



# Soroptimist International Sacramento Newsletter January 2022

**SIS Mission:** *To provide women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment.*

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## Presidents' Corner By Phyllis McMaster Moist and Cathy Diepenbrock

Cathy and I are midway through our presidency year of "Building for the Future Together" and it seems as though our 'building' efforts are more like 'holding it together' through all the adjustments we have all been making to how we meet and greet each other and how we fundraise. In the midst of preparing what thoughts to share with you all, two quotes surfaced that focused our thinking about our future.

The first quote is: We are "hoping for the best, prepared for the worst, and unsurprised by anything in between" which is a quote from Maya Angelou in her book, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*.

The next selected lines are from Amanda Gorman's poem for our New Year called 'New Day's Lyric:' "May this be the day we come

together. We are learning that though we weren't ready for this, we have been readied by it. So let us not return to what was normal but reach toward what is next."



What is next, you may ask, in this next half of our term? Our District 3 meeting, led by our very own Idelle, is scheduled for January 22. Our Live Your Dream (LYD) Awards are scheduled to be given at the March 18<sup>th</sup> meeting. As LYD is a core part of the Soroptimist mission, this meeting is a perfect time

to invite a friend or neighbor to attend our meeting to see the incredible impacts of the work that we do. The 46<sup>th</sup> Soroptimist Sierra Nevada Region Annual Conference will be held in Reno from Friday April 1<sup>st</sup> through Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> and is described in our SI e-blast, which includes registration information. Finally, our scholarship committee will be hard at work this Spring reviewing many applications and awarding the finalists at a date to be determined. We look forward to 2022 with renewed focus and hope for a productive, engaged Spring!

## **Successful Winter Fundraisers By Karen Smith**

Thanks to everyone who purchased from our fundraisers and passed on the information to family and friends. We made a profit of \$1056 from the Flower Power fundraiser and \$1551 from See's Yumraising. Thank you!

## **SIS Scholarship Applications Available in January By Karen Smith**

Please check the website (<https://soroptimistsacramento.com/awards-scholarships>) for the application for women attending college or university. The application is available now and the deadline to apply is February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022. If you know someone who qualifies, please let pass the information on.

SIS recognizes the talent, commitment to service, and the financial needs of local women and teenage girls. One way we support our mission is through annual scholarships. Scholarships are awarded in varying amounts to Sacramento area female students currently enrolled in accredited community colleges or universities. The number of awards varies annually between 4 and 8, depending on available funds which are either donated or bequeathed. Scholarship awards of at least \$1,000 each are based on academic and personal achievements, strength of character and financial need.

## **Join us for the January 21<sup>st</sup> Speaker Meeting By Karen Smith**

*(This is planned to be in-person at Swanston Community Center. If this changes, members will be notified of the switch to Zoom.)*

The guest speaker for the January 21<sup>st</sup> SIS meeting is Heather Yee, a Senior Civil Engineer with the County of Sacramento. Her presentation will focus on WTS, Advancing Women in Transportation, and its mission.

Heather is a past president of the local Sacramento chapter of WTS. WTS International is dedicated to creating a more diverse, inclusive and equitable transportation industry through the global advancement of women. The presentation will include a brief overview of civil engineering and what brought Heather Yee into the field. She will share the vision, mission, and goals of WTS, growth of the Sacramento Chapter and high points of a "typical" year.

### **Speaker Bio:**

Heather Yee is currently employed with the County of Sacramento, Department of Transportation as a Senior Civil Engineer. Ms. Yee has 20+ years of engineering experience, 5 of which was spent in the private sector of a national Architectural/ Engineering/ Consulting firm. She has found her way to the public sector where current work duties include managing and designing Capital Improvement Projects for the transportation system in Sacramento County. Heather is a licensed Professional Civil Engineer and Traffic Engineer, graduate of California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo.

