

HISTORY OF SOUTHERN REGION

1946 - 1956



SROPTIMIST FEDERATION OF THE AMERICAS, INC.

SROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION

1946 – 1948	Director Mary Moore	Miami, Florida
1948 – 1950	Director Helen Durkee	Palm Beach, Florida
1950 – 1952	Director Florence Weiser	St. Petersburg, Florida
1952 – 1954	Director Mabel Barwick	Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
1954 – 1956	Governor Easter Martin Russell	Coral Gables, Florida

1946 – 1948

Director Mary Moore

A first meeting to organize The Southern Region began the story. It was later declared officially the First Conference and was thoroughly businesslike. The group, representatives of the five Soroptimist Clubs in Florida; Miami, Palm Beach, St. Petersburg, Miami Springs-Hialeah, Fort Lauderdale had the great privilege of guidance and inspiration by Ruby Lee Minar, First President of the Soroptimist Federation of the Americas, Inc., and of Mae C. Bowman, Immediate Past Director of South Atlantic Region.

Director Mae represented Hazel B. Hackett, President of the Federation. Herberta Ann Leonardy served as Parliamentarian. The elected officers were:

Director	Mary Moore, Miami
Secretary	Frances Cooper, West Palm Beach
Treasurer	Ethel Davis, St. Petersburg
Members At Large	Ruby Lee Minar, Miami Springs-Hialeah Jewel Hess, Fort Lauderdale

The Soroptimist Club of Palm Beach extended the invitation for the Second Conference, which was accepted for April 1947. Thus it was that the Thirteenth Region (and the first since 1940) of the Soroptimist Federation of the Americas, Inc. was established.

Headquarters Hotel for the Second Conference was the George Washington, West Palm Beach; the dates, April 12-13, 1947 the program included Committee meetings, an Anniversary Banquet (Palm Beach was celebrating its second), and on Sunday, club presidents and committee chairmen gave reports.

The Region discovered how fun highlights good Soroptimist meetings. Civic guests and Regional members made an impressive gathering. They also learned of the pleasure and profit of sharing their activities with each other. Every Soroptimist recalls such satisfaction when clubs were less numerous, and realizes the loss, necessary as growth inevitably comes.

At this conference, the Soroptimist Club of Miami lead a proposal which the Region approved, that "man" should apply equally to men and women whenever used in the proposed new Constitution for the State of Florida. They reported purchasing a Home for Indigent Aged in Dade County. This became the pioneering and successful "Bay Oaks".

The Soroptimist Club of the Palm Beaches reported, "We became an entity". Their project was Aid and Care for those with any form of ill health that predisposes to malignancy. They had incorporated their cancer fund, and through Timi, a little dog, raised over one thousand dollars. They had secured the Ford gumball machines, to keep the pennies rolling in.

At St. Petersburg the Club had sponsored services rather than a project, purchasing a Christmas Seal Bond, holding a game party for ex-service women, purchasing shoes for crippled children (this they called their project). They had given much attention to Budget and Constitution and By-Laws.

The Soroptimist Club of Fort Lauderdale, very new, reported on its chartering, just two days before Southern Region's organization. This club immediately took a place with other service clubs in the city, although it was the only one for women. Its services were all in cooperation, with the War Memorial Fund, the March of Dimes, and the Lion's Horse Show; and a resolution to the City Manager to establish a teen-age group recreational director. One of its programs

had been devoted to the New City Plan.

In Miami Springs-Hialeah, the club featured a contest in the Elementary Schools, "What is Wrong in My Block". This was followed in the next year with "To Beautify My Block My Neighbor Has Promised To _____". They had made a community survey and learned there was a road-widening plan under way. (Later on they cooperated in the beautifying program). Aid in books for a school for black pupils; sponsoring a Girl Scout Troop, and making cash donations to three community agencies had made the year a busy one. They were considering Venture and the organization of a new club at Coral Gables. Especial note was taken on their efforts toward world friendship, studying Spanish, and corresponding with clubs in Europe.

In a final note, this club stressed its plan toward "friendship" by acting on the principle, "it begins in our club". They stated that each member would testify that she had grown in executive power, in ability to appear in public, as she had learned "the powerful nuances which make leaders of men".

To a very great degree this Conference was Soroptimism, alive and effective. It demonstrated the purpose and value of Regions. Here all phases of Soroptimism were evident. Each could be inspired and informed. Within each club phases that concerned its own community could be selected and developed each an effective segment, all together, a full and complete program.

Committee reports emphasized this. All had been done yet each had not done all. The effective power of the Region as an entity was unmistakable. For instance, the adoption of a resolution in reference to the new Constitution for Florida, 1) Militant support, 2) Definite and vocal demand for women representatives on the drafting, 3) Demand for "equality phrases", to equalize the laws as they apply to women as well as men. They noted that this would become supportable by and as a Region, if all clubs ratified.

