

Soroptimist® International of the Americas
100th Southern Region Conference
Lake Buena Vista, Florida
Friday, May 1, 2026.

#SOROPTIMISTISGROWING

The conference workshops began at 2:00 p.m.

Opening Remarks and Introductions by Governor Barbara Spyke.
(Seventy members in attendance with 21 first timers.)

Governor Spyke recognized Kim Grossman, CPA, SIA Chief Financial Officer, Peggy Gentile-Van Meter, Official Visitor SIA Board Director and past Governors.

Laurel Society Quilt: Wanda Moore, Southern Region Live Your Dream (LYD) Chair and SI Greater Daytona Beach won the Laurel Society quilt made by SI Davie member Gayle Buening.

Club Presidents - Updates & Advice:

The following 12 Club Presidents/representatives delivered presentations, sharing innovative ideas, best practices and activities that could be implemented in clubs.

Davie - Mary Anna Giordano, Glades and Palm Beach North - Glenda Garrett,
Greater Daytona Beach - Leslie Lahneman, Homestead - Alexandra Peña,
Huntsville - Sarah Bang, Music City Nashville - Aurora Daniels, Pasco County -
Sylvia Crim, St. Lucie - Kathy Blanton, Stuart - Mary Ann Searle, Tampa - Teri
Matlach, The Palm Beaches - Cathy Iho and Tuscaloosa - Skye Kent Burnett.

Transformation through Leadership: Stories that Connect Us:

Presented by Peggy Gentile-Van Meter, Official Visitor SIA Board Director presented when women lead, lives change and how leadership is a choice.

Announcements:

Governor Spyke announced the following would occur after the conference workshops:

- Presidents Meeting
- Welcome First Timers' Party for New Comers, hosted by SI Homestead, Florida.
- 100th Conference Birthday Party & Dinner reception with games, a fortune teller and magician, hosted by SI Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Note: Prior to the workshops Governor Barbara Spyke led a book club discussion on Theo of Golden, by Allen Levi. The book club gave 100% approval and suggests reading.

Adjourned for the day at 4:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Gail Reinfeld, Secretary, SIA - Southern Region

Soroptimist® International of the Americas
100th Southern Region Conference
Lake Buena Vista, Florida
Saturday, May 2 and Sunday, May 3, 2026.

#SOROPTIMISTISGROWING

The conference meeting was opened at 9:15 a.m., Saturday, May 3, 2026 by Governor Barbara Spyke.

Welcome:

Governor Barbara Spyke (SI St. Lucie) welcomed members and guests.

SIA Board President Sue Riney and SIA Executive Director and CEO Michelle J. Burnett welcomed all attendees to the conference via video.

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance.

State of the Region:

Governor Barbara Spyke stated the theme of her term was “Soroptimist is Growing”. She was pleased membership has grown over the past two years. She reported membership has increased from 286 members in Spring 2024 to 328 members in Spring 2025 to 343 members in Spring 2026 and two new clubs were chartered. She added as of July 2024 the Region lost 41 members and in July 2025 lost 12 members. The overall retention rate for Southern Region was 96.5% and SIA’s goal was 85%.

Her main goal was member retention and to grow existing clubs. Four strategies were to focus on the mission: advertise meetings through social media, promote social activities, collaborate with other clubs and advertise meetings through social media.

She concluded “Soroptimist is Growing” and under Governor Kacie Obradovich’s leadership it will continue to flourish.

Recognition:

Governor Barbara Spyke recognized the following for their assistance in the 2026 conference: Yvette Doherty (Conference Chair and SI Homestead), Megan Sheriff (Assistant Conference Chair and SI Homestead), Denise Held (SR Treasurer and SI Homestead) and Kacie Obradovich (SR Governor Elect and SI Tuscaloosa). She also recognized Pat McCay (SR Parliamentarian and SI Huntsville).

Announcements:

Governor Barbara Spyke stated there were various items for purchase such as; raffles, and patches for pins. Presentations and photo circle would be posted on the SR website.

Club Identity & Global Brand: How They Work Together

Ann Smallman (SI Stuart) presented our global brand and why branding matters even at the club level.

Opening Credentials Report:

Treasurer Denise Held (SI Homestead) presented the preliminary credentials report which was comprised of 14 clubs in the region; six clubs in District I, five clubs in District II and three clubs in District III.

