



FounderLink

The newsletter of *Sorooptimist International of the Americas - Founder Region*
Mary Ann Redden, Governor
December, 2003 Volume 3, Number 3
SPECIAL EDITION

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FOUNDER REGION OFFICERS

Governor's Message:

Once again I would like to thank everyone that participated in the District Meetings. Each meeting was a bit different with the exchange of ideas and program speakers. Every District has its own style which makes attending very special as a board member. I wish that each one of you were able to attend all of the meetings as the officers did because it really keeps you inspired and enthused to be a Soroptimist.

There were some important changes that have happened to the Region Board during and since the District Meetings. At the District III Meeting, Terry Keating Baldwin, SI Benicia, was elected to replace Carol Stein as District Director. Carol had submitted her resignation due to a family emergency when her husband became seriously ill. He is now home and recovering nicely.

After the District VI Meeting, Julie Kamanawa-Kala resigned her position due to increased family and job commitments. Jane Murakami, SI Honolulu was appointed as District Director. Both of these women are looking forward to their new leadership roles.

During the coming months I hope that everyone is making plans for what they will be doing to participate in the new International Quadrennial Project, **Project Independence: Women Survivors of War**. As promised the video for this project is now available. Please contact your District Director and arrange to show the video at a club meeting or a special event in your community.

As the holiday season is now upon us remember that December 10 is the kick-off date for the International President's Appeal. **The Dignity Program** will be changing women's lives in Paraguay through education and job training in a safe, supportive environment. Please donate generously.

Happy Holidays
Governor Mary Ann

Visit Women for Women International's VIRTUAL BAZAAR. Check out the Soroptimist challenge.

Go to the link at: <http://www.sifounderregion.org/fr-clubresources.html>

FOUNDER REGION OFFICERS

Governor Elect's Message:

October was a very busy and inspiring month. I was fortunate enough to attend all six district meetings. What fun to greet old friends and meet new ones! Each district has its own unique flavor, from District V's Friday night fun and games (Jeopardy and Karaoke, yours truly was Cher and Secretary Sue was Sonny, and we sang a rousing rendition of "I've Got You, Babe", only to be told the next morning **not** to quit our day jobs), to the Domestic Violence panel at lunch at District VI; we learned about our new quadrennial project, shared information, received hotel, flight, and registration flyers about our upcoming conference in Guam, inducted new members, and made new friends at lunch.

Governor Mary Ann has given me permission to fill my committee slots, so I am reaching out to you. Because Soroptimist International of the Americas is committed to leadership development, I am making that one of my goals. I think it is important to hear new ideas, see fresh faces, and get different perspectives. If you have never served on a Region Committee before and would like to get your feet wet, please let me know. I would love to have you serve on one of my committees.

The holidays are fast approaching and it is at this time that we gather with our family and friends to give thanks. This year as you are counting your blessings, I want you to know that there are many women and children who are able to give thanks, because a Soroptimist reached out and touched their lives. Sometimes we tend to get bogged down in the day to day matters and we forget why we are members of a worldwide service organization called Soroptimist. We must never forget our mission: **Advance human rights and the status of women.** Anything else is secondary.

Happy Holidays and A Joyous and Peaceful New Year

Cathy Mitchell, Governor-elect

FOUNDER REGION OFFICERS

Treasurer's Message:

Hello to all,

I had great time at the District Meetings that I was able to attend. It is always nice to see familiar faces and meet new ones. I think everyone that had a Share Fair, did a wonderful job in showcasing what the clubs in that District are doing. I know I came away with some new ideas for both fundraising and recruiting. District VI clubs had a panel with guest speakers from different shelters that clubs support, as well as survivors of domestic violence. This also showed that we all have the same issues and goals that we all try to deal with.

I want to also thank all the treasurers for the great job they are doing with sending me the forms for new members and the copies of the financial transaction reports. Remember to check the Federation website to make sure that you are using the most current forms, and keep up the good work.

As always, please feel free to give me a call whenever you have a question.

Sincerely,

Joyce Strand, Founder Region Treasurer, jstrand@onemain.com

FOUNDER REGION OFFICERS

Secretary's Message:

Your Soroptimist Bank Account

When I ask people why they joined Soroptimist the answers are as varied as the number of people I talk to. Responses include: networking, giving back to the community, or helping to make the world a better place. Some like me joined because of a specific project or award given by our organization. If you want to get the most out of your membership in Soroptimist, identify your passion. Is it protecting animals, helping people, or world peace? The list is infinite. Determine how your passion fits into one of Soroptimists programs or committees and volunteer.