With its adjournment all were of the opinion that Southern Region had made a good start.

The Fall Conference met in St. Petersburg at the Soreno Hotel, November 1-2, 1947. Some change was made. Saturday evening featured a Banquet and a Board Meeting. A full program was set for Sunday. Routine and details succumbed to time. All reports were to be typewritten, three copies, without fail. Again fun and laughter were ever present; consideration for delayed travelers, and beauty in the setting. There was gaiety, bright happy fellowship, and they were making plans for Toronto in 1948.

They discussed promotion for new members and the need for Federation Field Representatives. There is nothing new under the Soroptimist sun. Club reports told of growth and consolidation of plans. New interests appeared, participation in Federation activities in constructive legislation. One President, Jewel Hess, had been a candidate for City Commissioner. The president of the new club in Coral Gables said that for her "one of the greatest pleasures in heading the club has been the association with the fine women busily engaged in doing the world's work".

They did resolve to request the Federation to put a Soroptimist to work in their "fertile" territory, but they withdrew it. Somehow they knew there was a more productive way. Already they, themselves, had formed clubs in Coral Gables, in Miami, and Atlanta, in a new state, was in the making.

The Biennium closed with the Fourth Conference, in Miami, at the Columbus Hotel, April 23-25, 1948. A full weekend was planned, saving time for program by having registrations on Friday evening. There was time for fun, relaxation, and inspiration. The program highlighted a Pan American theme, colorful and informative. Eight clubs in two states with twenty-one delegates attended.

Director Mary's address stated, "Soroptimism is not a theory or speculation, but a life of living service". She saluted the Southern Region Soroptimist as an outstanding woman.

The Conference was a concluding one, was so intended. The first two years of life for Southern Region had reached completion. It was time to evaluate. Inter visitation had increased; Constitution and By-Laws were brought in line; President's reports were "incorporated in the minutes". There was awakening interest in Central and South America; publicity had increased; there was marked effort toward voting, one club reported 100% participation; growing attention to world affairs. Miami Spring-Hialeah had worked under flood conditions. Coral Gables had begun a club bulletin.

The Banquet speaker used as his topic, "Peace Begins at Home", in the heart. A paraphrase could be made for the two years of the first biennium of Southern Region. "Soroptimism Begins at Home", in learning, in joy, in friendship, in service and in growth.

Director Mary Moore turned her good works and the Region over to the new board.

Director	Helen Durkee, Palm Beach
Secretary	Easter Martin Russell, Coral Gables
Treasurer	Margaret Coates, Fort Lauderdale
Members at Large	Bessie McCready, Miami Springs-Hialeah
	Florence Weiser, St. Petersburg

1948 – 1950 Director Helen Durkee

Director Helen Durkee said of the biennium, "there were growing pains". Growing there was but "pains" were not in evidence. "Travel and Grow" could have been the slogan.

The Fall Conference (the Fifth) was held in Fort Lauderdale at the Governors Club Hotel, November 27-28, 1948. The delegates and officers recognized that these would be formative years. Consequently they allotted time freely for working out effective organizational procedures.

Good spirits, good fellowship, warm hospitality made for accomplishment. At the Banquet municipal and county representatives honored the Conference. "Soroptimisters" complimented the members by attending.

Mary Moore, Past Director, who had traveled to Harrogate, England for the meeting of Soroptimist International reported on the work of the sessions. Margaret Coates, member of the Soroptimist Club of Fort Lauderdale told of the lighter side. Director Helen had also visited Paris and attended the meeting of the United Nations. She spoke on the events taking place there, and of her travels in England and through war torn Europe.

The Conference featured committee reports. They considered establishing an attendance plaque for the club having the best record. They took steps to create a Regional scholarship fund. The program offered by the International Good Will Committee aroused much interest.

Time could still be allowed for Presidents Reports. Miami told of its project for older citizens, "The Bay Oaks Home", which they had initiated in 1947. This club also proposed that the Region support universal marriage and divorce laws through working with Legislators. In each case the reports reflected wide and active participation in the activities and life of the community.

Headquarters for the Sixth Conference was the Antilla Hotel, and the Elk's Lodge, Coral Gables, April 2-3, 1949. Springtime, Florida charm, music, soft breezes, swaying palms were all in evidence for a special patio party and the Banquet at which the guest of honor was the President of the American Federation, Gertrude M. Huitt. She gave her address the glamorous title, "The Alabaster Box of Soroptimism". The breakfast at the Barcelona Restaurant featured as decor the famed racetrack at Miami Springs-Hialeah, complete with golden horseshoes. At the closing luncheon, held at Elk's Lodge, the guest speaker urged that the ideals and the republican form of government of the nation be kept paramount.

The Board gave consideration to the publishing of a Regional Roster. Further plans for the Scholarship Fund resulted in a new name, The Regional Fellowship Loan Fund, since only candidates in graduate study would be eligible.

