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Calendar

- Mar. 19 -- Domestic Violence Resource Ctr.
- Mar. 25 -- Welcome Spring Social, Ethan Allen
- Mar. 26 -- TTY Kick-off
- Apr. 2 -- International Connections
- Apr. 7 Board Meeting, Pam Robinson’s Office
- Apr. 9 -- Business Meeting

SITM Meets...

Thursdays at Noon
at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa
Second Floor Convention Center
\$34 plated; \$35 credit/debit.
RSVP to info@sitmnev.org no later than noon on the Sunday before the Thursday meeting.

Soroptimist Is:

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



Winding Down the Year; Gearing Up for the New



As I sit here listening to the gentle rustle of thin plastic covering half the walls in our house (minor but numerous home repairs and upgrades going on this week), I’m thinking of another analogy. Our 17 committees change memberships and coordinators each year and in so doing, change the way the committees do their jobs, improving or changing what’s come before. yet keeping the core intent.

Co-President Lisa and I have been revising and upgrading several of the Co-President and President documents that have been passed along to us from previous presidents. Most notably are the templates for all the meetings’ agendas we inherited from Past President Jeanne Naccarato. It’s so much easier to “fill in the blanks” than compose a document from scratch. I know many committee coordinators do something similar to help incoming coordinators.

We’ve also noticed several committees have “upgraded” their offerings. Membership Co-Coordinators Line Cousineau and Billie Mendiola and their committee have expanded the handouts new members receive when joining SITM. This helps recruit and retain members.

Scrapbook Committee Co-Coordinators Liza Chapen and Line Cousineau have risen to the challenge of providing two president’s scrapbooks this year. I’m looking forward to their Year in Review presentation too. Hospitality and Membership committees are hosting a Welcome Spring Social on March 25th to welcome new members and prospective members. The Community Outreach committee has organized a Saturday volunteering and tour opportunity at the Food Bank on April 11. So many fun and inspiring activities coming our way!

Continued on page 2



Welcome New Member Liz Palm

New member Liz Palm was inducted into membership at the March Business Meeting by Membership Co-Coordinator Line Cousineau (right). Liz was sponsored by Billie Mendiola. Welcome Liz!

Continued from page 1

Please be thinking of how you'd like to be involved in our committees next year. We'll be signing up for the 2026-27 committees on April 23rd. Think about coordinating or grab a friend and co-coordinating a committee. Repairs, upgrades, or something

completely new is always a possibility. We continue to evolve and improve with new ideas.

Looking forward to a wonderful Spring together.

Marilyn Pearson
2025-26 SITM Co-President

Walking to Raise Awareness for Women

Soroptimists from District 5, Sierra Nevada Region, joined together for the annual Walk for Women, March 7 at the Sparks Marina. SITM members, their family members (2- and 4-legged) met for the approximate 2-mile hike around the Marina. The event was designed to raise awareness of Soroptimist's vital mission and the impact we make together, as we champion a better future for women and girls everywhere.



Kay Dunham's four-legged walkers for women.



Jeanne Naccarato's daughter Emily, with new puppy Rosie.



District 5 Soroptimists gathered for Walk for Women at the Sparks Marina, and stayed for a little camaraderie afterwards.



Jeanne's granddaughter Maddie with the Soroptimist banner.

An Early Easter for Project 150 Students



The finished product ... 250 bags of Easter candy.

The Easter Bunny got some helping hands at the March 5 meeting when SITM members pitched in to package and decorate 250 bags of candy for the student clients at Project 150. Members donated the candy and spent part of their lunch hour assembling the bags.

Additional helping hands included Kay Dunham, who designed and printed the 250 “bunny stickers” for the bags; Diana DeMatei’s husband cut 250 – 22-inch ribbons for the ties; Holly Nash, Debbie Handke and Gayle Kmetovicz brought wagons to transport the bags to Niki Ewiing’s car; Niki’s twins, Parker and Tanner, delivered the candy to Project 150.