You can start at the club level by creating or coordinating a project in one of the six programs of service. With programs of Economic and Social Development, Environment, Health, Education, Human Rights/ Status of Women, and International Goodwill and Understanding you should not have trouble finding one that will fit with your passion. Your project may be a one-time effort or ongoing. Next step is to serve on a region committee where you can focus your interest to a larger membership. Governor-elect Cathy is asking for interested people for the 2004-2006 biennium, so this is the perfect time to start.

Perhaps you want to enhance and develop leadership skills. What better place to get training and experience than in Soroptimist. We need new leaders. You may not aspire to be region governor or SIA President; no matter your goal there is an office that will suit your skills and talents. One of the luxuries of volunteering is to focus your energy on the things you most want to do.

When you open your own unique talent bank and give of yourself marvelous things happen. You make new friends, you add new skills and enhance others, and you develop self-confidence. It's like a bank account that can never be overdrawn. The more you put in, the more you get out.

In nature it's called "The principle of reciprocity". Earl Nightingale referred to it as "The Law of Cause and Effect". Whatever you give you shall receive. Whatever you sow, you shall reap.

So, find your passion and do a little sowing in your Soroptimist bank account.

Sue Finch, Founder Region Secretary

DISTRICT DIRECTORS REPORTS

District I Director's Report – Director Chrisann Nicholson

Hello District II!

Can you believe it? We're almost 6 months into the Soroptimist year. As always, District I clubs are keeping busy. Thanks to everyone who attended the District Meeting on October 19th. Those who completed surveys gave the meeting good marks, and everyone seemed to enjoy the speaker, Caterina Rando. I came away renewed with Soroptimist spirit, and the will to make some life changes.

Congratulations for naming 2 Fellows at the 2003 district meeting. You are fantastic; I knew we could do it! Thanks to President Jane Bartke and the members of El Cerrito for hosting a fantastic meeting. The view was spectacular. Your organization and flexibility made the day run smoothly for everyone. Thanks also to S.I. Livermore-Sunrise for volunteering to host the meeting for 2004.

Our District Project, S.O.S. for Kids (Soroptimists Organizing Suitcases for Kids) is continuing. To date Soroptimists in District I have collected and donated 700 backpacks and suitcases to the Department of Social Services in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. They have also donated over 300 stuffed animals and a variety of school supplies. A Soroptimists Celebrating Success form will be submitted soon!

Presidents, watch your mail for the "November Mailing". This mailing will include important region information. Another important resource is the federation web site. In an effort to reduce mail costs and to improve communication, our federation has included forms on their web site. Also check out the federation and region calendars on their respective sites. Please make sure you have at least 2 club members who can get the forms and information from the web sites, so that your club can KEEP UP WITH THE PACK!

District I President's Round Tables are planned for Nov. 18th and Feb. 9, 2004. The call to the Nov. 18th Round Table, with more information, is in the mail. Attendance at round tables is important to your club's well being. Please have at least 1 board member attend (preferably the president), but 2 are best. Why? Because 2 can bring back the information and ideas to the club, and together they can generate enthusiasm.

Please don't hesitate to call on me if I can be of any assistance.
Sincerely, Chrisann Nicholson, District I Director

District II Director's Report – Director Terry Comsky

District II is busy, busy, busy. All of the clubs have gotten off to a great start after summer's lazy days. S.I. Martinez hosted a great District meeting at the IBEW Union Hall in Martinez. They treated us like royalty and made everyone feel comfortable. All of the clubs in District II were well represented. What a treat for us to have our Region Governor, Mary Ann Redden from S.I. Antioch and S.I. Concord's own Nancy Walker, Past Governor and Immediate Past President of SIA both from District II at the meeting.

Many of the members commented on our Round Table Discussion segment. It was time for everyone to talk with members from other clubs and get lots of information and good suggestions that they could take back to their club. The Share Faire ideas from each club were terrific and there were handouts a plenty. Our District is ready for Guam after hearing about it complete with power point presentation by Linda Pau Comiskey, Director Terry's daughter-in-law, who is from Guam. Patricia Pava from the Contra Costa County Sheriff's Department spoke to us about the avenues available to women and children who may be experiencing violence in their lives. We all came away with much food for thought.

Many clubs are working on fundraisers for the fall and winter. Auctions, teas, festivals, raffles... you name it District II has it.