President's Reports brought in highlights. The Soroptimist Club of the Palm Beaches would be chartering a Venture Club, the first in Southern Region. Miami Springs-Hialeah reported continued progress in their project, "Ideal Girl's Club", organized to provide cultural interests among girls in the age group, 10-16 years.

In a strong patriotic mood, and alerted to the need for Peace among all people, the Conference closed.

The delegates and officers for the Seventh Conference assembled at Henry Grady Hotel, Atlanta, Georgia on September 3-4, 1949. It was a first occasion for Southern Region was meeting in a new state, Georgia. The hostess club had made plans, which were models of efficiency. The Friendship Luncheon was inspirational, the address, "Challenge to Womanhood".

Growth in organization brings needs. Discussion centered about each president arranging for mimeographing her own report, bringing fifty copies to the Regional Secretary for incorporating in Conference minutes, thus affecting economies of time.

The delegates approved a recommendation to the Federation for an annual roster for the Federation; also that the term for club presidents be set for a maximum of two years.

A President's Forum was a successful innovation. From the President's Reports the conference learned that East Miami had arranged for a Center with a committee in charge, where letters supporting approved legislation, in this case The Report of the Hoover Commission, could be prepared, signed and mailed.

The Conference closed on a note of confidence and accomplishment.

The final conference report for the biennium, the Eighth for the Region, opened at the Soreno Hotel, St. Petersburg, April 14-16, 1950. Informality was the keynote, the mood recreational. Travel was the theme. As the officers gave their final reports each expressed sincere appreciation for the inspiration, and for the contributions made by club members and Regional leaders.

Director Helen's program of visits to clubs, and her words of goodwill had inspired the formation of five new clubs, Fort Pierce, Macon, Savannah, Sarasota and Hollywood to make the regional membership 15 clubs.

Presidents' Reports revealed the usual generous giving to, and active support of, community efforts. Miami gave a full story of Bay Oaks, an ambitious, successful project representing an investment of \$35,000. Northeast Miami had begun tentative work through its Legislative Committee for the enactment of a uniform law for the protection of abandoned families. Homestead had studied the Report of the Hoover Commission and club members had written to their Legislators. Fort Pierce, the first of the "new clubs" set the mood by telling of their efforts, which had meant for them "fun".

The delegates approved sending the name of Past Director, Mary Moore, to the Federation Nominating Committee as a nominee for Second Vice President. By regular procedure the new Regional Board was nominated. Elected were:

Director	Florence Weiser, St. Petersburg
Secretary	Frances Crane, Miami Beach
Treasurer	Jimmie Gardner, Palm Beaches
Members at Large	Betty Ireland, Miami Springs-Hialeah
	Peggy Launius, Atlanta

Past Director Helen, looking forward closed the biennium with another innovation, appreciated and successful. The new Board met for a briefing session before leaving to take up their positions.

1950 – 1952 Director Florence Weiser

Miami Beach was the locale for the Ninth Conference. Director Florence Weiser opened the sessions at the Sherry-Frontenac Hotel, the dates October 27-29, 1950. She had selected the theme, "The Sincerity of Friendship". The hostess club implemented this in many ways. A Welcome Booth aided the delegates and established a fine spirit. The hibiscus made a sparkling setting for the luncheon. At the Banquet, the keynote address enhanced the mood, "Soroptimist Friendship, What Does It Mean to Me?"

Finances needed much attention but by the close, efficient procedures resulted. Much interest in Unesco resulted from an address and committee reports.

Most of the club reports indicated plans in the making. Palm Beaches had discussed a questionnaire on the Mid-century White House Conference on Children and Youth and forwarded it. St. Petersburg had organized the second Venture Club.

Quite unique and in the mood of the Conference, Mae Davis told of the work in the Fort Lauderdale Club in verse.

Details of operation filled the business meetings for seriousness of purpose was not disregarded. Education in Soroptimism brings rededication, and the conference closed with many feeling that there had been a "moving of the spirit".

The Tenth Conference opened with a spirit of acceleration. Headquarters was the 79th Street Hotel, Northeast Miami, and the dates April 13-15, 1951. Director Florence had set the theme, "Love of Country", and the hostess club had followed it in the lavishly beautiful setting for the Banquet. Folk songs by singers in authentic costumes created a reminiscent mood. "Queens of History" in costume added glamour to the World of Women.

The Conference used for the first time a "Call" and an "Agenda" to assist in expediting business. The Director announced the appointment of an Historian, Myrtle Gruelle, of the Soroptimist Club of Coral Gables. Noting the increasing length of reports and business details, Easter Martin Russell, former Regional Secretary, proposed streamlining both in the minutes.

For the first time, Resolutions appeared. They showed careful preparation. Discussion followed freely. Two were adopted:

- I. To sponsor a nation-wide movement to promote the registration of all eligible voters, and to urge the participation of all voters, in all elections, local, state and national; and to forward this resolution to the President of the American Federation of Soroptimist Clubs.
- II. To endorse the provisions of the Nursing Practice Act of Florida State Nurses' Association, to urge Legislators to support the Act; to the end that all nurses are registered.

