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EDITOR

Sherry Eskander

Deadline for October articles is Saturday 25th October

President's Message

Saturday 20th September was our region's AGM and I would like to thank Clubs that attended the meeting and thank the team who kept me on the straight and narrow as we worked our way through the formalities of the AGM.

Our first speaker represented Imago Dei and was their Fund Raising Officer. Imago Dei is a charity committed to equipping women in prison and upon their release to live in their fullest potential, set free from their past, knowing their true value and identity in life. Clea Saunders talked about the work this organisation undertakes and when talking about Grace House (in Maidstone) a property getting ready to welcome newly released women, I think all in the room started to think about how Soroptimist International could help. Clea will send a 'wish' list of items needed for the house to be made ready to become a home. I will be meeting her on Monday 29th September to discuss What Next! A thanks to Tunbridge Wells club for the introduction and who have been working with Imago Dei for some time.

The afternoon Speaker- Reverend Sue Lepp - Lead Chaplain at Gatwick Airport. What a varied role Sue has and her story certainly fitted into my theme of 'It's Never too Late'



Making her way from Canada to the UK, expanding her nursing career with a specialisation of palliative care through to becoming a Reverend! Her energy kept us all engaged and many questions followed.

I joined Soroptimist International Whitstable and District Club on Wednesday evening when I headed east to join the Club as it celebrates its second year since chartership. They have packed so much into those two years and it was great to welcome several guests to the meeting who are considering joining the Club.

As I have travelled around the region during my year in office I have taken away new ideas, got to know more of you and this newsletter really highlights the amazing programme action work the region undertakes.

Recently, I joined a Zoom meeting hosted by President Ruth Healey when a group of Regional Presidents got to exchange ideas, voice frustrations and celebrate their work. One

region is looking to develop an education programme for young men on the back of the harrowing drama Adolescence. So many ideas were exchanged.

I travelled up to Hotel 63 recently and met a fellow Soroptimist from Albany, Oregon. Just passing through with family as they make their way home. Great to connect with someone from another Federation.

I have two more events in October (before Conference). I will join an evening meeting at Sevenoaks and attend an 'Orange' themed event on the 25th of October hosted by Bromley Club.

In Friendship and With Thanks!



A plea for Vice President Nominations

One piece of business outstanding from our AGM is receiving nominations for the role of Vice President. There is a two year lead into the year of office and there is an experienced team (in the Region) to support all incoming officers. Interested? Then please reach out to either myself or Roxanne and we can chat about the role.

Your Region Needs **YOU!!!!**

Raising a glass to all of you and wishing you the best



It is time to call time on my monthly newsletter message. I will sit and reflect on the year and raise a glass to you all. |Wishing every success for Roxanne's year of office.

PS Hope to see some of you in Birmingham at Conference.

In Friendship and With Thanks!

President Sue



Data Storage in Clubs and Region

Do you know where and how your club stores data, member details, minutes, photos etc? At clubs and Region we have a responsibility to securely store this type of information. Do you know the risks if someone leaves and you no longer have access to the information, what happens if their system crashes or if they get hacked? Do you have back up plans? Do you check with your members that they are happy for their data to be stored and shared with members and possibility third parties? In Medway and Maidstone, we are looking at our governance arrangements and we're looking into the possibility and suitability of having a cloud-based storage system. One of our members, Mandy, has had experience in this area and challenged us to look more widely at the issue, considering governance, registering with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and our role as Data Controllers and Data Processors. Mandy raised the issue at a Regional meeting and it seems that a few other clubs are also getting to grips with the wider issue.

We would like to invite all clubs to nominate a representative to come to a zoom meeting, date to be advised, where we can discuss these issues, share knowledge and learning. Do we want a Regional data storage system or does each club have their own? A short paper covering these issues was sent out with the minutes from the Regional meeting on 20th September. Please do take the time to read it.

If you would like to be part of the group please contact me. Carol Infanti. Cfi42@outlook.com



Soroptimists Support Installation of 20,000 Poppies at Historic Dockyard Chatham

The Threads of Remembrance project previously reported on in SEE News (May edition) has grown beyond expectation with more than 20,000 handmade poppies from the community – far surpassing the original goal of 11,000.

Jane and Stella Barnes continued their involvement by responding to the call out on social media for volunteers to assist with fixing the poppies to the backing netting ahead of its installation on HMS Cavalier

The poppies form a striking installation at the National Destroyer Memorial at The Historic Dockyard Chatham. The tribute was unveiled on 15 September and Jane and Stella were invited to attend and be part of the commemorative photograph. There was media coverage, and Jane and Stella were interviewed by both Meridian and KMTV relaying why they had taken part. This tribute will be in place in the lead up to Salute to the '40s event and will remain on display until Armistice Day.