Thank you to Diana and Niki for coordinating this event and thank you to all of the members who donated candy. The approximate value of the total donation was \$1,000.



Easter Bunny Gayle Kmetovicz.

Project 150 provides basic needs to homeless, displaced and disadvantaged high school students, allowing them to focus on education and graduate from high school. The organization has a permanent boutique that provides clothing, supplies and limited food to these students, helping them stay in school.



Easter Bunny Niki Ewing with an overflow of prepared candy bags,



Preparing the candy bowls so members at tables could get to work. In front is Diana DeMatei, followed by Gayle Kmetovicz and Darlene DeLancey

Thanks to Youth Kick Off March 26

By Patty Downs, Coordinator TTY Committee

Thanks to Youth, a signature project of SITM since the 1990s will get its kick-start as this year's committee conducts its kick-off on March 26. The actual luncheon will take place on May 14 at the Atlantis Casino Resort Spa in Reno. The long lead time gives time to collect applicants for scholarship or recognition awards, promote the event, and of course, sell tickets and gather sponsors for the annual event.

Tickets for the luncheon this year are \$45, a Soroptimist table for eight will be \$450. Each SITM member is asked to try to sell four tickets to the event. Thanks to the generosity of Mr. John Farahi of the Atlantis, he is "comping" up to \$5,000 in meals that day. Digiprint is donating the printing of the tickets and programs.

Outside Sponsorship Opportunities:

Diamond Level will receive recognition during the event, in the program, on the website and a reserved table for eight. **Contribution of \$1,500.00**

Emerald Level will receive recognition during the event, in the program, on the website, and a reserved table for six. **Contribution of \$1,000.00**

Ruby Level will receive recognition during the event, in the program, on the website, and receive four tickets to the event. **Contribution of \$500.00**

In the beginning ...

Thanks to Youth was developed by Katy Simon and Sherri Rice to recognize and reward youth in our community who are making a difference at their schools and community but often not highlighted through traditional programs. We later added youth scholarships for traditional college-bound students and within the last few years have added mid-level skills/programs for eligibility.

The money raised each year at the Thanks to Youth event funds the scholarships and Unsung Hero grants awarded the following year. In 2025 the TTY luncheon netted \$11,000, which will be presented to students by the Youth Committee at the 2026 Thanks to Youth event.

Some Thoughts from Patty ...

For those members interested in contributing to TTY through a QCD, consider the following.

A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) allows individuals aged 70½ or older to transfer up to \$111,000 (for 2026) annually from an IRA directly to a qualified charity, tax-free. This method satisfies Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) without increasing taxable income. The funds must be transferred directly from the IRA custodian to the charity.

Key Aspects of QCDs

- 1. Eligibility:** You must be at least 70½ or older at the time of the transfer.
- 2. Tax Benefits:** QCDs are not included in your adjusted gross income (AGI). They are not considered taxable income, which helps reduce tax liability and prevents the phaseout of other tax deductions.
- 3. RMD Fulfillment:** The transfer counts toward your mandatory RMD (if you are at the age where RMDs are required).
- 4. Eligible Accounts:** Traditional and Roth IRAs are eligible, but active SEP or SIMPLE IRAs generally are not.
- 5. Direct Transfer Requirement:** The check must be made directly to the charity, not to the individual.

Note from Patty: *The HR director in me wants to add a qualifier that I am not an expert, and this is for general information only. Members should check with their financial or tax advisor*

Returning Member Nicole Dupont Missed SITM Projects

By Liza Chapen



Hooray for SITM! After being away from our club for a period of time, the vivacious Nicole Dupont is returning to our club! How terrific is that?!