Much time resulted in establishing a \$500 grant for the Fellowship Committee to be a Loan, interest free; also that a fund for a \$1,500 award be financed.

Presidents' Reports indicated clubs were continuing activity in the work of other organizations in the Community. Miami announced that Bay Oaks now had its own Board of Trustees. Havana mentioned five needs in their city, and indicated that its project would be selected from these. Coral Gables had sponsored a Woman's Exchange opened February 25, 1951. Miami Springs-Hialeah had formed the third Venture Club.

The delegates, after official adjournment, went their ways, with the feeling that much had been accomplished, and that there was much to do.

The third conference of the biennium (the Eleventh for the Region) opened at the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post Hall, Homestead; its dates October 12-14, 1951. Director Florence chose "The Dignity of Service" for the theme. She welcomed the official visitor, Grace Nichols, President of the American Federation of Soroptimist Clubs.

Again hibiscus made gay settings, seashells being added in the decor. The head table had a breath taking display of orchids in great variety. At the delegate's tables bowls of tropical fruits made luscious centerpieces. For informality everyone enjoyed the Sunday lunchtime fish fry.

Three forums planned for the Presidents created so much interest they were held in the open meetings. A Resolution was passed, to support legislation to strengthen the child molester law; and to secure better administration so that maximum penalties would be used in sentencing,

Betty D. Hammock, University of Kentucky was the first recipient of the \$500 grant named by the Project (Fellowship) Committee, to assist her in securing an MA degree in English and Speech. The Conference spent much time on the Civil Defense Program, urging full participation by the clubs.

The Region took a big step, beginning its participation in the work of the American Federation of Soroptimist Clubs by nominating and electing Easter Martin Russell, Coral Gables, to the Federation Nominating Committee. President Grace Nichols complimented the Region with the appointment of Jimmie Gardner, Palm Beaches, as Chairman of that Committee.

President Grace had reminded the Conference that as growth comes, Presidents' Reports become too numerous to take Conference time. However, Southern Region still found them of interest and value.

Sarasota had sponsored a Teen Age Evening Program looking toward a building and had secured the support of an interested, well-to-do rancher. St. Petersburg told of having "certificates" for "Soroptimisters" attending meetings "over and beyond the call of duty". The Club is sponsoring a movement to establish a "hotel for women" and has created a community committee for the project. Coral Gables used the "themes", the tenets of the Pledge for the framework of its report, listing eight Community Boards on which Soroptimists sat. Miami noted that the investment in Bay Oaks was now more than \$50,000. The Kiwanis Club of that city had invited Fort Pierce to a joint meeting.

Havana had founded the "Bank" of Streptomycine for children registered at the Infantile Paralysis Infirmary. Palm Beaches had sponsored a "Golden Ages Day".

Director Florence closed the meeting with appreciation and justifiable pride that club attendance was 100%.

The work of the biennium concluded with the Twelfth Conference at Fort Pierce Hotel, Fort Pierce, April 25-27, 1952. Cordiality was the word for the hospitality extended by the hostess club. The theme for the luncheon decor was the use of Indian River County products, fruit, vegetables, fish and Indian dolls. For the "speech", there was a history of the County. The "Old South" was featured at the Banquet. Square dancing and songs by a Black choral group made up the program. Dr. Isabel Margarita Ordety of the Havana Club spoke earnestly on the need to preserve and help in the growth of the new in the South.

The Director announced the creation of the position of Assistant Director and discussed her duties as a member of the Regional Board. The official nominees for the Incoming Board were invited to sit with the Board as a means for their orientation.

Easter Martin Russell read the preliminary report of the Historian who had done yeoman service in listing and fixing the dates for chartering the eighteen clubs of the Southern Region. A Resolution was adopted: to urge Legislators to enact a law for uniform support of dependents; to send a copy to the Soroptimist Clubs in the Region, and to such others who could assist; and to give the resolution publicity.

Three new clubs were introduced; Memphis and Nashville in Tennessee, and Louisville in Kentucky, a satisfaction to all that two new states could be active in the Region.

Federation matters had due attention: a plea from Pluma B. Batten, Second Vice President of the Federation and Chairman for the monetary gift to the Woman's Medical College in Philadelphia on the occasion of its One Hundredth Anniversary was given serious consideration and support was urged; detailed information for the Federation Convention at Washington, D. C. and for that of Soroptimist International Association at Copenhagen, Denmark was made available.

One club report (Fort Pierce) listed its efforts to organize the Mental Health Group. Atlanta had organized the fourth Venture Club.