Our District is working on Get Real Day for seniors in high school. Thanks to SI Sonoma Valley for the great model they have in their Hit the Road Day. Get Real Day will be held at the Holiday Inn in Concord on Monday, February 9, 2004. Invitations have gone out to all the high schools in District II. We have already received some acceptances and plans are moving forward at great speed thanks to co-chairs Kathy Dorsey from SI Lamorinda and Ruth Brown from SI Pleasant

Hill. Our wishes to everyone for a holiday season spent with those you love and a New Year filled with hope and peace.
Terry Comiskey, Director, District II

From Carol Stein,

I had to resign as District III Director due to my husband's sudden serious illness. I will be devoting most of my times in the foreseeable future to helping him recover. Terry Baldwin was elected to take my place. I will miss working with you.

District IV Director's Report – Director Linda Simon

On October 18th, 2003, District IV had their meeting at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in Sonoma. Soroptimist International of Sonoma Valley and Soroptimist International of Sonoma Sunrise were the co-hosts. They did an outstanding job! Governor Mary Ann gave us an update on the Sydney Convention as well as the Governor's meeting in Japan. Governor – Elect Cathy reminded us all that she's looking for committee members to serve in the next biennium. (I understand it's still not too late to contact her.) Secretary Sue reminded us all to look for the November mailing and passed out the "official" roster to make changes. Treasurer Joyce surprised us all by being able to attend. (She was in the process of buying a new home and consolidating two – so this was a huge, much welcomed surprise.) She let us know she has all the final figures from our last Founder Region Conference and that all is well with our Region's financial health.

We were especially honored to have our immediate Past President of SIA, Nancy Walker as our keynote speaker. Nancy started off by welcoming us in all the official languages of Soroptimist International. (If you don't know the official languages of our organization, ask your club President for a SOLT presentation.) She then gave us all an overview of a year in the life of a SIA President. Nancy is such a gracious wonderful woman and really brought our organization into perspective for many members.

Past Governor and Conference Coordinator for our Guam Conference, Linda McDoniels, let us all know how much the clubs of Guam are looking forward to our coming to their island. Special air fares and room rates are available and Linda encourages us all to "book early".

Other hi-lights were: learning about the upcoming Nominations and how every club should participate; an update about the "Women At Ground Zero" and how they're staying in touch and helping each other, we raised over \$1,000 for Fellowship and Mendocino-Sonoma Coast was the big winner on the Fellowship baskets; **AND** we inducted 3 new members (two are Associate members working on starting a club in Cotati/Rohnert Park!)

The Share Fair portion of the day was much more successful than I even expected. Clubs shared everything from successful fundraisers, to Baby Think it Over, to new member binders and rosters, to how to complete a Program Focus Report. I was hoping to get a copy of all the handouts but things were going so well with members sharing ideas that I never got to get "a word in".

Finally, to all the members of District IV, it truly is my honor to be your Director and again, I thank you for all you have given me from the beautiful vase and candlestick holders, to your warm welcomes and especially for your friendships!! I look forward to seeing you at our next function!!!!

Committee Reports

For a copy of the contest use the link at: <http://www.sifounderregion.org/fr-clubresources.html>

“EXPRESS” PUBLIC RELATIONS CONTEST

The Public Relations committee is proud to announce our 2nd Annual “Express” Public Relations Contest! We have received feedback from members that they would enter the contest if it were not so time consuming. So here you go- a “slimmed down” version of the Public Relations Contest!

We received excellent response last year with 29 entries. We would love to see even more response this year. Our winners last year were 1st place SI Vacaville, 2nd place SI Clearlake, 3rd place SI Fort Bragg and SI Dixon with Honorable mention. These hard working clubs received awards and recognition at last year’s Region Conference. Wouldn’t you love to see your club up there next year?

We all know you do PR, but not a lot of you told us about it before. Don’t keep your PR efforts a secret anymore. The club with the highest score will receive special recognition at the Region Conference. There maybe many clubs with high scores so feel free to include any samples of PR for extra credit.

