



SOROPTIMIST®

Investing in Dreams

Soropti - Scoop

*A Communiqué by
women and men dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls
through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.*

Volume 30, Issue 8

Soroptimist International of Sequim

Celebrating 78 Years of Service

February 2026

Officers 2025 — 2026

President:

Roxann Harr

President-Elect:

Natasha Merkuloff-Nichols

Secretary:

Christy Holy

Treasurer:

Sandy Lawrence

Assistant Treasurer:

TBD

Director: 2 year

(one year remaining)

Kathy Purcell

Director: 2 year

Shirley Legg

Director: 1 year

Colleen Blazier

Director: 1 year

Patty Lebowitz

Immediate Past-

President:

Linda Klinefelter

Newsletter Staff:

Kathy Purcell

Jan Hartig

Jane Manzer

Pat Willis

**“Focus on the journey,
not the destination.**

**Joy is found not
in finishing an activity
but in doing it.”**

~Greg Anderson

President’s Message

Hello Everyone,

As February rolls in, my husband often teases me about getting the “winter blahs.” The days are getting longer and brighter, but the chill in the air and the cold wind can make gardening feel discouraging, even with the sun shining. Thank goodness it’s the shortest month of the year!

This month, our club is buzzing with activity, and I can hardly keep up! The Gala Garden Show is shaping up to be an exciting event featuring Ciscoe, fantastic raffle items, beautiful artwork, new and returning vendors, and a unique contest. We’ve made a slight increase in the admission fee but will be offering discounts on two-day passes. Sophie’s Florist, our very first Diamond sponsor, will be decorating the entrance alongside Linda Klinefelter.

In addition to the show, I’d like to highlight that the Medical Loan Closet is moving to a new location. A big shoutout to Chris Snow, Susan Coffee, and Elaine Powlesland for their admirable hard work in securing the new leased space and coordinating the move! They’ll be hosting an open house and/or a Chamber showing soon, so stay tuned for more details.

Mark your calendars for the Olympic Peninsula Area Meeting in Port Angeles on Saturday, February 28th. This event provides a wonderful opportunity for us to support the PA clubs and connect with members from other local clubs. I strongly encourage everyone, especially our new members, to attend. As we prepare to host the Area Meeting in the near future, it’s important that we rally together and demonstrate our support for this vital event.

On a somber note, we recently lost a long-time member, Mayme Faulk. Although I did not have the privilege of knowing her, I’ve heard from other members that she was kind, dedicated, and truly someone to emulate. Mayme joined the Sequim club in February of 1986, and we will be dedicating the 2026 Gala Garden Show in her memory.



Warm regards,
President Roxann



**“Life is short and we have never too much time for gladdening the hearts
of those who are travelling the journey with us. Oh be swift to love,
make haste to be kind.” ~Henri Frederic Amiel**

Letter from the Editor

Dear Friends,

It's February – Heart Health Month. When we see or hear the word *heart* we often first think of the muscular organ that pumps the blood through our circulatory system. We think of the physical meaning of the word heart. We know that a healthy diet and exercise can contribute to a healthy heart.

When we see or hear the word heart in the month of February we often think of hearts and flowers and cupid. We are reminded of Valentine's Day everywhere we look.

The symbol of a heart can represent friendship, love and passion. We see that being Soroptimists we bring all of these together. We establish friendships, we love what we do and we get to express our passion while doing it. Each of us has something we enjoy. We have gifts/talents to offer – something that stirs our hearts. These are enhanced when we share them.



The heart is a specialized muscle that contracts regularly, and consistently pumps blood to all cells of the body. The pumping action is caused by the flow of electricity through the heart that repeats itself in a cycle.

This reminds me of Soroptimist. As members, we are the heart of the club; love is our life-blood; our enthusiasm is the electricity. We have some ways of spreading these to other Soroptimists by attending the Olympic Peninsula Area Meeting in Port Angeles on February 28 and the Northwestern Region Conference in Whitefish, Montana, April 23-26.

Our yearly club cycle starts in February with a Nominating Committee. Their task is to find the electricity in the club – to form a slate of officers/board members for the next year. The process is an opportunity for members to step forward and express their hearts for Soroptimist. Just as there are many ways to physically exercise, there are many ways to direct our inner Soroptimist energy. Committee heads will also be needed for next year. If you are asked to serve, please consider accepting.

If you have an interest in a specific position, speak up. Or think about stretching yourself by going outside your normal comfort zone. With any new exercise there is some initial ache, but that is part of the health of the muscle. And the club is here to support each individual's growth and expansion. We continue empowering through encouragement.