12 clubs were represented at the conference; 4 clubs in District I, five clubs in District II and three clubs in District III.

Presidents	11
Delegates	23
Board Members	7
Total Voting	41

Non-Voting Soroptimists	25
Official Federation Visitor	1
Federation Guest(s)	1
Guest(s) (Soroptimists)	0
Guest(s) (Non Soroptimists)	0

Total Attendees 68

Announcements:

Michelle Strawser, SIA Director (SI Pasco) joined by Kacie Obradovich, Governor-Elect (SI Tuscaloosa), Daphne Boswell (SI Tuscaloosa) and Skye Kent Burnett (SI Tuscaloosa) announced raffles, including a special raffle.

Vote - Preliminary Credentials Report:

Preliminary credentials report, as presented, by Treasurer Denise Held, approved by unanimous consent, with no objections.

Vote - Consent Agenda by Conference Delegates and Board Members:

No items were pulled from the consent agenda.

Consent agenda, including standing rules and financial reports (2026-2028 general and service budgets and 2027 Spring conference budget), as presented, with the recommendation of the Board, approved by unanimous consent, with no objections.

Break

Big Goal Accelerator Projects: Eligibility Deep Dive:

Tanda Jackson (SI Tuscaloosa) presented eligibility criteria for Big Goal Accelerator projects, how to identify common challenges that often lead to project ineligibility and how to apply Big Goal Accelerator project eligibility knowledge to develop new projects and reporting to SIA.

Empowering Every Member Through Financial Clarity Transparency from Club to Region:

Kim Grossman, CPA, SIA Chief Financial Officer provided an introduction describing her background and functions. She presented on the frequency of treasurer reports, transparency toolkit, non-treasurer responsibilities, call for feedback and SIA's team.

Dream It, Be It - A Panel Discussion

Elizabeth Seymour (SI Homestead) and Jeanne Sherwood (SI Homestead) Southern Region Dream It, Be It Co-Chairs led a panel discussion on providing career support for girls in the Dream It, Be It program and how it made you feel.

They also shared a recent letter received from the Boys and Girls club to SI St. Lucie on the DIBI partnership.

Human Trafficking Awareness: Coordinating the Community:

Patricia McCay Past Governor, Human Trafficking Awareness Committee Chair and Chair of the State of Alabama Human Anti-Trafficking Task Force (SI Huntsville), presented information for planning an awareness event, the purpose and content of the event, where the event would be held and how to get people to attend. She also shared how to coordinate and partner with the community.

Live Your Dream and Luncheon:

Skye Kent Burnett (SI Tuscaloosa) substitute for Live Your Dream (LYD) Chair Wanda Moore (SI Greater Daytona Beach) presented an update on Southern Region's LYD awards. LYD awards were provided to a total of 52 recipients which surpassed the goal of 40 LYD awards. A total of \$74,200 was awarded by clubs in the region, plus an additional \$8,000 provided by SIA for the region to distribute to two top identified recipients.

Peggy Gentile-Van Meter, SIA Board Director and past SI Atlantic Region Governor presented two awards - \$5,000 to first place winner and \$3,000 to the second place winner.

First place winner: Cori Jackson recipient from SI Glades and Palm Beach North. Cori Jackson, joined by her children, spoke and thanked SI Glades and Palm Beach North and SR for the award.

Second place winner: Geraldine Monestime recipient from SI Davie
Geraldine Monestime, joined by her children, spoke and thanked SI Davie and SR for the award.

Evolving Trends: How to Tap into Fundraising Tactics:

Marie Kennedy, Past Governor and Fundraising Chair (SI Stuart) presented the role of technology in fundraising, popular mobile giving apps, social media fundraising, peer-to-peer fundraising, targeted communications, increasing donor engagement and retention and resources.

A.I. and Social Media:

Lucie McGuire, Social Media Coach (SI Stuart) presented how Soroptimist was the “best kept secret” and clubs should be ready to take Soroptimist to be seen and they should be shared using social media and A.I. She also mentioned several resource tools and talked about social strategy. She explained the BITS concept - **Brand Awareness, Interest, Trust Gained and Sold**. She also spoke of the big shift in social media and how “people used to assume everything is real and looked for lies but now they assume everything is fake and are looking for truth.”

Award:

Governor Barbara Spyke presented the Facebook Award Certificate to SI Homestead.

