



S O R O P T I M I S T

Best for Women

# NEW MEMBER HANDBOOK

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*To educate & empower you to be the best Soroptimist  
you can be!*

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A publication of the  
**Golden West Region**  
of Soroptimist International of the Americas, Inc.  
*Updated July 2018*

# ***Soroptimist Vision & Mission***

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## **Vision**

Women and girls have the resources and opportunities to reach their full potential and live their dreams.

## **Mission**

To improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

## **Core Values**

Soroptimist International of the Americas is committed to:

- Gender Equality: Women and girls live free from discrimination.
- Empowerment: Women and girls are free to act in their own best interest.
- Education: Women and girls deserve to lead full and productive lives through access to education.
- Diversity & Fellowship: Women from varied backgrounds and perspectives work together to improve the lives of women and girls.

## **Goals**

As Soroptimist approaches its 100th birthday in 2021, we are working to define our next century. Our first Big Goal exercise identified "Invest in the dreams of half a million women and girls through access to education" as our Big Goal to guide our work from 2021-2031.

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# 1 — Soroptimist Basics

## Who We Are

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Soroptimist International, which consists of 4 federations including Soroptimist International of the Americas is a global volunteer movement working together to transform the lives of women and girls. Our network of over 75,000 club members in 122 countries works at a local, national and international level to Educate, Empower and Enable opportunities for women and girls. The name, Soroptimist, means “best for women,” and that is what the organization strives to Achieve

## What We Do

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The Soroptimist mission is to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment. In order to accomplish this goal, the organization administers several international programs. Soroptimist members belong to local clubs, which determine the focus of volunteer work to their communities and their participation in region, federation and international programs and projects.

## Why We Focus on Women and Girls

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It's true that both men and women live in poverty, face discrimination and must overcome obstacles. But throughout history—in every country in the world—women and girls face additional obstacles and discrimination solely because of their gender. Consider the following:

- One in three women have been beaten, coerced into sex or otherwise abused in their lifetime.
- According to a recent report, of the 600,000-800,000 people trafficked across international borders annually, 80 percent are female.
- Women work two-thirds of the world's working hours but earn only 10 percent of the world's income, and own less than 1 percent of the world's property.
- Two-thirds of the 880 million illiterate adults are women.
- Of the more than 110 million children not in school, approximately 60 percent are girls.