Nicole originally joined our club in the fall of 2022 and is now returning to us because she loves us, loves our service projects, and really wants to be involved in all

things SITM. Her favorite SITM project when she was with us before was our spectacular High Tea in the fall, but she has fond memories of the Youth Awards committee, reviewing the applications for the scholarships for the Unsung Hero students, interacting with the children on picture day when their photos were taken, and then taking a couple of them and their parents shopping at Target after the Thanks to Youth event. She's looking forward to being involved on those committees again, plus more!

The Bay Area was Nicole's childhood home, but she had always loved Nevada, so she moved to Reno after High School to attend UNR. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in English. Having been lucky enough to be involved in the Study Abroad Program in high school, Nicole had spent a semester in France, so she minored in French at UNR. Most recently, while traveling to Europe with her nieces, she was able to impress them with her knowledge of French when ordering from the menu or asking for directions. Nicole was very proud that there was no cringing from the Parisians. Quelle surprise!

Nicole had planned to be a schoolteacher, but as life happens, after college she ended up moving back to the Bay Area where she established her career in Human Resources. Eventually, she moved back to Reno, and from 2000 to the present, she has worked in various HR positions with local businesses

but is now very excited to be at that stage in her career where she is ready to go out on her own as a freelance HR specialist. Her plan is to work as a consultant with a local HR organization where she will interact with clients to set up HR departments for their businesses. Nicole says helping businesses develop their human resource departments is like managing a classroom full of adults, so she considers herself a teacher after all.

Nicole has never been married but has had a significant other for the last 13 years. She says he's a great guy who works for the Washoe County Sheriff in the Search and Rescue division. When I asked her if marriage might be in their future, she responded by quoting Carol Burnett: "He'd have to move in next door because I'm not changing a thing in my house!" Hilarious!

Nicole's siblings have provided her with children to adore and dote upon, so she spends a lot of her free time with four nieces and a nephew here in town and in Southern

California. Her parents are living the dream in Southern California, and they visit Reno for extended vacations in the summer. Her mother is looking forward to the next Tea Party. She attended a few years ago, and it's all she can talk about this year.

Of course, an English major would be a voracious reader, and Nicole tells me she has books all over her house. Quilting is also something she enjoys doing, although she doesn't claim to be an exceptional quilter like some of our other SITM members. She also loves being in groups and is very involved in a Bible Study group at the Summit Christian Church in Sparks. In addition to studying the Bible, the group also does service projects, going out and helping in the community.

Having fun fundraising and really making SITM's programs work is Nicole's ultimate goal as she re-joins our fabulous lunchtime Soroptimist club! Welcome back, Nicole. We're so happy you've joined us again!



Nicole with boyfriend Brian after the Heart Walk. Nicole is wearing her "Survivor hat" as a tribute to the successful open heart surgery she survived.

A 2025 Update on the Nepal Project to Educate Girls by Monica House, SI/Sierra Reno

It's been another busy and successful year for our Nepal project! I'm excited to share a few highlights that show the real, lasting impact we are making along with what lies ahead in 2026.

One of the most meaningful milestones this year was the girls officially moving into their new dormitory. Thanks to donor support, they now have safe, comfortable housing with real windows, bathrooms with running water, a beautiful kitchen, and a large communal space for studying, meals, and time together. Our Liaison Shyam Paudel and Campus Chief Hari said, "The excitement and joy as they settled into their new rooms was unforgettable!"

In April, Dr. Purna Subedi joined us in Reno, where we shared a presentation on the project and the transformation taking place in his home village of Thulipokhari. Hearing him speak firsthand about growing up in the village and comparing it to the opportunities available today made it clear just how deeply this project has changed lives, not only for the girls but for the entire village.

We are also grateful to share that the security wall is now complete, made possible through the generosity of a donor committed to the girls' safety. This addition provides peace of mind and an added layer of protection, and plans are underway to paint it to match the dormitory once the weather improves.

Looking ahead to spring 2026, the young women are planning an educational field trip to Sikkim, a small Himalayan state in northeastern India. Traveling by train and bus through Nepal, they will experience new places and cultures-many for the very first time. These field trips are a vital part of their education, broadening horizons and inspiring dreams beyond their village.