Infusing Joy into Membership:

Michelle Strawser, SIA Director (SI Pasco) and Adrienne Griffiths (SI Homestead), Region Joy Officers presented how to add joy in clubs.

Break Out Session: Member Joy & Social Media

Share and discuss

Break

Building a Culture of Transformational Leadership: Inspiring Impact:

SIA Board Director Peggy Gentile-Van Meter presented what is transformational leadership, why it matters and barriers women face.

Final Credentials Report:

Treasurer Denise Held (SI Homestead) presented the final credentials report which was comprised of 14 clubs in the region; six clubs in District I, five clubs in District II and three clubs in District III.

12 clubs were represented at the conference; 4 clubs in District I, five clubs in District II and three clubs in District III.

Presidents	11
Delegates	22
Board Members	7
Total Voting	40

Non-Voting Soroptimists	26
Official Federation Visitor	1
Federation Guest(s)	1
Guest(s) (Soroptimists)	0
Guest(s) (Non-Soroptimists)	0

Total Attendees 68

Vote - Final Credentials Report:

The final credentials report, as presented by Treasurer Denise Held, approved by unanimous consent, with no objections.

Vote - District Director Handbook Amendments

Parliamentarian Pat McCay presented two proposed amendments to page 5, Section A and D of the District Director Handbook.

Section A: full reimbursement for lodging expenses when shared lodging would be unavailable and

Section D: alcoholic beverages would not be eligible for reimbursement.

Amendments to the District Director Handbook, as presented, approved by unanimous consent, with no objections.

Vote - Laurel Society Awards:

Parliamentarian Pat McCay stated it was the Board's recommendation to award \$1,000.00 to each of the four nominees for the Laurel Society at the first level.

Four nominees to the Laurel Society, approved as presented, with the recommendation of the Board. Majority approved by consent, with three votes in opposition.

Vote - 2026 - 2028 Officers

Officers and Directors for 2026 - 2028:

Governor: Kacie Obradovich (SI Tuscaloosa)

Governor Elect: Kathi Pease (SI The Palm Beaches)

Treasurer: Tanda Jackson (SI Tuscaloosa)

Secretary: Anna McArdle District (SI Boca Raton – Deerfield Beach)

District I Director: Alexandra Pena (SI Homestead)

District II Director: Mary Ann Searle (SI Stuart)

District III Director: Sarah Bang (SI Huntsville)

Uncontested slate of new Officers for 2026 - 2028, as presented, approved unanimously by acclamation, with no objections.

Ruby Lee Minar Memorial Fund Annual Meeting:

RLM President Nancy Los (SI Music City Nashville) convened the committee's annual board meeting from 3:49 p.m. to 4:01 p.m.

RLM Treasurer Teri Matlach (SI Tampa/Pinellas) presented the financial report for RLM.

In summary: \$10,000 in a Certificate of Deposit account, \$15,739.34 in a money market account, donations received in Huntsville of \$84.86 and donation by Nadia Bernstiel in memory of Mary Jo Horton of \$50.

All bills have been paid.

Loans: Cindy Lespinasse (\$1,052 remaining), Kaitlyn Moore (four year remaining), Becky Word (pay back begins this year) and Alicia Snorton (payments began this month).

RLM Treasurer Teri Matlach (Si Tampa/Pinellas) announced the RLM Bylaws were amended and SIA members are now eligible to apply for a five-year loan. Payment would be required one year after completion of studies.

RLM President Nancy Los (SI Music City Nashville) stated RLM committee is looking for more members and nominations would be opened in the Fall and members elected at the next SR Conference in 2027.

Motion:

Paula Austin (SI Stuart) moved, seconded by Governor-Elect, RLM Board Liaison Kacie Obradovich (SI Tuscaloosa) to appoint Megan Skelton (SI Tuscaloosa) as District III representative to the RLM Board for the next three years. Unanimous vote with no objections to affirmatively approve the RLM appointment. Motion carried.

Announcements:

Governor Barbara Spyke announced new SR bylaws and Procedures were posted on SR's website. She also stated all presentations would be posted on the website.

Marie Kennedy, Past Governor (SI Stuart) announced the Laurel Society and Stargazers reception would be held at the conclusion of today's meeting.

Conference workshops recessed at 4:05 p.m.

The evening of Saturday May 2, 2026 began with the Laurel Society Reception by invitation from 5:15 p.m. to 5:45 p.m. followed by the Homecoming dinner dance and Installation of 2026 - 2028 Officers starting at 6:00 p.m.

