



Soroptimist International of Los Angeles

Continuing the Journey

March 2012

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Greetings!

All A-b-o-a-r-d!

Arriving on the 7th Street Track in approximately 25 days, the SILA Train will reach its March destination - 90 years of service to the Los Angeles community. This train initially began its trek on August 6, 2011, when club members were invited to "get on board, join hands" and start this SILA train "rolling, rolling". And it has been chugging along ever since . . . on a constant, selective multi-stop tour. With each stop, SILA members have left an indelible impression on the community.



Our most recent stop was at Children's Hospital on February 25. Conductor **Carole** powered our sleek SILA locomotive to a stop in front of 4650 Sunset Blvd. With nearly 100% club participation, and major support from Peace Over Violence, approximately 34 young high school women had an opportunity to explore issues regarding relationships (both positive and negative). Special thank you to the Community Relations Division at Children's Hospital for hosting the Forum. Kudos to committee members **Joyce, Barbara, Jeri, Jessica, Daphyne, and Teresa** (with the support of the rest of the club), for your hard work in the development and implementation of this critical work. As Carole put it, "Hopefully there is a girl out there who will see a path out of a dangerous situation due to today's effort." At the end of the Forum, **Carole** quite graciously handed over the bells and whistles to the next conductors: **Sheila and Pam**.

With hands on the levers in an effort to control the speed of the approaching station, **Sheila and Pam**, with committee members **Julie, Jeri, Janet, Jessica, Daphyne, Teresa, Emily, DeAnna, Karen** (and the rest of the club as a committee-of-the-whole) are masterfully guiding us towards our Anniversary Celebration luncheon. We are definitely past the "chug, chug" phase! It's full "team" ahead. Plans are in place and conference calls are being held weekly. The colors for the day are Black and White with a splash of red, and hopefully members will wear black and/or white also. Dignitaries and guests are confirming their attendance. Members are putting together their silent auction baskets. The community-at-large are responding with ticket purchases. We know that when our conductors finally apply the brakes in front of 431 W. 7th Street, SILA members will pour out in full force to greet guests; present the Ruby, Fellowship, Women's Opportunity, Violet Richardson Awards; and celebrate Soroptimist International of Los Angeles' 90th Anniversary (1922-2012).

Please plan to attend the last two meetings before the gala. Although much has been done, there is still much to do.

Thank you again to everyone who has worked to make our anniversary celebration a success. Although your name may not be listed, know that everything you have done . . . from helping to select our award winners to working on the day of the event . . . is appreciated! Everyone has worked so hard to make this an event to remember.

Our next conductor will be **Jeri**. Our next stop, after the anniversary celebration, will be the Downtown Women's Center.

All A-b-o-a-r-d!!

Happy Anniversary Everyone,

President Ginger

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Karen Bass to be Honored at 90th Celebration

SILA is pleased to announce Congressmember **Karen Bass** is SILA's 2012 Soroptimist Ruby Award honoree. Former Speaker of the House for California and currently representing California's 33rd Congressional District in the US House of Representatives, Ms. Bass is a lifelong advocate for effecting social change and improving the lives of women and girls.

She will be recognized, along with three other outstanding awardees at SILA's Gala Silent Auction and Luncheon Celebrating 90 Years of Service on Saturday, March 31, at the Los Angeles Athletic Club. Tickets are on sale now for \$75. [Click here](#) for more information and to download the invitation and RSVP card. The deadline for reservations is March 16.



Reading is FUNdamental



"A child will be lost if he or she is not hooked on reading by the 3rd grade," **Suzanne Coscarelli** told SILA members at the February 1 program meeting at Taix Restaurant. Suzanne is the Site Coordinator for [Reading is Fundamental of Southern California](#). RIF's mission is to promote literacy and motivate children to read by building at-home libraries for underserved children in Greater Los Angeles.