## Our Relationship with the United Nations

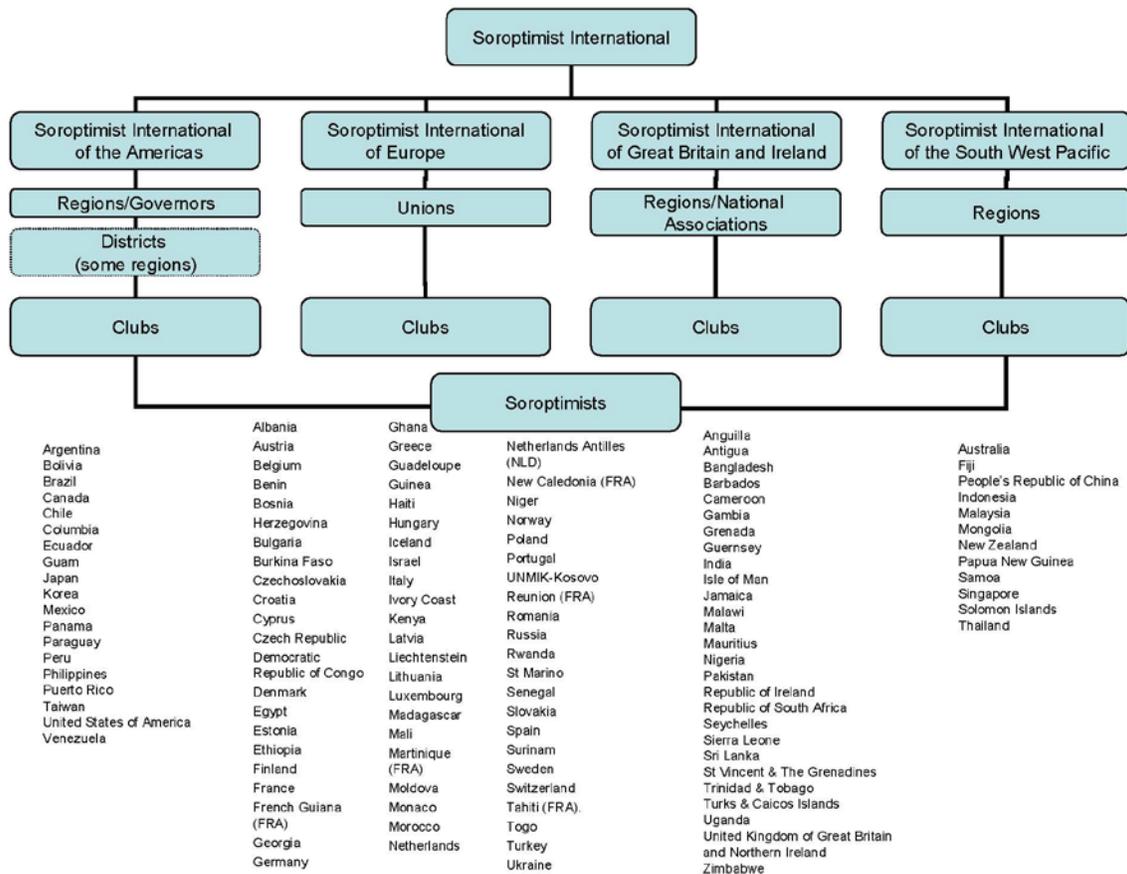
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Soroptimist International is active at all the major UN centers around the world. SI holds General Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council, (ECOSOC), official relations with several agencies and technical bodies, and a network of permanent SI representatives at all of the major UN centers. SI works to ensure that the voices of women and girls around the world are included in international decision-making and policy setting. Our experience with 'on the ground' projects all over the world drives our advocacy and lobbying efforts within the international community. Our representatives also serve as a link to this international community and inform our members of emerging issues, trends, and best practices.

## 2 — Soroptimist International Organization

### Soroptimist International

Soroptimist International unites women (or individuals) throughout the world to promote the objectives of Soroptimist, and to cooperate with intergovernmental and other organizations for the advancement of international goodwill and understanding. Soroptimist International is an association of Soroptimist federations, which in turn are made up of clubs.



### Structure

The SI board of directors consists of the officers of Soroptimist International, the president of each federation and two representatives from each federation selected in accordance with the procedures of the federations.

The voting body of the SI board of directors is composed of the president of each federation and two representatives from each federation. To retain equality of voting rights between federations, international officers have no vote.

## **Soroptimist History and Growth**

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The first Soroptimist club was organized in Oakland, CA, in 1921. The first club outside the US was chartered in Greater London in 1923. Since then, outstanding women from many parts of the world have become dedicated Soroptimists. Learn more by visiting the Soroptimist International of the Americas website:

<http://www.soroptimist.org>

## **Soroptimist International of the Americas**

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Soroptimist International of the Americas (SIA) has a membership of nearly 40,000 Soroptimists in 21 countries and territories and another 80,000 supporters through our Soroptimist.org online community. SIA Headquarters is located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Each club is assigned to a region in the federation. There are 28 regions in SIA. Regions may be divided into districts.

The Soroptimist mission is to improve the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment. In order to accomplish this goal, the organization administers several programs. The organization's major project is the **Soroptimist Live Your Dream Awards**, which mentors & assists women by giving them the resources they need to improve their education, skills and job prospects.

Other Soroptimist programs focus on awareness about sexual trafficking of women and girls, awareness of domestic violence as a workplace concern, and the **Dream it, Be it** training award to mentor girls in secondary school on setting and achieving their goals, moving forward after setbacks or failures, and discovering career opportunities

## **Golden West Region**

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Due to the global proportions of Soroptimist International of the Americas, the federation is divided into regions. The Golden West Region (GWR) has more than 40 clubs with approximately 1,000 members in an area covering Riverside and San Bernardino Counties in California, the state of Arizona except for Yuma County, and the entire state of New Mexico. The region is divided into four districts.