We are powered by our members' involvement. The spark of each of us is important. It comes through our love. Working together – combining our talents – is a healthy diet, and as we exercise our Soroptimist hearts, what we contribute makes the heart of our club stronger. Thank you all for the love you give, the love you share, the love you are.



Light and Love
~Kathy Purcell, Editor



“Love is not singular except in syllable.” ~Marvin Taylor

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY 2026

- 3 GGS Core Cmt Mtg
- 6 Board Meeting
- 10 Business Meeting
- 21 Area Meeting - PA JetSet
- 24 Program Meeting

MARCH 2026

- 3 GGS Core Cmt Mtg
- 6 Board Meeting
- 10 Business Meeting
- 21-22 Gala Garden Show
- *31 GGS Potluck Celebration

*Evening Meeting

EMPOWERING



Through Encouragement

“Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place.”
~Zora Neale Hurston



“Love is the magician that pulls man out of his own hat.”
~Ben Hecht

Celebrate Life!

FEBRUARY 2026

Becky Archer
Sherry Lacey
Patty Lebowitz
Glen Varvil

MARCH 2026

Brandi Larson
Stephanie Soha



A REMINDER—2025-2026 MEETING LOCATION

We meet at
Fifth Avenue Senior Independent Living
500 W. Hendrickson, Sequim at 8 a.m.

See you February 10th.



FEBRUARY PROGRAM

Our program this month is **Jessie Young**, Director of Education and Artistic Engagement for the **Field Arts and Event Hall**. She's going to bring us up to date on Peninsula Performs! It's one of the programs to which we're providing funds.



Also, **Dana Lawson** of **Unbounded Horizons** will speak to us about their program.

Note the phone number for our
MEDICAL LOAN CLOSET
360-504-0231

*"Love is a symbol of eternity. It wipes out all sense of time, destroying all memory of a beginning and all fear of an end."
~Author Unknown*



SOROPTIMIST MEETING DATES TO REMEMBER

Olympic Peninsula Area Meeting
Port Angeles Jet Set
February 28, 2026



NWR Conference
Grouse Mountain Lodge
Whitefish, MT
April 23-26, 2026



49th Biennial SIA Convention
Incheon, South Korea
July 22-25, 2026

*"A man is not where he lives,
but where he loves."
~Latin Proverb*

MEET THE DECEMBER 2025 AND JANUARY 2026 GIRLS OF THE MONTH

Maryclair Torres



Soroptimist International was pleased to recognize Maryclair Torres as their **December 2025** Girl of the Month. Maryclair is a sophomore who enjoys her English Language Arts class and considers it her favorite. She is on

the cheer team, plays flag football and basketball, and when not busy with school activities, works at Sunny Farms. She hopes to attend college and pursue a career in law enforcement.

Kamrie McMahon



We are pleased to announce **January 2026** Girl of the Month, Kamrie McMahon. Kamrie is a sophomore whose favorite class is choir. She believes that singing brings out the best in her, and she thinks of the choir as a big family.

Looking ahead to her future, Kamrie plans to attend Peninsula College to study early childhood education, as she loves working with children.

CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS UPDATE

Mia Pozernick—Continuing Education Scholarship 2025-26 for Eastern Washington University

Gonzaga has been great! I love their law program. I've felt a perfect balance of supported and challenged. I just finished Fall Semester where I completed all of the required civil court classes: Torts, Contracts, Civil Procedure, Legal Research and Writing I, and Professional and Academic Foundations. I finished with a 3.43 GPA, which put me into the top 25% of my class!

I've also been mindful of trying to give back to the community. I completed around 25 hours of public service during my first semester, including helping with the SHS Mock Trial team while home on breaks. Most of the hours I have are from a Gonzaga Law club called Street Law. We prepare materials and teach classes at the local high schools about law that is most likely to affect the general public (free speech, illegal search and seizure, etc.). I hope I can run for a chair position of the club next year as I'm really passionate about informing kids of what their rights are!

Hannah Wagner—Continuing Education Scholarship 2025-26 for Vancouver Island University

My final semester of coursework was definitely challenging, but I'm happy to share that I successfully completed all of my classes and have now begun both my internship and my thesis. While I am still in the early stages of my thesis and have not finalized a specific topic yet, I am currently exploring ideas that align with sports management and collegiate athletics.

I am back in Canada completing my internship with the athletic department at my college, Vancouver Island University. I chose this placement because VIU is hosting the Men's Basketball Nationals, which gives me a unique opportunity to learn how to plan and execute a large-scale championship event. It has already been an incredible behind-the-scenes learning experience within an athletic department and aligns closely with my long-term career goals.