So imagine a child being able to choose a book off a big table of new books and being told this is their book to keep. It may be the child's very first book. RIF wants to give that experience to many kids, including those at Hollywood Primary Center, where SILA member **Dona Lawrie** is principal.



Funding cutbacks has made it hard for RIF to fund its programs, even though they are able to obtain quality, age-appropriate books at a fraction of retail cost. Thanks to a personal donation from member **Pam Smith**, the RIF will continue this year at Hollywood Elementary, where 100% of the children qualify for a free lunch.

Watch for more information on a hands-on service project being planned for May in which SILA members will have the opportunity to participate in a literacy event that includes reading to children.

Youth Forum A Success

by Jessica Washington

On Saturday, February 25, SILA conducted a Youth Forum for 34 high-school girls on preventing teen relationship violence. Held at Children's Hospital Los Angeles, the participants came from throughout Los Angeles and from both Charter and regular schools.

The goal of the forum was to present information to the girls to help strengthen their self awareness of relationship violence both in the schools and in the home. It also provided options for the girls on how to confidently protect themselves as well as report any observations of violence.

SILA President **Ginger Cole** started off the session with several ice breakers that allowed the young ladies to mix and meet others in attendance. The balance of the forum was conducted by members of the Peace Over Violence organization that not only presented very informative information but related with the girls to help "bring them out" so that the participants appreciated the information they were receiving.



Registration at the Teen Forum

During the forum, SILA members had an opportunity to interact with the adults who brought the young ladies and get feedback on the value these adults saw in this type of forum for girls in this age group.

SILA members and the other adults in attendance also were treated to an excellent tour of Children's Hospital Los Angeles by Family Resource Center representative, **Alma Barrera**. Founded in 1901, CHLA is the first and largest pediatric hospital in Southern California. The beautiful new \$636 million hospital building was opened just last July and features state of the art trauma and surgical facilities as well as kid and



Alma Barrera describing CHLA's 110 year history

family-friendly playrooms, waiting rooms and art work.

The Forum ended with each girl being asked to complete an evaluation. The comments and results were very encouraging. Of the 34 participants, 30 girls completed evaluations with obviously thoughtful responses. Many of the girls

took the time to make positive comments about the forum:

- Change NOTHING!
- Liked getting information I can pass on to friends
- Wide engagement and sharing of ideas
- Learning things can change
- I think maybe I bully my little sister...I need to change that

Giant kudos go to SILA 1st VP and Chair of this event, **Carole Oglesby**. It was because of her tireless efforts that this event was a success.

SILA's Banner by Joyce Jacobs & Barbara Jury



Barbara Jury and Joyce Jacob with SILA's Official Flag

All Soroptimist Clubs have a flag or banner, but SILA's banner has its own history. Recently, the banner needed to be cleaned, so member **Joyce Jacob** took it to the French Hand Laundry & Dry Cleaning which specializes in antique and special garments. The owner **Pam** commented that the banner has the most beautiful embroidery work she'd seen done on a banner. To keep it clean, Joyce then took it to The Flag Shop in Whittier to find a cover. When owner **Jan Mericle** saw the banner, she immediately recognized it. "We made the banner for SILA and I am a Soroptimist in Whittier!"

Barbara Jury remembers that SILA had to get special permission to have the banner custom made instead of buying one from Soroptimist International of the Americas (SIA). The ones from SIA tended to fade quickly. **Marilyn Hosstetler**, 1980-1982 SIA President, lived in Whittier and gave the permission to have SILA's banner custom made. It does stand out from all the rest!

Past WOD Award Winner: Pati Zarate by Joyce Jacobs

SILA feels a strong connection with **Pati Zarate**, Chef, Founder and Manager of [Homegirl Cafe](#), which catered the food for SILA's recent Youth Forum. Pati received the Woman of Distinction Award (now called the Ruby Award) from SILA in 2007 for inspiring and mentoring young women who needed her guidance to turn their lives around.