We are also thrilled to launch a new Pen Pal Program this year, connecting local Girl Scouts with several Nepal scholarship recipients. This cross-cultural friendship initiative is designed to foster global awareness, empathy, and meaningful connections for girls on both sides of the world.

Thank you, Soroptimist and all of our donors, for your continued support. If you would like to continue supporting this project or know someone who may be interested, I would welcome the opportunity to connect at monicah8691@gmail.com. Gifts of any size create real impact, allowing us to continue providing these young women with safe, sustainable housing;

access to education; nutritious daily meals; and enriching opportunities that expand horizons and build confidence. Donations may also be mailed to Soroptimist International of Sierra Reno, P.O. Box 40218, Reno, NV 89504, with Education for Girls' Project noted in the memo.

Thank you for believing in these girls and for continuing to make a difference halfway around the world. Together, Soroptimist is truly changing lives.

With sincere gratitude,
Monica House
Soroptimist International of Sierra Reno



The security wall around the dormitory is complete and color will be added soon.



Excited about moving into the new dormitory.

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Congregating on the beautiful garden roof reading the "Education for Girls Project" brochure.



2025 scholarship recipients, housemother Ganga and campus management committee.

All You Want to Know About A.I. by Ron Kmetovicz



Get ready for the "platform shift" to Artificial Intelligence, or AI, according to Ron Kmetovicz. Ron was our speaker at the February 26 meeting, sponsored by the Finance & Governance Committee. Ron is an engineer and inventor. He holds a degree in electrical engineering and worked for many years for Hewlett Packard during the dawn and uprising of the personal computer.

A "platform shift" is a reinvention of how we do things. Examples of "platform shifts", Ron explained, came with the introduction of the first personal computer. It was followed by the connection of these computers to the internet giving us the ability to interact with each other. In 2022, the newest shift was movement to The Cloud, which provides external storage of documents and materials with access anywhere (not just when you are in front of your computer). Each "platform shift"

changes what and how we do things on our computers, and different parts of our lives.

The newest "platform shift" is Artificial Intelligence. Ever evolving, AI is a computer science that develops and studies methods and software that enable machines to perceive their environment. These machines use learning and intelligence to take actions. AI can generate and create tools, such as language or art, or ever increasingly perform human tasks. Simple general applications used today are virtual assistants, Google, Alexa & Siri, Waymo autonomous vehicles.

Of course, the issue of AI replacing humans became part of the discussion, especially when it comes to jobs. Ron says depending on the jobs, AI should make humans more productive. According to GROK, an AI chatbot that is currently available to assist humans, AI could replace as much as 30% of the workforce. However, all is not lost, according to Ron. There is no question jobs will change, but people will be needed to do what AI cannot do -- serve the human element. Humans will use their knowledge, their expertise and things like understanding and empathy in their future jobs.

Ron reminded us of a long-held axiom that applies to AI. It's called GIGO, or Garbage In, Garbage Out. AI can only be as good as the engineers, researchers and analysts who create the program to create the machines are at their jobs..

For PC users with Microsoft programs, Ron recommended trying Google Co-Pilot, which is free. It can review first drafts and make recommendations, take your thoughts and ideas and reorder them into a report, even create images from your description. For further reading, Ron also recommends "Co-Intelligence, Living and Working with AI" by Ethan Mollick.

March Board and Business Report

By Faye I. Andersen

The downhill race has begun as SITM Committees have completed, or are on the verge of launching many of our annual programs

Welcome New Member Liz Palm

New member Liz Palm was inducted into membership at the March Business Meeting by membership Co-Coordinator Line Cousineau. Liz was sponsored by Billie Mendiola. Welcome Liz! We're glad you've joined us.