Highlights of Ms. Yee's career include speaking to classes of students about the engineering profession, competing in the American Society of Civil Engineers concrete canoe event, inspecting dams using climbing and rappelling techniques, mentoring young women in the field of civil engineering, speaking on behalf of women in career growth panels, serving as the Sacramento Chapter President of WTS – Women's Transportation Seminar, and being the proud mother of 2 boys: Mason and Nolan.

## To Gift or to Not Regift by Bonnie Coleman

After the Holidays come the days when you decide what to do with the thoughtful gifts that don't fit your body, don't fit your decor, or just don't fit anywhere. There are several options: Are you a person who a) saves gifts for "best"; b) passes them along to others; c) donates them to charity; or d) tosses them out with the tree and the turkey carcass. Whatever your inclinations, I will tell you how it worked in my Mother's family, which included 4 girls and 2 boys. The one grown brother lived outside the city limits where he and Auntie June were raising 5 kids of their own and they both worked so they were excused from the hosting. The other brother was the same age as the cousins and generally thrown in the heap with the rest of us.

The family grew up in the Great Depression in their Grandparents' home in rural New Brunswick. My Great Grandfather had a lot of "rural" and lumber but not a lot of money and anyway, they were thrifty Scots Irish stock whose family motto either was or should have been "Waste Not, Want Not". He built the school, the church, and sent all his children to college but that was mostly it.

When I was somewhere between a tween and a teen I was sent "home" for the summer with whichever relative was traveling that way. During the war the whole clan had moved from New Brunswick to Ontario to work in defense so that was the new "home". My Mother went to her cedar chest and brought out brand-new pink shorty pajamas so I would look "presentable". I was delighted.

Note: The two provinces, New Brunswick and Ontario, are English-speaking, on either side of Quebec, a very nice French-speaking province also full of very nice Canadian people. For years both sides could not, or would not speak nor understand the other's languages, so Quebec was like a big speed bump with trees - nice trees I'm sure.

Since the family all lived in the same small city, including my Father's Mother and Sister, the general plan was to shuffle me from one sister, or sister-in-law to another for a week or so each. They all treated me as their kid so



I was at home and happy wherever I was. One of the first to take her turn with me was Auntie Bab. (These names are the subject of another Aunt Bonnie.) She and Uncle Harvey had no children but they regularly put up one or another of the clutch of cousins, "just

because". The "City Kids" could use a very good bus system to move independently within the city but not beyond the bus routes.

At bedtime Auntie Bab came to my room say "goodnight" and make sure everything was as it should be. Instead, the first words out of her mouth were "Where did you get those pajamas?" "From Mum" I answered, a bit baffled. "Mum got them from Auntie Kay for Christmas, and she gave them to me because I didn't have any brand new ones and they fit us both. "Well", said Auntie Bab, who was always more known for her candor than her diplomacy, "I gave them to Kay for her birthday". "Oh" I said, wondering if I should give them back, and if so, to whom. Once it was all sorted out, everything was ok and I got to keep them. However, I'm sure it spent some time on the grown-up grapevine, as did everything else in that tight-knit little clan.

## Christmas in Germany! By Wendy Haydon-Schneider

Germany has several Christmas traditions that I am still learning about. We lived in an apartment building in our state's capitol for 6+ years and I think that, living in that setting, we just did not experience some of these traditions, although Werner is well aware of them. Now that we are living in a house in a small village, the traditions have come to light for me!



A visit from St. Nikolaus can yield this! Not my photo!!

In our village, due to COVID, Nikolaus did not visit individual homes this year. Instead, families registered with St. Nikolaus and made an appointment to visit him on Nikolaustag at our community

center.

December 6<sup>th</sup> was Nikolaustag (St. Nicholas Day). Nikolaus (St. Nicholas) wore red and had a long white beard (sound familiar?!). But he is not the same person as der Weihnachtsmann (the Santa Claus) here in Germany. While Santa Claus sneaks into German houses on Christmas Eve to leave presents, Nikolaus pays a visit on December 6<sup>th</sup>. For a long time in Austria and parts of Germany, he was the main character in Christmas celebrations.