Each poppy represents one of the 11,000 men who lost their lives aboard the 142 Royal Navy destroyers sunk during the Second World War. At the heart of the memorial stands HMS Cavalier, the last surviving Royal Navy destroyer of the Second World War.



Lynnette Crisp, Director of Public Engagement, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, said: "Threads of Remembrance has grown far beyond anything we imagined, and we are deeply grateful to everyone who has contributed. Every handmade poppy carries a message of remembrance, love and respect. We are also grateful to the volunteers who devoted hundreds of hours to building the installation. Attaching thousands of poppies has been no small task and their commitment has been incredible."



Jane Barnes

SI Medway and Maidstone

66th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE SISEE REGION

President Sue welcome everyone including first time attendees to the 66th Annual General Meeting on 20 September at the Holiday Inn Rochester.

Our first speaker was Clea Saunders from Imago Dei - ID Prison Ministry via Zoom. She spoke about the work they do helping women in prison to address their personal issues, reasons for their past offending behaviour - with a view to becoming healed, whole, and living in their true potential. They have 4 key projects and one of these is the GRACE project. It is in Maidstone and is a property that is being refurbished by December for 6 women. There will be opportunities for member to get involved volunteering and donating items from a Wish List (to be provided) for GRACE house.

The AGM and adoption of officers was held, and all posts were confirmed except for Vice President. If any members would be interested in taking on this role then contact President Sue or incoming President Roxanne.

Following lunch, our speaker was "The Irreverent Reverend" Sue Lepp who serves Gatwick Airport chaplaincy and two local parishes. She was a lively speaker and told us about her journey from Canada to the UK and the twists and turns!

President Sue then had the pleasure of presenting a Long Service Award for 25 years' service to Carol Reed from SI Canterbury. There were two further certificates for Wanda Wright (Medway and Maidstone) and Jane Webb (Whitstable and district), who unfortunately were not in attendance and will be presented at a later date.

This year there were joint winners for the Grace Onions Award and certificates were presented to both SI East Grinstead and SI Canterbury for the work they have done on the environment.

Roxanne spoke about her plans for the coming year where her theme is 'Harvest our past to secure our future.'

Jane Barnes -SI Medway and Maidstone



Book Donations for Medway Maritime Hospital's Patient Library Trolley Service

One of our members, Teresa Cambell is a volunteer at Medway Hospital every Thursday. She assists with a library trolley service for patients that has made a comeback 25 years after the original service was last seen on the wards.

Reading offers a lot of therapeutic benefits that complement medical treatment, helps to reduce anxiety, and stimulates cognitive function. Books can also help patients maintain a sense of normalcy by sparking conversations with others, combat isolation, and support emotional healing. There really are lots of wellbeing benefits to reading which is why we decided to bring the service back after discovering the photo in our archives."

Patients can borrow books for as long as they wish, with returns collected during the next trolley visit. If a patient is discharged mid-read, they are welcome to take the book home.

To help grow its book collection the Library is appealing for donations of popular adult fiction, biographies or children's picture books that have been published in the last five years and are in good condition. Medway and Maidstone Soroptimists responded by donating books at their September meeting. In addition, clubs across the Region also brought books to the Regional AGM.

The hospital posted this message on their Facebook page:-

'A huge thank you to Soroptimist International of Medway and Maidstone for their generous donation of over 100 books to our patient library trolley service which has returned to our inpatient wards after 25 years.

And that is not all. The group has kindly pledged to donate more books following its regional Annual General Meeting this Saturday.'

Jane Barnes - SI Medway and Maidstone



Book donations for Medway Maritime Hospital's Patient Library Trolley Service

Bucket kits for the Refuge

SI Sevenoaks members Vicky Tibbits and Sandie Higgs visited the Sevenoaks Women's Refuge on 4th September. We had a good meeting with the Refuge Manager and she outlined areas where we could give them some support. She advised us that two families were due to move on to their own new accommodation that week.

So we went to Tesco to buy two bucket kits containing mop, cloths, brushes, dustpan, rubber gloves, hand cream and cleaning fluids so they could get off to a clean start!

The items were very gratefully received and we plan to have more available when needed. Pictured is Vicky Tibbits with the buckets!