Nominations for 2026-2027 Club Officers

The Nominating Committee of Coordinator Jeanne Naccarato, Gayle Kmetovicz and Dot Watts spent last month corralling members willing to stand for election to the Board for the 2026-2027 Club Year. Their slate of candidates was presented at the March Business Meeting. A biography on each candidate was compiled and is attached to the Friday Digest. Thank you to the Nominating Committee for their hard work. Thank you to the members who agreed to stand for election. We appreciate you.

Thanks to Youth Kick Off March 26

The Thanks to Youth committee is getting ready for their kick-off event to be held at the March 26 meeting. Plan to attend. In the meantime, TTY Coordinator Patty Downs presented the committee's budget for the event. It was punctuated with the good news that the Atlantis will underwrite the luncheon up to \$5,000 and Digiprint will print the tickets and program book at no charge. The membership approved the budget for the event. (See page 4 for more details.)

Money raised from last year's TTY will be used to support Youth Scholarships and Unsung Hero recognition this year, while this year's proceeds will benefit the 2027 TTY.

Welcome Spring Social Set for March 25

The Membership and Hospitality Committees are hosting a Welcome Spring Social event for all SITM members and prospective members. The event is scheduled for Wednesday, March 25 at Ethan Allen from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. Come, bring a friend. Refreshments will be served.

Food Bank Work Party and Tour

The Community Outreach Committee proposed a motion to offer an opportunity for members to volunteer and tour the Food Bank of Northern Nevada, April 11, 9-11 a.m. We completed a food

drive of protein items for seniors last month and several members expressed an interest in volunteering and touring the Food Bank. Doris Phelps will be coordinating a carpool that day.

Parking Lot Sale May 16

Start saving those treasures and junkie for the upcoming "Parking Lot Sale" on May 16, 2026, with set-up May 15, at Kay's business office complex, First Wall Street Financial Advisors, 190 W. Huffaker Lane in Reno. Attached to this newsletter is a flyer if you have an opportunity to place it for advertising at your work, your church, clubhouse or gym.

Money Matters and Happy Dollars

In addition to the \$7,500 announced last month in donations to the girls' dormitory and school tuition funds in Thulipokhari, Nepal, an additional \$5,000 from SITM's Nepal Funds at the Community Foundation of Nevada had been sent to build a security wall around the dormitory.

Happy Dollars collected in February totaled \$534 for the Jo Ann & Dee Ann Roberts Memorial Scholarship for Education Majors. SITM also received additional donations: \$5,000 from Reno Arch Lions for our women's scholarships; \$100 from Norma Rash for the Roberts Memorial Scholarship; and a general donation of \$36 from Caryn Rubin in honor of Mary Ann McCaukey's birthday. Thank you to all of our donors!!

March Birthdays

Celebrating March birthdays were, from left, Vicki Schultz from the Hospitality Committee; Kay Dunham (March 3); Doris Phelps (March 15); Patty Downs (March 23); Jeanne Naccarato (March 28); and Margie Hermanson (March 30)



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Nepal Update Fundraiser Set for April 22

SI/Serra Reno will be hosting a Dream Maker Luncheon on April 22 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Reno National Automobile Museum. Tickets are \$65 each and Vicki Schultz is coordinating a table for SITM members wishing to attend. The event will celebrate their commitment to service and share updates on their local programs as well as their joint SITM project to educate girls in Thulipokhari, Nepal.

Tickets are available at siserrarenodirector@gmail.com, or contact Vicki Schultz to join an SITM table.

A Generous Donation from the Reno Arch Lions Club



Co-President Lisa Robinson displays the check, along with Reno Arch Lion's members, Dot Watt's husband, Vern, Teresa Harper, Priscilla Capps, Sandra Tindle, Janyce Rossall, and SITM member Dot Watts.

