happy about – on November 22, I was given the Faculty's award for life's work (the highest award given to one person every third year). It's a very rewarding feeling to get a recognition like that at the end of the career"

Our congratulations on that wonderful award were sent for the New Year, and finally Nada says as from the 1st of January she will be President of SI Maribor for the next two year –

well if you need someone for a job, trying asking a retired person, they'll have nothing else to do – will they!!

Lindsey