Thank you again for your encouragement and for believing in my journey. I'm incredibly grateful for the continued support from Soroptimist International of Sequim, and I look forward to keeping in touch as I take my next steps.

Kimberly Flores—Continuing Education Scholarship 2025-26 for University of Washington

CONTINUING EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS UPDATE

I am incredibly thankful to have received the Norma Varvil Scholarship. It truly means so much to have the support of a foundation that believes in women like me who have big dreams. I am working hard to push through rigorous courses and make this dream a reality, and with your support, I feel one step closer to achieving it.

During the fall quarter, I took three courses, including the first course in the organic chemistry series, the second course in the introductory biology series, and an environmental public health course. I also joined a club called Health Equity Forward; it's a health policy think tank that researches health outcomes to inform local and federal policy. Currently, I am part of a project in which I am contributing to an article that aims to understand the lived experiences and barriers immigrants experience when traversing the healthcare system.

Amanda Weller—Continuing Education Scholarship 2025-26 for BYU

This past semester our two main focuses in our nursing classes were OB and Community Health. I loved this semester so much because the content felt so applicable to my life. Even though I don't necessarily want to be an OB nurse, one of my main goals in life is to be a mom, and so much of the content from this last semester talked about that.

One of the hardest things this past semester has been that I was working two part-time jobs and still recovering/doing physical therapy for my ACL that I tore last year. It was hard to find the balance of exercising as much as I needed to while still doing homework and working. However it was definitely manageable because my classes this last semester were not too difficult. I've heard that this next semester is more difficult academically, and because of help from you, I am able to work just one part-time job that is very flexible with my schooling hours.

"I have known friendship love, parental love, romantic love, family love and unrequited love in my life time, but the only love that made a difference was self love. You don't need confirmation from the world or another person that you matter. You simply do matter. When you finally believe that truth and live it then you can do amazing things with your life!" ~Shannon L. Alder

MEET OUR NEWEST MEMBER

LOREE CONRAD



Loree Conrad, sponsored by her friend Susan Coffee, is our newest member. Loree has only lived in the Sequim area for six months, moving here from Quinlan, Texas. She and her husband have three grown children, one of whom lives in Seattle. Her background as a registered nurse for 40 years includes 25 years in Pediatric Homecare and the balance in adult home health and various departments such as ICU, ER and Dialysis. Aside from her professional life, Loree has volunteered many years with Boys Scouts and Girl Scouts, children's and adult ministry in her church, and many years involvement with PTA.

Loree loves any kind of puzzles, reading and hiking. She says she's "passionate about making my little corner of the world a better place." The best advice she's received or has given is "Listen twice as much as you speak." We're excited to get to know Loree more and happy she will be volunteering with the Medical Loan Closet. Welcome Loree!!

MEMBER—COOL STUFF



Currently 14th

IN THEIR GROUP

You decide who will be featured on the cover of Muscle & Fitness HERS and take home \$20k

VOTE

Voting for the TOP 15 ends
Thursday, February 12th at 7PM PST

Vote here: <https://mshealthandfit.com/2026/pauline-geraci>

Help Pauline Geraci be the next Ms. Health & Fitness while supporting a great cause!

The B+ Foundation provides financial assistance to families, funds childhood cancer research, and brings awareness to the fight against childhood cancer.

HAPPY DOLLARS

January 13, 2026

Jane Manzer—is grateful for Suzanne and Denise and the Pathways committee. She is happy the survey will be out soon. And happy for Chris Snow's hard work with the MLC.

Jan Hartig—is proud of the Pathways group.

Shawn Dredla—is happy for the Pathways group. And happy for her very gracious secret pal.

Denise Bayer—is happy for Chris and the MLC. She is happy to be going on vacation to Hawaii.

Suzanne Plemmons—is happy for Chris and the MLC.

Becky Archer—expressed her thank you to Chris and the MLC. Also, she had a nice Christmas with her daughter and granddaughter. Please email her with events for cards.

Linda Klinefelter—mentioned there is a controversy over how many people lived in Sequim at the time our club was founded. She is grateful that 80 years ago a group of women got together.

Connie Tallman—expressed thanks to the Pathways group.

Virginia Kostanich—is happy for MLC and the new location.

Sandy Lawrence—expressed thanks to all.

Natasha Merkuloff-Nichols—is happy to have to have attended her grandson's wedding.

January 27, 2026

Roxann Harr—is happy to be part of our group, proud of our DIBI, MLC, awards and scholarship programs.

Chris Snow—is happy the MLC is moving indoors.

Shawn Dredla—thanked Mark Nichols and the information on human trafficking.

Jane Manzer—thanked Mark Nichols for his talk on Human trafficking. Also, in honor of Mayme.