The real Saint Nicholas was a man called Nicholas of Myra, a Greek Christian bishop who lived during the 4th century in the area now known as Turkey. During his lifetime, he performed various miracles. Canonized as the patron saint of little children, sailors and merchants, Nikolaus' life and deeds began to be celebrated on December 6<sup>th</sup> (the anniversary of his death). The tradition continues to this day in Germany, where children leave out a freshly cleaned and polished pair of shoes or boots on the evening of December 5. If they've behaved well this year, Nikolaus will fill the shoe with nuts, fruit, chocolate, sweets and maybe a couple of small gifts. If they have been naughty, they receive a switch (of wood), for the parents to spank their child with. In some areas, Nikolaus visits the house or the child's school to question them about their behavior.

Germans celebrate Christmas from December 24<sup>th</sup> through December 26<sup>th</sup>. Businesses typically close mid-day on December 24<sup>th</sup> and remain closed for the next two days. December 24<sup>th</sup> is Heiligabend (Holy Evening) and is the biggest celebration of the three days. A big dinner is enjoyed (goose seems to be popular). Presents are opened. For the second year in a row, late in the afternoon on December 24<sup>th</sup>, 14 of us from our neighborhood met out in the street to toast with beverages that included cups of heißer Glühwein (hot mulled wine) and shots of mirabelle brandy (Mirabelle plums were from the neighbor's tree and are distilled locally!!). It was so festive to see and hear three of the neighbors who stood out on their balcony overlooking the street play several Christmas songs on their instruments!

While we were gathered outside, the Christkindl (also known as Christkindl) stopped by and did a reading. I am sorry to report that, not only did I not understand what they said, they spoke very quietly so I did not even hear it. The Christkind in our village were two girls dressed in costume, carrying a book and a bag for donations. The Christkindl is literally translated to "Christ child", but Germans don't think of the Christkind as the baby Jesus. The Christkind is often described as a young girl with 'Christ-like' qualities. The Christkind brings children

their Geschenke (presents) on December 24<sup>th</sup> and leaves them underneath the Weihnachtsbaum (Christmas tree). Parents tell their children that the Christkind won't come if they try to spot him. He is not meant to be seen! Sometimes parents will secretly ring a bell to announce the arrival or departure of the Christkind, after which the children go running to find their presents.

If you are wondering (as I did) why does Christkind exist if there is already a Santa Claus?! In short: Santa Claus originated as a Catholic figure. The Christkind was created by Protestants. The Christkind was created during the reformation, in 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Europe, when Martin Luther wanted to de-emphasize the previous Catholic celebration of Saint Nicholas on December 6<sup>th</sup>, and invent a new celebration for the Protestants. This was because he did not want a Catholic saint (St. Nicholas – who we know today as Santa Claus) bringing Protestant children their gifts. He also considered it blasphemous to idolize saints rather than Jesus himself. Hence, the Christkind was born – and brought gifts on December 24<sup>th</sup>, the last day of Advent.

As Europe became more secular, the Protestant Christkind and Catholic St. Nicholas began to cross over. St. Nicholas became a secularized version of himself, known in German as der Weihnachtsmann (Father Christmas/Santa Claus, literally: “The Christmas man”), celebrated regardless of religion. Meanwhile, the Christkind transformed from a suggestion of Baby Jesus into a blonde female angel. Although it has been commercialized over time, the traditional Christkind is still important to many families in Germany and other parts of Europe, and there is much less commercialization of it than there is of Santa Claus. Since the 1990s, the Christkind been fighting with the commercial celebration of Santa, but it remains a much-loved part of European Christmas time.