Alicia Zachman Emerging Leader Award:

Pat McCay, Past Governor, (SI Huntsville) and Region Chair for Alicia Zachman Emerging Leader stated there were two Alicia Zachman Emerging Leader applicants and she presented a Certification of Participation to Ann Smallman (SI Stuart) and Alexandra Pena (SI Homestead).

She also presented an Alicia Zachman Emerging Leader award trophy to Alexandra Pena (SI Homestead) as the recipient of the Alicia Zachman Emerging Leader award.

Installation of 2026 - 2028 Officers Ceremony:

Michelle Strawser, SIA Director (SI Pasco County) led the installation of Pat McCay as Parliamentarian for SIA Southern Region for 2026 - 2028.

Parliamentarian Pat McCay led the installation of the 2026- 2028 Southern Region Board of Officers and District Directors: Governor Kacie Obradovich; Governor Elect Kathi Pease, Treasurer Tanda Jackson and Secretary, Anna McArdle, District I Director Alexandra Pena, District II Director Mary Ann Searle and District III Director Sarah Bang.

Outgoing Governor Barbara Spyke passed the gavel to incoming Kacie Obradovich Governor.

Incoming Kacie Obradovich Governor (SI Tuscaloosa) recognized the outgoing Board members and presented outgoing Governor Barbara Spyke (St. Lucie) with a gift puzzle of photographs during her term of office.

Incoming Governor Kacie Obradovich (SI Tuscaloosa) shared her philosophy, goals and focus for her upcoming term.

Program adjourned for the evening at 8:04 p.m.

Sunday, May 3, 2026 reconvened at 9:00 a.m.

Celebration of Life: Hosted by SI Stuart

Mary Ann Searle (SI Stuart) led the celebration of life for two Southern Region District II members passed since the 99th SR conference. Patricia Louise Arbutine (SI Tampa/Pinellas) and Mary Jo Horton, Past Governor (SI Stuart). She recited "Life Well Lived", author unknown.

Tribute was led by Lorraine Lundy (SI Tampa/Pinellas) for Patricia Louise Arbutine and by Paula Austin (SI Stuart) for Mary Jo Horton.

The celebration of life concluded with individual remembrance of these members. Benediction was recited – "Gone but Not Forgotten".

Announcements, Awards and Raffles:

Announcements:

Governor Barbara Spyke announced 21 new members attended the conference and there were 52 Live Your Dream recipients in the region. During her term she continuously focused on member retention She added members should believe in the mission and be a shining star - "Shine a light for women and girls".

She announced the next Southern Region (101st) conference in 2027 would be held in Lake Buena Vista, Florida at the Embassy Suites.

Awards:

Governor Barbara Spyke presented award certificates to the following clubs for below winning categories:

- Attendance: SI Tuscaloosa and SI The Palm Beaches
- Club Giving from SIA: SI Music City Nashville - Contributor Level, SI Homestead - Dream Believer Level and SI Davie - Dreamers Level
- Facebook: SI Homestead
- Membership Gain: first place SI Stuart and second place SI Greater Daytona Beaches
- Mileage: SI Huntsville
- Website: SI Stuart and SI Music City Nashville (tied)

Raffle Winners Announced

Laurel Society Winners:

Marie Kenendy, Past Governor, Chair Laurel Society (SI Stuart) announced four first level Laurel Society winners: Dianne Aucamp (SI Davie), Eula Clark (SI Stuart), Nancy Los (SI Music City Nashville) and Megan Sheriff (SI Homestead).

Laurel Society pins presented to those in attendance. Dianne Aucamp (SI Davie) was not present and pin provided to SI Davie.

Governor Barbara Spyke gave special recognition to board members, club presidents, conference and region chairs, member presenters, moderators of conference sessions, coordinators of special activities, and all members that fulfilled a specific function during the conference.

Attendees gave applause to Governor Barbara Spyke.

Conference evaluations were distributed, completed and submitted by attendees.

Kacie Obradovich, Governor-Elect (SI Tuscaloosa) reiterated her theme of "One Team, One Dream" for her term of 2026 - 2028.

After the Soroptimist Pledge, as there was no further business the 100th Soroptimist Southern Region Conference adjourned at 10:00 a.m., Sunday, May 3, 2026.

Gail Reinfeld
Secretary, SIA - Southern Region