The election of nominees for the 1952 - 1954 Board had resulted in six members:

Director	Mabel Barwick, Fort Lauderdale
Assistance Director	Peggy Launius, Atlanta
Secretary	Jane Chaney, Fort Pierce
Treasurer	Simone Heisterman, Homestead
Members at Large	Ione Hickox, Savannah
	Jet Alexander, Louisville

Director Florence with great sincerity expressed her appreciation to the clubs for their efforts, which brought to all the realization of the full meaning of the theme for this closing conference, "The Joy of Achievement". Her confidence in the members had been her guiding star and she wished for them all a rich full life of Service. Southern Region had come of age.

1952 – 1954 Director Mabel Barwick

"Coming of age" brings busy days and Director Mabel Barwick began her duties early in July. Past Director Florence Weiser could not attend the Convention of the Federation in Washington, D. C. Director Mabel had the pleasure of sitting on the Boards of Directors throughout the convention. She was also the first to be installed as Governor of Southern Region. This title was created by Federation to create a status for the regional office on the level of such officers in other Service clubs.

The regional activities began in the Thirteenth Conference in the Hotel Dempsey, Macon, GA, October 10-12, 1952. Open House created warm, friendly greetings on arrival, which continued until the last farewell. The official guest was Pluma Batten, First Vice President, and American Federation of Soroptimist Clubs. Blue and gold colors accented the decorations. Arrangements were the ultimate of efficiency.

Governor Mabel had chosen from the Federation the theme "Molding the Future", adding "The Region's Share". Extension was the keynote, the Governor being so-minded, and the Federation guest, Vice President Pluma Batten, being also Extension Chairman for the Federation. The challenge was given, strong members make strong clubs, and strong clubs make a strong Region. Thus Southern Region could become a beacon light in the Federation.

The Region realized to a marked degree that a great loss had come to them in the death of Ruby Lee Minar, a tower of strength in the development of the Region; and honored as the First President of the American Federation. She had died on shipboard on her way to Copenhagen, Denmark for the International Convention. She was a member of the club at Miami Springs-Hialeah, which had created a Memorial, purchasing a heart machine for Children's Hospital in Miami. The Region voted to give one hundred dollars to the Memorial.

Some items of business had special interest and significance to a Region so lately "of age": 1) The Board was granted money for filing cabinets, records have a way of piling up; 2) The Conference invited the Federation to come to their Region for the Convention in 1958; 3) They voted to "adopt" Gertrude Huit, First President of Soroptimist International Association; 4) They heard the report by the Governor that Key West wished to discontinue as a club; 5) They made plans to extend in Natchez and Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Governor Mabel and others reported on the meetings in Washington, D.C. A special pleasure came in hearing of the SIA meetings through Juanita Clay, member of the club at Fort Lauderdale, who had attended the SIA Convention in Copenhagen.

Regional Chairmen were announced. In the Presidents' Reports the spirit of Soroptimism was moving. The State Mental Health Association had accepted Fort Pierce's Association as an affiliate. Coral Gables had spear headed a movement for all Service Clubs to have one large affair to raise funds for a Medical School at the University of Miami.

With a final glance ahead there came a recommendation to share in raising the fund for entertaining the delegates coming to the International Convention at New York in 1956.

As warm as the farewells were, everyone realized that much must be done before assembling in the spring.

When May 8-10, 1953 arrived, The Fourteenth Conference assembled in Havana, Cuba at the Hotel El Nacional. Late docking by the SS Florida made it necessary to open the Conference on May 9. Elsie M. Fenton, President of the American Federation of Soroptimist Clubs was official guest. Honors were extended to "Soroptimisters" Everett Fenton and William Barwick. Speaker at the opening session was the President of the Havana Rotary Club. He urged broad vision, great humanity, dedicated welfare to one's fellowman, these to be guides to the full life.

An early gesture was laying the traditional floral piece at the base of the statue of the national hero, Jose Martii. Informality was the spirit. The Banquet, however, had tones of formality and entertainment of high order. Luncheon on Sunday was a first indeed for Southern Region; its menu:

Puerco Asado
Frijoles Colorados y Arros Blancos
Tamales Yucca
Ponecillos
Pastello Guava Crveza
Cafe Cubano

Spanish names did not disguise the delicious food.

Business consisted of routine financial matters, but attention was given to what the Region could do to further the Federation program, "Second Horizons" and to assist the Venture Clubs in their organizational growth. Necrology services became a part of the program, this first one for three members who had died.

Governor Mabel introduced a new procedure, in the nature of economy of time and prevention of duplication it was a statistical report, which could be compiled on one sheet and distributed. This made for shorter Presidents' Reports, which could tell of the programs and projects.

Committee Reports told of effective work. Legislation had joined forces to aid in the passage of "Uniform Support of Dependents Act". Project, now the official name for the Regional Fellowship work indicated money on hand, but no applicants. It acquired a new name, The Ruby Lee Minar Memorial Fellowship at \$1,200, as an interest free loan, under the existing regulations.