Jeanne Martin—thanked the speaker, the newsletter and MLC.

Natasha Merkuloff-Nichols—thanked Patty Lebowitz for arranging judging for the LYDA award.

JANUARY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MEDICAL LOAN CLOSET

Coming In From Out of the Cold

Roxann Harr and **Sandy Lawrence** signed the lease for the new MLC space on January 27th. By the time you read this article, a crew of 20+ volunteers will have completed the move of the MLC from our home of 40 years at The Sequim Stow Place, to its **new home** at **425 E. Washington Avenue, Suite 1B**. The space is large enough to accommodate the MLC and the items that the club has been storing in an All Safe storage unit. There are a couple of things to be done (signage, donation materials, ribbon cutting and community announcements), but the bulk of the work has been completed. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped with the move and the set-up of the new MLC!

January Activity Overview

Our call and equipment volumes remain steady. During the month, we answered **187** calls and lent **104** items. We received **114** equipment returns or donations and received **\$485** in contributions from our generous community clients. One of our generous donors sent a nice greeting to us with their check: “Your Medical equipment loan was a godsend at a very traumatic time!”

New MLC Volunteers

Denise Bayer spent a week with **Chris Snow** at the Closet in January. She is ready to solo! We have one new MLC volunteer, **Loree Conrad**, who has already spent time with **Susan Coffee** at the Closet. Reaching our goal of 20 MLC volunteers feels like it is a distinct possibility! Please reach out to any of the MLC Co-Chairs if you would like to know more about joining the MLC.

With gratitude,



Susan Coffee, Elaine Powlesland, and Chris Snow
Medical Loan Closet Co-Chairs



HUMAN TRAFFICKING AWARENESS

In recognition of Human Trafficking Awareness Month (January), Sergeant Marlies Dick of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) presented an hour-long program in collaboration with the Soroptimist International Clubs of Clallam County and Peninsula College. Sgt. Marlies Dick works in the greater Vancouver area and has served on their Integrated First Nations Unit, Sex Crimes and Child Abuse Unit, and the Youth Intervention Unit. She’s an authority and excellent public speaker on the subject of sex trafficking.



I attended the presentation and was pleased that SI of Sequim was included in Kathy Estes’s introductory remarks. Although Sgt. Dick’s presentation was graphic and difficult to listen to at times, it was the very best presentation I’ve heard on the subject in the 20-some years I’ve heard that subject addressed in local awareness events, at Area Meetings, and at Region Conferences. I wasn’t the only one who was so impressed. A group of us visited with her afterwards and she is very willing to come back and extend her remarks to an evening event also. We can look forward to plans being made for her to return next January.



~Jane Manzer

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.” ~**Leo Buscaglia**

OLYMPIC PENINSULA AREA MEETING

In February each year, our area gathers together to hear the goals and accomplishments of each of the clubs. Our District Director and District Secretary provide information from our Northwestern Region leaders, including an activity such as round table discussions about a current issue or program focus.

We always have a wonderful lunch and this year our local Port Angeles club is our host. In the next few days, we will learn more about time and such. Keep the morning and early afternoon of February 28 open so that you can attend. Let's have a large amount of our membership in attendance.

NORTHWESTERN REGION CONFERENCE

On the heels of our area meetings, members from the four Districts attend the Northwestern Region Conference each year. We send two delegates to this yearly conference, and encourage many more club members to attend. As you know, our region includes Washington, Oregon, Montana, Alaska and North Idaho. This year our conference is in Whitefish, in Northwestern Montana, April 23 – 26.

This is a great opportunity to immerse yourself as a first-timer at this conference. There will be general sessions on current Soroptimist International of the Americas (our Federation) activities and initiatives. Saturday there will be a luncheon to honor the region's Live Your Dream awardees. There will be program and leadership sessions to attend.

The food is always good and the dinner on Saturday night is always a celebration of the year just past and the excitement of the year ahead.

The "Call to Conference" will be sent out at the end of the month. I hope you will consider attending this year.



~Sandy Lawrence



*"Love many things, for therein lies the true strength,
and whosoever loves much performs much, and can accomplish much,
and what is done in love is done well." ~Vincent vanGogh*

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

Soroptimist International of Sequim was pleased to present a \$2,000 check to Leslie Bond, Executive Director of **Healthy Families**. Healthy Families' mission aligns with the goals of Soroptimist International of Sequim, and they are pleased they can support the organization. Pictured from left to right are Kelli Ward, member of Soroptimist, Leslie Bond, Executive Director of Healthy Families, Kaitlyn Lester, employee of Healthy Families, Roxann Harr, President of Soroptimist International of Sequim, and Sarah McBride, employee of Healthy Families.



SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

Our club is pleased to be able to support **The Friends Place** with a donation to support their socialization program that serves women and men battling various forms of dementia and/or disabilities

Pictured from left to right are **Rhonda Heyn**, Executive Director, and **Linda Klinefelter**, Soroptimist board member.



Our club is happy to continue its ongoing support and alliance with **Peninsula Behavioral Health** with a \$2,000 donation. Pictured from left to right, **Natasha Merkuloff-Nichols**, President- Elect, **Tracy Sheldon**, Director of Development, Peninsula Behavioral Health, and **Roxann Harr**, President of Soroptimist International of Sequim.



“Love doesn’t just sit there, like a stone; it has to be made, like bread, remade all the time, made new.”
~ Ursula K. LeGuin

SOME 2026 GALA GARDEN SHOW NEWS

Chamber Luncheon: SI of Sequim sponsored the Sequim Chamber of Commerce Luncheon on January 27. Eight members of our club were in attendance to show solidarity. **Linda Klinefelter** spoke about the beginnings of our club, our mission of improving the lives of women and girls through access to education, our Medical Loan Closet and how we have supported the community over our nearly 80 years. Linda spoke about our annual Gala Garden Show (GGS) held the third weekend in March; this is our 27th GGS. We had flyers for the GGS Table Decorating Contest and sponsorship forms on the tables. Some of these were picked up.



T-shirts: **Janet Real** will have the T-shirts at the business meeting on February 10. She sent out an email to those who ordered T-shirts to let them know the amount due for their shirts.

Staffing for the GGS: There are many parts to the Gala Garden Show. That is why we have a core committee, and why all members of the club are important to the production and success of the show. **Chirs Snow** is our Volunteer Staffing Coordinator for the 2026 show. Most of the slots for workers have been filled. Chris has sent out the spreadsheet so it can be reviewed/verified.

Vendors: Currently there are 50 vendors, 12 of which are new! There are four booths left—two in the gym and two in the multi-purpose room. If you know anyone who you think would be interested in being a vendor, please contact **Shawn Dredla** or **Shelle Paulbitski**. In the past many vendors donated items for our raffle. This year we are initiating something new: we will have buttons that say “2026 Soroptimist Gala Garden Show Raffle Donor” which we will give to vendors who make a donation to the raffle. One of the new vendors will be providing a piece of equipment that will be on display in the front of the Boys & Girls Club. This will give attendees something new to grab their attention.

Raffle: Virginia Kostanich said they can use some small gardening tools; if you want to donate something, please contact her so she can coordinate what has already been committed. Some of the raffle items donated by the vendors have already been collected.

Signage: **Glen Varvil** will have magnets signs for your car along with yard signs at the club meetings in February.

Cafe: New this year is a Table Decorating Contest. These tables will be used in the Cafe. The targeted audience are banks, real estate offices and small businesses. Flyers with all the details will be distributed in the next week or so. The winner of the table decorating contest will get a trophy and a gift card from Dominique.



Roxann Harr and Kathy Purcell, 2026 Gala Garden Show Co-chairs

“We become that which we love.” ~*Saint Bridget*

FUTURE GGS MEETING DATES:
March 3 / April 7 Debrief

Note the future dates for upcoming GGS Core Committee Meetings. Please try to work your schedules around these dates. For continuity and effectiveness, it is important to have as many of the core committee members present as we get closer to the show.

March 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH Brandi Larson Stephanie Sofia 	2	3 GGS Core Committee Mtg 1st Security Bank 9 am	4	5	6 BOARD MEETING	7
8	9	10 Business Meeting	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20 Gala Garden Show Setup 	21 Gala Garden Show 
22 Gala Garden Show 	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31 GGS Potluck Celebration				

Free Hugs

by: Brittini Thomas

It's the touch that gives you comfort,
It's the touch that makes you feel,
It's something that no one else can ever steal.
It's the sweetest human contact for the body and the mind,
It's the connection where two bodies link and bind.

It's what we search for when we feel all alone,
It can be so meaningful, the emotion is deep to the bone.
It's what makes us realize that someone else is there,
It's the touch that says, 'Just know I'll always care.'
It can say hello, it can say goodbye,
It can leap out when you're happy, or make you want to cry.
It can say 'I love you' or 'I'm really glad we're friends,'
It can be the last spark in a story that ends.

All you need is another soul to make you feel this snug,
It's the connection in our life...
Everyone needs a hug.



Soroptimist International of Sequim
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SOROPTIMIST®

Investing in Dreams

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

To a Person Making a Difference for Women