The Golden West Region provides administrative support for region clubs. The GWR works to assist and support clubs in maintaining a healthy membership and to educate and motivate clubs in effectively participating in service projects both in local communities and internationally.

Learn more about Golden West Region by visiting the GWR website:

<http://www.goldenwestregion.org>

## **3 — Club Structure and Protocol**

### **General Club Structure and Purpose**

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Soroptimist clubs are organized with a recommended minimum of 12 regular members. Each club maintains a charter as long as it remains current in all financial obligations to the region and federation, and has submitted all required final reports from federation club grants and disaster relief grants. Clubs not in good standing are not eligible to vote in federation elections or mail ballots, and cannot receive grants or awards from the federation.

If a club has less than 12 regular members, they are notified by the Federation that they are below the number of members recommended to maintain a club. Those clubs are encouraged to recruit more members and to seek advice from their region and the federation. As long as the club remains current in all financial obligations to the region and federation and submits all required final reports from federation club grants and disaster relief grants, the club is considered to be in good standing. No club shall forfeit its charter due to having 11 or fewer regular members.

Clubs initiate, adopt and promote procedures and policies to attain federation and club objectives in carrying out the Soroptimist mission.

Club bylaws should provide for the following:

- that the board of directors, composed of officers and board members, have administrative control over the affairs, funds and property of the club, except that of modifying any action taken by the club.
- that the president be the chief officer and direct the business of the club.
- that all standing and special committees be appointed by the president, unless otherwise provided for in the club procedures.

Each Soroptimist club operates within the framework of federation and international adopted policies, programs and bylaws, but each club assumes responsibility for formulation of Soroptimist policies by sending its informed delegates to federation conventions, region conferences and district fall meetings.

Clubs retain their individual character. They hold meetings, invite speakers, arrange discussions leading to research into the needs of their communities, and provide service to their communities and the world. Plus, membership carries the privilege of attending Soroptimist club meetings anywhere in the world!

## **Parliamentary Procedure**

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Parliamentary rules ensure accuracy in business, economy of time, order, uniformity and impartiality, and enhance the transaction of business. All members should have the privilege of voicing their opinions, and knowing how to do so is an important part of being an effective Soroptimist member.

In accordance with federation bylaws, *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* is the parliamentary authority.

### **Making Motions**

To be knowledgeable members and to participate in club meetings, learning correct parliamentary procedures is important. The two columns below show motions to make to accomplish the results you want:

<b><u>PURPOSE</u></b>	<b><u>MOTION TO MAKE</u></b>
Set time for meeting	I move that we adjourn to meet at...
If the adopted program or order of business is not being followed	I call for the orders of the day
Enforce the rules	I rise to a point of order
Reverse the decision of the chair	I appeal from the decision of the chair
Change rules of debate temporarily	I move that the debate be limited (or extended) to...
Prevent a new vote on a question that has been voted on	I move to withdraw...
Object to the consideration of any principle motion	I object to the consideration of...
Set aside temporarily to take care of an emergency	I move to lay on the table the motion regarding...
Bring before the assembly a question that has been	I move to take from the table the motion tabled regarding...
Stop debate and bring a vote on the motion immediately	I move the previous question
Defer action on a question until certain time	I move to postpone consideration of this action until...
Prevent action or suppress a question	I move to postpone indefinitely the...
Have a small group or committee study or take charge of a matter	I move to refer the motion to...
Change a motion before adoption	I move to amend by...
Bring a subject before the assembly	I move that we...
Obtain a new vote on a question that has been voted upon	I move to reconsider the vote on...
When an assembly wishes to annul some action it has previously taken and it is too late to reconsider the vote	I move to rescind...