A tableful of visitors joined us for our February 26 meeting featuring speaker Ron Kmetovicz on the topic of Artificial Intelligence. The visitors were all members of the Reno Arch Lions Club, who came bearing the gift of a \$5,000 donation to our women's scholarship fund. This is the second time Reno Arch Lions has contributed \$5,000 to our women's scholarships. Like SITM, their members are engaged in a variety of service projects and have had great success in their fundraising endeavors. Thank you for your generosity, plus the chance to meet some of our like-minded and faithful service club members in the community, no matter the name.

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Those celebrating March birthdays, but not in attendance were:



Laurie
Chappelle
March 1



Mary
Loukas
March 30



Nicole
DuPont
March 6



Beth Sharp
March 30

2026-2027 State of Officers Announced

At the March Board and Business Meetings, the Nominating Committee announced the slate of officers willing to stand for election, to be voted on at the April Business Meeting. Biographies on each were provided by the Nominating Committee and attached to the Friday Digest.

Congratulations and thanks go to members who are standing for election to office for the 2026-2027 Club Year. They are:

Co-President-Elect – Mary Ann Mc Cauley
Co-President-Elect – Billie Mendiola
Vice President – Programs – Eileen Fuller
Vice President – Membership – Line Cousineau
Secretary – Nicole Dupont
Treasurer – General Fund – Pam Robinson
Delegate – Lisa George

The positions of President, Holly Nash; Treasurer – Service Fund, Cynthia Tashiro Cramer; and Directors Marilyn Pearson and Lisa Robinson; are completing their terms of service.

A big thank you to Nominating Committee Coordinator Jeanne Naccarato, Dot Watts and Gayle Kmetovicz for your diligent and dedicated work to compile this slate of officers.

Since none of the offices are contested, the election will take place by voice vote at the April Business meeting, unless a last-minute candidate emerges from the floor. However, if you would like a paper ballot to mail in, contact Jeanne Naccarato.

SITM Update

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Contributing to this issue

Marilyn Pearson	Diana DeMatei
Lisa Robinson	Margie Hermanson
Jeanne Naccarato	Nicole Dupont
Liza Chapen	Monica House
Cynthia Cramer	Patty Downs

Soroptimist International of Truckee Meadows
P.O. Box 20125 • Reno, NV 89515
www.sitmnev.org

Board Meets monthly on Tuesday
following the first Thursday, noon.

SITM Board 2023-24

Co-President
Marilyn Pearson
Lisa Robinson
President-Elect
Holly Nash
Vice President/Program
Mary Ann McCauley
Vice President/
Membership
Billie Mendiola
Secretary
Bev Perkins

Treasurer/General Fund
Pam Robinson
Treasurer/Service Fund
Cynthia Tashiro Cramer
Delegate
Debbie Richards
Director
Jeanne Naccarato
Parliamentarian
Doris Phelps



For information about our organization, check out these Soroptimist Websites:

Sierra Nevada Region: www.soroptimistsnr.org
Soroptimist International of the Americas: www.soroptimist.org
Soroptimist International: www.soroptimistinternational.org



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Investing in Dreams

Did you know . .

District 5 Winter Forum

Sixteen SITM members attended the February 28 District 5 Winter Forum, "Driving Change: Women on the Move". Look for an upcoming report on that meeting.

In attendance were:

Lisa Robinson	Line Cousineau
Marilyn Pearson	Billie Mendiola
Carmella Cipollina	Mary Ann McCauley
Bev Perkins	Pam Robinson
Holly Nash	Georgia Baker-Flambures
Darlene DeLancey	Margie Hermanson
Millie Mitchell	Jeanne Naccarato
Deb Richards	Cynthia Cramer



Parking Lot Sale

Sierra Pines Professional Plaza
190 W. Huffaker Lane

**Saturday
May 16, 2026
7am - 3 p.m.
Multi Family
Soroptimist* Sale**



**Contact Kay Dunham
First WallStreet Financial
Advisors #405
775-826-1777
775-560-4374-cell**

***Proceeds benefit
Soroptimist educational
and community projects.**