One interesting "first" appeared; a Resolution, against support of UNESCO; also one requesting a special study. These were ruled out of order. Another was on the matter of having one conference a year, also ruled out of order. Serious matters need serious decisions and the Region acted accordingly.

Fort Lauderdale had organized the fifth Venture Club; one at Sarasota was the sixth.

President's reports proved adequate even though shortened. Palm Beaches told of their "Aid to Cancer Victims", from the Club to individuals recommended by Doctors under a Cancer Board. Sarasota had completed their efforts to include their Youth Recreation project in a bond issue, and to organize city support.

It was not difficult to express to the members of the Soroptimist Club of Havana appreciation for hospitality unsurpassed, even though leaving brought the bit of sadness that comes with goodbye.

But coming together was good. The Fifteenth Conference assembled at Hotel Peabody, in

Memphis, on October 2-4, 1953, a first in the State of Tennessee. The welcome was in the best tradition of Southern hospitality. Guests came from the Soroptimist Club of Little Rock, Arkansas. Distinguished guests included Gertrude Huitt, President of SIA, the International President of Zonta, and a past Director of Rotary. A program of dramatic entertainment featured "How Women Rule the World".

A new step was taken, letters of congratulations were presented in digest form, heightening the point of the letter, and, what was becoming increasingly important, conserving time.

A new feature, the Presidents' Council, and the Forums became valued opportunities for education, and for the exchange of ideas.

Governor Mabel told of her visit to Key West with Easter Martin Russell and their reactivation. Committees had full reports. Civil Defense had an extensive program. The Project (the Fellowship) presented a complete study and offered recommendations to the Federation Committee in order to secure candidates and an equitable distribution of funds. Patricia Minar Vajda, Miami Springs-Hialeah, made a strong plea for understanding the problems of the day, and urged study of the U. S. Constitution.

Clubs were involved in finding "new" projects. Fort Pierce had completed the formation of their Mental Health Association. It was now an independent four-county unit. They were now organizing a "Golden Years Club" to be housed in an old library building. Miami Springs-Hialeah announced an Oxygen Tent had been placed in the Children's Cardiac Home as the Memorial to Ruby Lee Minar. Their new project is to establish a Medical Loan Center for which the city has provided a room in City Hall. Palm Beaches gave an account of their "aid and comfort" to Cancer patients not eligible for assistance from other sources, the work being managed by the club and now representing an investment of \$10,000. Savannah had financed two teachers for students homebound from disease, aiming for a state law to require this as part of public education. They had written letters to newspapers and to city officials for a law prohibiting abandoned iceboxes.

In the words of the Courtesy Resolution, "the Southern Region had held a most successful conference and enjoyed a period of golden hospitality".

The Sixteenth Conference, held at the McAllister Hotel, Miami, on April 23-25, 1954 brought the biennium to its close. Governor Mabel had chosen for the theme, "Service, Our Challenge". The attendance was unusually large, "a tribute to the Governor for her selfless devotion to the cause of Soroptimism".

The welcome party featured the Easter season, suitably, for Easter (Martin Russell) herself provided the name. The luncheon had typical decor; the Banquet had Miami officials as guests; Miami artists provided the program. The Conference visited Bay Oaks, the project of the Miami Club.

In the midst of fellowship, fun and hospitality there was business. An award for the best Club Scrapbook was established. Governor Mabel was nominated for Secretary of the Federation. A Resolution to support laws on sex crimes to be strengthened, as well as bettered, and for more considerate use of evidence obtained from young children was tabled. Civil Defense was given full attention. Tributes were spoken for members who had died during the winter.

Three new clubs had been organized, Lake Worth-Lantana-Boynton Beach, Jacksonville, and

Birmingham, Alabama, a first in that state, making 24 in the Region.

The Legislative Committee reported working with some success, on income deduction for employed help at home; correcting discrimination against women in the accounting field; studying the proposed legislation regarding sex crimes recommending further study; also sending letters to Representatives on the Equal Rights Amendment.

The Project Committee placed a \$400 grant with Mary I. Theophilus, studying for a Master's Degree at the University of Miami. In the Scrapbook award St. Petersburg and Fort Lauderdale tied, each receiving a plaque.

Presidents' Reports indicated completions of work under way. Miami Springs-Hialeah announced that their "Ideal Girls Club" had been taken over by the Recreation Department thus going the way of all good Soroptimist projects.

The slate for the new Board was voted in practically unanimously; and their presentation was given a "burst of applause":

Governor	Easter Martin Russell, Coral Gables
Lt. Governor	Flossie Keaton, Nashville
Secretary	Madrid Williams, Macon
Treasurer	Molly C. Hickman, Memphis
Members at Large	Era Mae Furr, Miami Springs-Hialeah
	Edna Dillehey, Louisville

The Conference shared another first, the installation ceremony for the new Board. Governor Mabel, acting for First Governor Mary Moore, used nosegays of spring flowers and ribbons, which she gave to each one as she named their titles and made comments on their duties.