If you need any help filling this form out, need a speaker or want help to start doing some of things we asked about on the contest form- please contact us:

District 2
Jo Harlow
keypub@aol.com

District 3
Pam Herrera
sroptipamh@yahoo.com

District 5
Lolita Beltramo
lolitabel@aol.com

Chair
Cori Reed
877-635-3485 toll free
creed@hbms.com

Thanks for participating, Cori Reed, Public Relations Chair

Violet Richardson Award

The Violet Richardson Award applications are distributed and should have been completed by December 1, 2003. And then judged at the club level and then the Honoree should be sent to District by January 15, 2004. The District Honoree will be submitted to Region by February 15, 2004 and the Region Winner will be sent to Federation by March 15, 2004. The young women submitting an application must be between the ages of 14 to 17 years of age on the date of their application. She should be engaged in volunteering, a caring, compassionate, creative young women and show initiative and has had noteworthy accomplishments as a volunteer. We hope that all clubs are participating and if a club is new or small or have never participated before please consider joining with another club that is experienced and can give support to your efforts. If you need assistance, please contact Mary Lou Batchelor by email batchelors@onramp113.org or call 707-678-9317.

Committee Reports

“S” Club Committee

The “S” Club logo includes the words, Friendship, Leadership and Service. Since we already know that those words describe the heart of Soroptimist, “S” Club is a way for your club to bring those goals to these energetic and enthusiastic students and to renew your club’s own energies and enthusiasm.

As of our District Meetings this October there is an active interest in the formation of several new clubs. Soroptimist International of Vallejo has three high schools and is taking the preliminary steps to get an “S” Club going at each school. Other clubs that have shown interest in chartering are S/I Benicia, and Soroptimist International of El Cerrito.

Remember that your club not only benefits from the energy and enthusiasm of the “S” Club members, but also an increased membership as the community learns more about Soroptimist. It is not a matter of who your club members are; it is what you are doing that makes a difference.

A new “revised & approved” Handbook is available with lots of suggestions and guidelines. Call your “S” Club District representative soon, we can get the information you need to get your club excited about this service project.

Nominating Committee

By the time you read this newsletter, the deadline for submissions of names to the nominating committee will have passed. The nominating committee will have met and sent out letters of consent to each of the nominees. This coming year at the region conference in Guam, delegates will be selecting a governor-elect, treasurer, secretary, as well as a district director and fellowship director for each of the six districts. Each member of the nominating committee made a presentation at their district meeting, explaining the duties of each office, and encouraging participation.

If you have been nominated for an office and have questions regarding that office, please contact your district nominating committee member. Nominees must complete the consent form and return it to the nominating committee by January 15, 2004, by mail for which there is proof of delivery. Nominees who are accepting a nomination and consenting to run for office will need to include a 2x3 black and white passport photo along with their resume.

The Region Secretary will include the official list of nominations and resumes in the call to conference.

Legislative Advocacy Committee Message

We continue to focus on Governor Mary Ann's theme for this biennium, which is domestic violence. Domestic violence is a problem throughout the world and violence against women and children know no boundaries. Domestic violence is not a social problem but a crime that exists in all economic segments of society, all cultures and in all countries of the world. The cycle of domestic violence must be broken. We, as an organization will continue to promote awareness in our own communities and keep others informed as to agencies where help and guidance can be found.

In keeping with Soroptimist policy our Founder Region Legislative Advocacy Committee is continuing to lobby and involve club members in issues having 'Political' Implications.

We have successfully put together packets that were distributed among Founder Region Clubs for distribution throughout clubs in the United States to get CEDAW ratified first in the Foreign Relations Committee and finally earmarked for the Senate. CEDAW, the Convention For The Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, is a treaty for the rights of women and is the most comprehensive international agreement on basic human rights for all women. This mass mailing effort was designed to let our Government Representatives know who we are and what we stand for, Awareness, Advocacy, and Action. The US is the only industrialized country that has not signed this treaty.

We have emailed information to Founder Region members to be aware of and familiarize themselves with California SB921 and how it could affect their health insurance if it becomes law in the state of California. This bill has passed the Assembly and been sent to a Senate Health Committee for review.

We plan on pursuing and lobbying the state through our elected representatives in California to enact a law leading to the prosecution of those who commit crimes relating to "the sexual trafficking of women and children". Washington is the only state in the USA who has a law against trafficking. Trafficking is the most treacherous form of human trade going on in the world today and it has no boundaries. We must find ways in which to alert and educate law enforcement and other social service agencies of the need to identify and recognize that there is an existing problem in our own communities.

We continue to keep our members informed through emails on what is happening in any one of our six programs of service, Health, Education, Environment, Economic and Social Development, Human Rights/Status of Women, and Goodwill and Understanding. We pass on any legislation we are able to find.