## **Eight Steps to Action**

1. A member should address the chair. (*"President Mary"*)
2. She should wait for recognition by the chair.
3. She makes the motion (*"I move that" not "I make a motion"*)
4. Another member seconds the motion.
5. The chair states the motion. (*"It is moved by \_\_\_\_\_ and seconded by \_\_\_\_\_ that..."*)
6. If the motion is debatable, the chair asks for debate. (*"Is there any discussion?" or "Are you ready for the question?"*)
7. The chair takes the vote. (*"The question is on the adoption of the motion to....As many are in favor of the motion say 'aye'... Those opposed say 'no.'"*) (If a two-thirds vote is required: *"As many as are in favor of the motion, please stand...Be seated. Those opposed, please stand...Be seated."*)
8. The chair announces the result. (*"The motion is adopted." or "The motion is defeated."*)

## **Customs and Protocol**

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- By custom, the membership pin is worn on the left side, close to the heart
- Attend meetings regularly
- Be on time for meetings
- Address the presiding officer as president by her name, e.g. "President Mary"
- Address another Soroptimist by her first name
- Welcome and introduce visiting Soroptimists and guests
- Do business with Soroptimists on a business basis, expecting no favors or special treatment
- Pay your own way, unless you are invited as a guest or as a speaker
- Honor the office a person holds
- Disagree politely and keep informality within the bounds of fellowship and parliamentary procedure.
- Use correct terminology:
  - We are Soroptimists—not Sorops
  - We are members—not sisters or girls
  - We are clubs—not chapters
  - We are a federation—not national or federal
  - We have a pledge—not a creed or motto
  - We elect region officers—not regional officers
- Use correct names:
  - Soroptimist International of (name of your club)
  - Soroptimist International of the Americas
  - Soroptimist International

## **4 — Member Responsibilities**

### **Membership Qualifications**

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To qualify for membership in Soroptimist International, individuals should be, but are not required to be from the community who support SIA's mission of improving the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment. SIA empowers clubs to be inclusive rather than exclusive when growing their clubs.

### **Membership Types**

#### **Regular Member**

- Definition: Those who support SIA's vision, mission, and core values.

#### **Life Member**

- Definition: Those members who achieved life member status by July 2001 and who wish to retain that status.
- The federation no longer bestows life membership, but clubs are encouraged to honor members for years of service.

### **Member Self-Introduction**

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The correct method of self-introduction is:

Member's name  
Member's title in her firm or business  
Name of firm or business  
Slogan (optional)

### **Member Responsibilities**

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All members are responsible for:

- attendance at scheduled meetings of the club
- membership on committees and participation in club activities
- attendance at region conferences, and federation and international conventions
- participation in fundraising events to benefit club projects
- prompt payment of dues to the club

## ***Soroptimist Emblem***

The emblem is a circular disc on which the figure of a woman appears as the central figure. She emerges as the “spirit of womanhood” —vital, steadfast and dauntless. A plaque bearing the name “Soroptimist” is held in her upraised arms. The leaves and acorns of the oak bend downward to the right from the word “Soroptimist” and are emblematic not only of the strength and growth of the organization, but of the progress and achievements that it will attain. The leaves of the laurel are on the left of the word “Soroptimist.” Laurel is renowned as the symbol of victory and typifies friendship and success, both of which are vital to club life. The word “International” forms the lower portion of the emblem and signifies the worldwide institution that Soroptimist has become. Our emblem is more than just a badge of identification; it is a symbol of the aims and ideals of Soroptimists everywhere.



## ***Soroptimist International of the Americas Logo***

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In 2004, SIA conducted a marketing research study in which participants indicated there was a need to update / modernize the Soroptimist “look.” This led to the creation and adoption by SIA of the “S” logo to project the qualities of a contemporary and relevant organization.

This “S” logo will now replace the Soroptimist emblem as the official pin for all members of the SIA federation. The “S” logo is a simple, stylish graphic representation of the modern Soroptimist organization intended to foster brand unity in today’s environment. All SIA clubs are encouraged to use the “S” logo on their materials.