The Board, to serve for 1954 - 1956, met for a short briefing session. The need to "expedite" their work was stressed. There was much to be done and time was usually short. The new officials were "admirably" prepared. Southern Region could look forward with assurance. Past Governor Mabel had been honored at the Governors' Luncheon with appreciation and gifts. Her biennium had set standards of action. Possibly a "first" which still stands, was her report that in fulfilling her duties she had traveled 22,150 miles.

1954 – 1956 Governor Easter Martin Russell

In her opening words of welcome, Governor Easter Martin Russell said she hoped to have a working conference. These were to be key words for the biennium; a two-day meeting offered too little time indeed for operating a large and growing organization.

The Conference was the first in the State of Kentucky, at Louisville, Hotel Seelbach, October 15-17, 1954. Guests of honor included the Immediate Past, and the present Governor of Midwestern Region, a member from Indianapolis, and Gertrude Huitt, President of Soroptimist International Association, and on her way to visit the Federation of Great Britain and Ireland.

For Registration and Welcome they met in the Leather Room, where else In Louisville and what else but Kentucky ham, beaten biscuits, mint Juleps. The luncheon emphasized classifications by hats and corsages. The Banquet featured June L. Hadley, student in the School of Medicine, Vanderbilt University, and the Fellowship award winner of the Region. SIA President Gertrude Huitt again spoke of "My Alabaster Box".

Work began with the opening session. No surer sign of maturing is found than in the effort for self-support. Official action made it routine to pay expenses of officers, guests, and committee chairmen within established controls. They granted time for Key West to try to retain its charter; they settled on a Registration fee of \$1.00 assessment per club to help finance the conferences; they ordered a Committee formed to create a Transportation Pool to assist in travel costs to Conferences by delegates; the Scrapbook contest became one for Press Books. They considered and adopted the options under the new laws of Soroptimism.

Herberta Ann Leonardy conducted a rather new approach to meet an old need, a Parliamentary Law Clinic. SIA President Gertrude conducted a Question and Answer period. The tone was set, earnest, thoughtful consideration.

Committees followed through: they urged study of the United Nations and its Agencies; The Fellowship chairman gave the details of procedures, and reported that the recommendations sent to the Federation had not been brought out of Committee. The Conference approved insuring Fellowship recipients. There would be a Regional Directory clubs to be pro-rated for costs. The Civil Defense program was clarified.

Club reports showed maturity, true service in the Soroptimist sense: Atlanta reported one of their members had "run" for the Governorship of Georgia; Birmingham had participated in a new approach, members had appeared on a panel via Radio to publicize a two-year survey of social and health problems in the county; Jacksonville had sponsored, with the other women's service clubs, a Finance Forum, open to all business women; Macon had been influential in organizing a Council of Women's Civic Organizations.

Memphis had become associated with the Women's Executive Council in that city; Miami, because of purchase of new land for Bay Oaks, now had an investment of \$135,500. Miami Springs-Hialeah had set up a twelve weeks' Course in Psychology for Parents; Miami Northwest had begun steps to establish a Day Nursery for children of working mothers; Louisville told of organizing a Drug Clinic to provide medicine and other needs for patients, not eligible for aid from any other source.

With all the "work", the Seventeenth Conference closed in an atmosphere of warm, genuine friendship. All left with a willingness to "accept the challenge".

Sooner than a delegate could think it was time for the Eighteenth Conference at the Hotel De Soto, Savannah, on April 22-24, 1955. Governor Easter Martin had with much candor selected "So Much to Do, So Little Done" as the theme. Members of the Venture Club in antebellum costumes greeted the delegates with traditional hospitality.

Luncheon had a repeat on the theme, Classifications by hats and corsages. At the Banquet character dancers entertained and there was a skit on Soroptimist nomenclature. Necessarily, finances needed much time at the meetings.

Business was dispatched. The Region would choose the place of meeting a year in advance. Greeting letters were noted in a listing. The Sister Club program had been given a broad study; the report was thorough in all details. Legislation became more flexible under a new name, Public Affairs.

They Issued a Southern Regional Extension Policy and Procedures leaflet; the Committee working on the Transportation Pool brought in a plan, which was adopted. Additional rulings were made to the Fellowship plan. Ratings for attendance award were established. At Savannah, Soroptimism was plainly a Way of Life.

The Presidents' Reports continued to show creative service. Jacksonville had become a member of the Civic Round Table; Miami Springs-Hialeah had instituted a "Home Safety Campaign"; St. Petersburg reported an honor, they had been listed by the Woman's Home Companion among 250 clubs for outstanding participation in service to community work; Stuart had organized and chartered the Martin County Historical Society and was involved in two further studies, the need for a County Welfare Home, and needs for juvenile detention centers.

Everyone agreed that the Conference had been one of Service in an atmosphere of charm. So much to do, and so much done was the compliment to the hostess club.