Coming to Los Angeles from Guadalajara, Mexico in 1981 at the age of 23, Pati brought with her her mother's creative gift of cooking and trying new recipes. She became the secretary to Father Boyle, founder of [Homeboy Industries](#), bringing that gift of cooking to the priests at Dolores Mission Church.



Homegirl Cafe and Catering is a division of Homeboy Industries. It teaches the basics of the food service industry to many disadvantaged and formerly gang-affiliated women. Years in development the Homegirl Cafe opened in April 2005 in Boyle Heights. A new, larger, state-of-the-art facility in Chinatown was completed in October 2007 to house Homeboy Industries, and the first-floor storefront is now home to Homegirl Cafe, where 30 to 40 homegirls undergo job training at a given time. Other locations are by LAX American Airlines, in City Hall, and they also sell their products at several Farmer Markets.

SILA is proud to have had a small part in the development of Homegirl.

To Buy or to Add On: Soroptimist House Unit II

Looking Back: Establishment of Soroptimist House...continued from last month's Newsletter.

With one goal accomplished and another on the horizon, a special committee, chaired by **Muriel Morse**, recommended that the board consider adding another residential building at the rear of the existing Soroptimist House property. A questionnaire was



sent out to all active members requesting a "yes " or "no" response. The recommendation passed overwhelmingly.

After meeting with university department heads to discuss the possible building, the Dean of the School of Architecture offered to arrange a class project to create a design. In November of 1957, with the Chancellor in attendance to lend his support, the results of this project were shown to the membership.

By April of 1958 the decision was made to proceed, as the cost of approximately \$30,000 had already been approved by the members. A ground breaking tea was held in the Chancellor's suite and two days later the cement slab foundation was laid. Members of the contracting firm were on the staff of the School of Architecture at the University, guaranteeing additional expertise.

In less than four months, on a Sunday in September of 1958, SILA saw their dream come alive when ten more women students called Unit II of Soroptimist House their home.

The houses continued to be maintained and managed by SILA members as cooperative housing for international and local women students until 1994 when club members voted to convert them into a shelter for victims of domestic violence.

In the words of Muriel Morse, "No minutes, no audits, no words or phrases can tell the real story of Soroptimist Foundation of Los Angeles [now SILA]. It is not a story of facts and figures, but a story of people."

Member News: Stephanie Klopfleisch



If you've missed seeing member **Stephanie Klopfleisch** at meetings lately, it's just because she has been extremely busy. Besides her second career as a professional musician, exotic travels with husband Randy, and time spent with her daughters and their growing families, Stephanie is currently president of the [Committee of Professional Women \(COPW\)](#) for the Los Angeles Philharmonic. For an interesting review of this group's history, including references to former SILA members **Muriel Morse**, **Mildred Lillie**, and **Jackie Johns**, [click here](#).



Stephanie is most proud of COPW's participation last May in the instrument drive for [YOLA](#), the Youth Orchestra of LA Philharmonic. During this drive, 104 used but playable musical instruments were donated so that disadvantaged children in Los Angeles could participate in YOLA. This program is led by LA's Maestro **Gustavo Dudamel** and inspired by the El Sistema program in Venezuela that gave Dudamel his start in music.

Decade by Decade: 1973-1982

SILA: 90 Years of Service



Decade: 1973-1982

Roe v. Wade: Supreme Court legalizes abortion in first trimester (73)

Soroptimists attend 1st UN World Conference, Mexico City (75)

Reagan nominates first woman on Supreme Court: Sandra Day O'Connor (7/81)

Equal Rights Amendment fails ratification (6/82)

Presidents:

1973-73: Barbara Jury

1973-74: Diane Frank

1975-76: Mari Hata

1976-77: Ruth Kagy

1977 (7-12): Jacquie Nicoud

1978 (1-6): Margaret Sacks

1978-79: Dollie Wakeham

1979-80: Mildred Bugbey

19780-81: Gretta Stenvick

19781-82: Nancy Morris



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