I wish to thank my committee members Carrie Domogalla, Jane Bartke, Dion Weaver, Tess Albin-Smith, Jo Bennett and Angie Haramoto for the joint teamwork that makes this committee a success. Submitted by Gloria Scoggin, Founder Region Legislative Advocacy Committee Chairman

For additional information: www.sifounderregion.org/service/fr-legislative.html

EXTRA, EXTRA

On October 4, 2003, **Soroptimist International of Humboldt Bay and SI of Eureka** held their 14th annual Walkathon – a benefit for the Alzheimer's Resource Center in Eureka. The event was a huge success netting \$10,000 which was donated to the Center for maintaining quality care for their clients. Approximately 60 walkers from the two clubs along with community supporters took part in this fun event, walking either two or six miles, and then enjoying a barbeque lunch. Much of the financial support for the event came from 30 sponsors whose names appeared on walker's t-shirts and posters about town.

Soroptimist International of Crescent City is celebrating 50 years of Community Service. We would like to extend our invitation to all clubs in Founder Region. We hope you will attend. The celebration will be on January 10, 2004 at the Crescent City Cultural Center, 1001 Front Street Crescent City, California. The event will be semi formal to formal. Dinner will be \$20 per person and will have choices of Prime Rib, Chicken and a Vegetarian dish. Official invitations & lodging information will be mailed the week of December 15. Soroptimist International Crescent City hopes to see you there. Debbie Thompson, President

My Experience in Japan by Diana V.

It was very exciting for me to go to Japan. When my grandma asked me if I wanted to go to Japan, I was shocked. I was so happy. Never in my life did I think that I was going to go out of the USA, let alone go to the other side of the world. Of course I had never been in an airplane flight that was so many hours long.

When I got out of the plane, on my first day in Japan, I felt that whoosh of hot, humid air. Immediately I had sweat dripping down my face. It wasn't bad after a while, but it was unexpected. It was the first moment that I could sense that I was in a different place, somewhere totally unfamiliar.

When we were walking out of the airport, we saw all the ladies welcome us with pictures, hugs, and kisses; I knew that I would have a good time, and that two weeks in Japan would be a great memory. All of the sightseeing was great and I couldn't get enough of it. I saw new things, such as temples and a geisha girl, and tried new foods, such as tempura and green tea ice cream; I saw a new culture.

Everybody that I met was really nice, even letting us into their homes before really even knowing our names. It was a welcoming we in the states wouldn't show our neighbor, let alone someone from such a distant place. I admire the generosity of the people we met; they never left us not feeling like their biggest priority.

One of the ways I can judge the trip's value is this: I want to vacation there when I am older.

Here, back in the states, I see cartoons that are speaking Japanese, and I understand some of the words. I see a movie and I see parts of the Japan I visited. Even small things, like soda machines, remind me of Japan, of what we have compared to what they have. Just this weekend I saw at a pizza place a game of fighting, and in the background, they had the Buddha, and the deer walking around, just like in Nara. I see so many things that I did not see before, things that I would never have recognized, and this is what I will be thankful for the most. I see and appreciate my world here more, having visited a much different one this summer.

Allison Jean C. wrote:

First of all, I would like to profusely thank Japan Chuo Region for inviting me to stay in your beautiful country. All of your people are so warm and generous and I could not have expected a better welcoming. There are so many amazing things that I experienced during my trip, such as visiting the old Shogun Temple in Kyoto and standing at the Pacific Ocean looking East towards California. I just would like to say that the best time that I had was on Awaji Island at the Youth Forum. It was an amazing learning experience for me to have been given the opportunity to meet and talk to all of those girls. I was surprised by how similar American and Japanese teenagers are, and that really opened up my eyes to a lot of issues that go on in other countries that are typically not seen in the United States. All of the people that I met on my 10 day trip greatly affected my life and I will cherish this trip for the rest of my life! Who knows, maybe I will learn the language and come back to study at university! Thank you once again!

Sincerely,
Allison Jean C., Vacaville, California

GRANT OF FRIENDSHIP, JAPAN CHUO REGION, AUGUST 21 – SEPTEMBER 1, 2003, BY LINDA MC DONIELS

I had the privilege of being selected to receive a grant of friendship from Japan Chuo Region from August 21 to September 1, 2003. I also had the opportunity to take two teenage girls, Allison C., 16, and Diana V., 15, with me.

Neither of the girls had ever been outside of the United States and had never met each other prior to this opportunity. We had a dinner with the girls and their parents months before the trip so they could become acquainted. We spent time discussing what they would need to bring, what the weather would be like and the need to bring gifts. After much discussion and thought the girls decided on what to bring and in the process became good friends.