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A Christmas tradition that I am familiar with is the Weihnachtsmärkte (Christmas Markets) that are typically open from about November 23 – December 23 each year. They are a highlight! They consist of booths selling hot food, beverages, sweets, and many vendors selling a variety of goods (hats, scarves, cooking and baking items, olive wood items, decorative items, you name it!). In 2020, we were in lockdown so all Christmas Markets were closed. In 2021, some were open, many were cancelled due to COVID..at the last minute due to our increasing COVID infection numbers. We literally had to check online on the day we wanted to go to a market to make sure it was going to still be held. Several of the markets we went to in 2021 required proof of vaccination, checked our ID cards, and handed out wrist bands that served as proof that we had been determined eligible to be there to eat and shop. In some cities, the Luca app is being used as a means to ‘track and trace’ COVID – when you enter an establishment, you check-in on the app, and when you leave, you check out. These extra steps being taken create long lines, but are really just a small inconvenience in a much bigger picture. I will close this Christmas article with a few photos of Christmas markets that we visited in 2021!





In Koblenz



In Hamburg



In Bernkastel-Kues



In Laubach



In Mainz

Sources:

<https://www.iamexpat.de/lifestyle/lifestyle-news/nikolaus-weihnachtsmann-christkind-whats-difference>;

<https://blogs.transparent.com/german/forget-santa-meet-the-christkind/>;

<https://germanculture.com.ua/german-holidays/christ-child/>

Nikolaustag photo source:

<http://www.berlinforallthefamily.com/misc-info/whatisnikolamustag>

## Officers 2021-2022

Co-Presidents-Phyllis Moist &  
Cathy Diepenbrock  
First Vice President – Karen Smith  
Second Vice President-Carol Adams  
Secretary-MaryAnne Selvage  
Treasurer-Kathy Platz  
Assistant Treasurer-Maria Trejo  
Board of Directors 2020-2022 –  
Mary Locke  
Board of Directors 2021-2023-  
Minisha Trivedi  
Parliamentarian-Regena Boyland

## Board Action Items

- Motion was made and seconded to correct the December board minutes and resubmit.
- Motion was made and seconded to approve the current financial report.

## January Birthdays



|                          |                   |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Sarah Lee</b>         | <b>January 3</b>  |
| <b>Susann Hadler</b>     | <b>January 6</b>  |
| <b>Bonnie Coleman</b>    | <b>January 10</b> |
| <b>Karen Kouretas</b>    | <b>January 15</b> |
| <b>Yoli Manzo</b>        | <b>January 17</b> |
| <b>Cathy Diepenbrock</b> | <b>January 19</b> |
| <b>Paula Wright</b>      | <b>January 22</b> |

## Donations

Nancy Wolford Landers for Richard Canterbury  
Barbara Coulam for Richard Canterbury  
Barbara Coulam for Ralph Griffin (Dana Griffin's husband)  
Eva Garcia for Richard Canterbury  
Elaine Pesce for Richard Canterbury  
Regena Boyland for Richard Canterbury  
Rosalie Gladden for Richard Canterbury  
Carol Adams for Richard Canterbury  
Barbara Coulam for Colleen Heck's mother, Carolyn Murphy  
Jennifer Willis for Richard Canterbury  
Wendy Haydon for Richard Canterbury  
Cathy Diepenbrock for Richard Canterbury  
Idelle Claypool for Richard Canterbury  
Phyllis McMaster Moist in memory of Richard Canterbury  
Sally Day in memory of Richard Canterbury  
Debbie Davis donation in lieu of buying Flower Power  
Rosalie Gladden made a donation to the general fund in honor of her sister, Rose D'Antonio

## Upcoming SIS Meetings

Friday, January 7<sup>th</sup> – Business meeting  
Friday, January 21<sup>st</sup> – Heather Yee, Advancing Women in Transportation  
Friday, February 4 – Business meeting  
Friday, February 14<sup>th</sup> – Nilda Valmores and My Sister's House  
Friday, March 4 – Business Meeting  
Friday, March 18 – Live Your Dream Awards  
Friday, April 1 – Business Meeting  
Friday, April 22 – SIS Scholarship Awards (*Please note this is the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday due to Good Friday and Easter*)  
Friday, May 6 – Business Meeting  
Friday, May 20- Paula Salinger and Heather Tiffie, Capital Pro Bono  
Friday, June 6 – Soroptimists Celebrating Success  
Friday, June 17 – New President Installation (tentative date)