The second half of the biennium began in the Nineteenth Conference at the Andrew Jackson Hotel, Nashville, on October 14-16, 1955. Emily Ziegler, First Vice President of the Federation was guest of honor, acting in consulting, advisory capacity. The theme had an echo quality, "We Can Do More, We Will Do More".

Nashville's forte, "hill-billy", that is Country Western, costumes, fun and music were in evidence at the Welcome Reception. An innovation also came. Vice President Emily and Governor Easter Martin had been interviewed and televised. By TV all saw and heard the occasion. A real innovation also was of note, no program at Luncheon; time was needed for Regional matters. At the Banquet there were skits and music. The speaker was June Hadley, the Fellowship Awardee. After the Banquet, all who wished, went to Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, where else?

There can remain no doubt that the Region had come of age. Details of Finance and Procedures occupied eleven pages of the official minutes. Committee Reports amplified purposes and plans very inspirational. Vice President Emily reviewed the development and the wide bases and full concepts of Soroptimist Service. Panel discussion on Extension was a challenge. One new activity was a Roster of registrants at the Conference by Clubs. It was a matter of pride that clubs attending were 100%.

The Civil Defense program was again promoted. Birmingham proposed a "World Peace" project, to be attained by personal correspondence. One big step was the ruling that club reports would be presented annually only, thus securing more time for the better achievement of the responsibilities of the Region.

Governor Easter Martin had mentioned in her report that the Region would be ten years old in 1956, and should show a deal of solid accomplishment to justify its existence. At the close it could be seen that they had come by more than a "slight degree closer to ultimate goals" to greater understanding and appreciation of Soroptimism.

The hostess club had given comforts, convenience and happiness to the delegates. It seemed no task was too great for their effort, no detail too small for attention. It was Soroptimist hospitality dispensed with Southern prodigality.

Gaiety and "Joy or Achievement" pervaded the Twentieth Conference, which completed Governor Easter Martin's term. St. Petersburg-Gulf Beaches were the hostesses, at the Tides Hotel, April 20-22, 1956. The Conference opened with a Beach Party at the Bath Club. Hostesses were colorful in Seminole Indian costumes. The speaker used for his topic, "Women I Have Known". He was an artist and drew cartoons of some of the Soroptimist giving them as a memento to each subject. There was a first; Era Mac Furr did a "striptease", however she just divested herself of certain items of her costume for door prizes.

Business began promptly, finances and procedures taking much time. The Regional Secretary gave a full presentation of the work of her office, a revelation to some of the delegates. Much time was given to correct terminology to be used by Soroptimists. The finances of club fees, other moneys, and budget items had comprehensive treatment.

They heard an appeal to attend the New York Convention, emphasizing the good fellowship, the friendships and the ideas to be gained. The Service Objectives Committee reported on Southern Region's response to a questionnaire in the American Soroptimist. Two items were of striking import: 1) Among those answering, the predominant interests were Civic Organizations and Social Agencies; and 2) the predominant activity was retailing.

The Conference reviewed ten proposals to amend Regional By-Laws and approved seven. Considerable solid work had gone into compiling a Regional Policy Code. This was a "first" for the Region and the finished product was ready for distribution; there was also a brochure for the guidance of clubs hosting a Conference.

In the club reports it could be noticed that this was a period of using the name, "Soroptimist International of Americas" as official. The reports mainly indicated the maintenance or completion of the activities of the biennium. Homestead had initiated a dental clinic, well organized, and so successful that other community groups were aiding in the finances. It is worthy of note that Louisville had worked with the Marine Hospital on a unique, advance project, "Healing by High Frequency".

The Extension Committee, Era Mae Furr, Chairman, and Past Governor Mabel Barwick, Co-

Chairman, brought "JOY" seven new clubs had been chartered; Stuart, Fort Myers, Dothan, Greater Orlando, Tampa, Holiday Isles and Jackson, Mississippi. This one opened a new state, and at the time completed the forty-eight states in the United States of America.

For the Convention at New York they discussed a communication from President Pluma Batten; they approved the formation of a Governors' Council, but did not approve the changes proposed in the organization of the Federation Board. Governor Easter Martin announced that Southern Region would hostess a luncheon, and plans were being made for free orange juice, the Florida kind.

Final business at closing conferences is the selection of a new Board. By regular and efficient procedure the delegates nominated and elected the following, to whom "the torch was handed":

Governor	Flossie Keaton, Nashville
Lt, Governor	Madrid Williams, Macon
Secretary	Maralee Springer, Hollywood
Treasurer	Juanita Clay, Fort Lauderdale
Members at Large	Nellie Campbell, Miami
	Grace Cocke, Savannah

and another "first", a Conference picture of the assembled delegates.

One other "Joy", this was the largest conference yet held one hundred thirty-seven in attendance and everyone considered it good to have attended. With thanks to St. Petersburg and Holiday Isles for generous and joyous hospitality, they closed the sessions with much accomplished, and with eyes turned to the future.