Sandie Higgs—SI Sevenoaks



Buffet raises £140 for Domestic Abuse services

On 6 September, Carol McKeough hosted a summer buffet at her home. Although Carol was recovering from a series of recent surgeries and still wearing a plaster cast on her right arm, she was the perfect host as always.

Members attending brought along a variety of salad dishes to accompany the various cooked meats and some delicious desserts. We were fortunate that the weather was dry, and we could sit outside enjoying the food and company of Soroptimist friends.

It was a great afternoon enjoyed by all and the good news is that with donations £140 was raised. This money will be used to print materials as we launch the healthy/unhealthy relationship materials produced by Maplesden Noakes pupils for year 7 pupils in schools within Medway and Maidstone schools.

Jane Barnes - SI Medway and Maidstone



Carol's
Summer Buffet
raises
£140 for
domestic
abuse services



SI Sevenoaks Busy at Work

SI Sevenoaks were invited by new member Kerry Locke to attend Tommy's Tea Party celebrating 106 years at the British Legion Industries village in Aylesford, Kent on Wednesday 3rd September.

The cakes were fantastic and Homepride supported the event with their star Fred posing for pictures! Margaret Nicholson and Pat Downing are shown in our picture. Our second picture shows Anne Bond, Sandie Higgs, Kathy Jordan, Margaret Nicholson and Pat Downing; Kerry Locke was busy on duty and Penny Robbins was also at the event. We met some of the residents and joined in with some war time songs and were given bags of flour and Homepride tea towels. We each made nice donations to the event.

Sandie Higgs SI Sevenoaks



SI Sevenoaks President Margaret Crabtree handing over a cheque for £1,000 to Irene Collins of Guide Dogs, pictured here with trainee guide dog Rhubarb who behaved impeccably throughout the meeting.

Kathy Jordan SI Sevenoaks



SI Eastbourne & District Celebrate International Literacy Day 2025

Club members celebrated the UN International Literacy Day 2025 at the club meeting on 8th September (the actual day) by sharing quotes.

The range was very varied as you can read below (and approx 50/50 women and men and ranging from around the 1500s to practically the present day):

'One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world' Malala Yousafzai

'Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body'
Richard Steele (Irish writer from 17th century)

'Literature is the jump off point on which all life's successes take flight' Lauri Fortino (writer)



'A house without books is like a room without windows' Horace Mann (American education reformer)

'The pen is mightier than the sword' Edward Bulwer-Lytton (writer 1839)

'A woman who reads is a dangerous creature' Fatema Mernissi (Moroccan sociologist)

'For most of history, Anonymous was a woman'
Virginia Woolf

'Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world' Nelson Mandela

'Frame your mind to mirth and merriment, which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life'
William Shakespeare (Taming of the Shrew)

'You may shoot me with your words
You may cut me with your eyes
You may kill me with your hatefulness
But still like air I rise' Maya Angelou from her famous poem 'Still I Rise' (quite pertinent as we battle against Violence against Women and Girls)



'Its not eazy being a pedent
correcting others' mis-takes all daylong
My freinds and me are totally sic
of observing gramma witch has gone wrong.

"Whom are these language offenders"?,
"could it be that I maybe one, to"
Their ignorant; stupid, and careless:
off gramma they have'nt a clue.

They're speling is sutch an embarrasment
its' amature, wired, and, abserd,
comprized of neither thought or intelligance,
to a dictionary they should of refered.

Writing down there awkwardly formed sentences,
the participle clauses are left dangling.
just made one less mistake each would have the affect
to dramatically reduce this language mangling.'
Pedents by Brian Bilston (poet and writer)

It was great fun sharing the quotes and learning about their writers.

What would you have chosen?

Joyce Boorman - SI Eastbourne & District



Soroptimists complete train station safety surveys



The full article on the hub library ' Railway Project Article Final.PDF'

COMMUNICATION CAFÉ DROP-IN





**LAST FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH,
DROP-IN SURGERY FOR AN HOUR FROM MIDDAY.**

**BRING YOUR QUESTIONS, IDEAS, CHALLENGES.
WE LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU.**

Please note the following upcoming events.

No need to register, just use the link at the correct date/time - all events and the links are in the Events section of the Hub:



**Friday 3 October
12:00-13:00 -**

**NEW Programme
Drop In Cafe - to be
held first Friday of
the month**

**Saturday 18 October
13.30-15.50 -
Federation**

**Programme Action
Committee
meeting 2025 - this
is the annual FPAC
meeting.**



Passionate Host



Dedicated Service Woman

Thank You



Savvy Fundraiser

Thank You
FOR YOUR SUPPORT



Excellent Team Player



She will pursue change