We left San Francisco on August 20 for a very long flight to Osaka, Japan arriving on August 21. We were met by Kazu Morita and her IGU committee members, Yasuko, Yoko and Kyoko. They took us back to Kyoto to meet with the host family for the girls and some members of the Kyoto-Heian club for dinner. The girls went with their host family and I went to Kazu's home.

The next day we were taken on a tour of a Shogun temple and the Golden Temple by members of the Kyoto club. We had lunch with them and visited a kimono factory in the afternoon. That evening we had a welcome dinner at which a Michael Girl was present.

We went from Kyoto back to Osaka. The girls spent the afternoon and evening with other girls from the local S club visiting the zoo and a police station. I attended the installation/recognition banquet for the incoming SIA president. I felt very privileged to be attending this event with members of Chuo region. It was an amazing experience to be there with members from another region and another Country not my own.

The next morning we were met in Osaka by members from the Yaizu club. We went with them via bullet train to their city for a visit of two and one half days. This is the only club where we had both a welcome party and a goodbye party. At the welcome party quite a number of girls from the local high school came to meet Diana and Allison. By the end of the evening they were exchanging e-mail addresses and promises to keep in touch. The evening ended with the girls and me going to our respective host families. My host family did not speak much English. They have a 13 year old grandson who spoke a little English, but by the time I was scheduled to leave I felt as if I had known Yoko and her family for a very long time and that we were good friends. They were all so very nice to me, working very hard to make me comfortable. Yoko presented me with a kimono, which I had the opportunity to wear to the goodbye party.

The members of the Yaizu club made sure that we had every experience possible in their city. They are the club which helped all of us learn some Japanese. I can now say not only good morning, good afternoon and good evening but what

my name as well as a phrase which loosely translated means "think well of me". They have one member who speaks English very well and she was with us the entire visit. Her name is Miko and she did an excellent job of making sure we understood everything. She is the one who encouraged us to learn Japanese, giving us words and phrases and helping with the pronunciation. When we completed the goodbye party we were all in tears over having to leave our new found friends.

Yaizu was also the place where I experienced the public bath for the first time. Kazu encouraged me to come with her for a bath. This was something very new for me as we don't have public baths in the United States. Allison also came with us to the bath.

We went from Yaizu to Awaji for the Chuo Region Youth Forum. I stayed in Awaji at a hotel with the four IGU committee members while the girls went to a host family. The forum was attended by approximately 300 girls. The three of us were divided up into the work groups and had the opportunity to work with a small group of girls and the liaisons. We also got the opportunity to perform with our groups on Friday night. This was really quite amusing. I don't sing, however, my group did a song in four different languages the last one being English. It was great fun. We also learned the "Women's Dance" in Awaji. It was difficult for me to get the steps, however when we showed some of the members our dance called "the electric slide" they said our dance was also difficult. It was quite fun to watch 300 or so women and girls going in a circle doing this dance.

After the Youth Forum we went to Nara for our last days. We stayed at a temple which belongs to Yasuko, of the IGU committee members, and her family. Allison and I took the opportunity to attend the Sunday service. I already understood that even though there are differences in Countries and religions there are many things similar in each. Allison had the opportunity to learn this truth and was very moved by it.

We were taken by members of the Nara club to see the "Big" Buddha. There we were treated to a very up close and personal tour. One of the priests personally escorted us through the temple and up the stairs to see the Buddha closely. We were then taken to lunch at the home of Tutui, one of the members, who is the wife of one of the priest.

After lunch we went to the deer park and got to feed the deer. We heard some very funny stories from members about the deer and the tradition of the deer in Nara. I had been to the park in 1990 when I was attending the Kyoto convention, so it was fun to watch the girls feed them.

That evening we went to dinner with the members of the Nara club. Again it was so great to get to meet and visit with members. They were very excited to show us how to use some of the gifts we received that evening.

Unfortunately the next day we were going home. It was very hard to leave all of my new friends as well as the old ones I had renewed during my stay.

I will never forget the experience I had or the friends I met. Everyone in Japan Chuo Region was absolutely wonderful. I hope that at some time my friends will come to California and allow both myself and Founder Region the chance to give them the kind of experience that I had in Japan.

I want to thank all the members of Japan Chuo Region for their graciousness, their welcome and for the wonderful spirit of Soroptimist friendship given during my trip. It was indeed an experience of a lifetime.