



SOROPTIMIST  
INVESTING IN DREAMS

# Sorooptimist International of the Sierra Foothills (SISF)

March

2024/2025 Volume 8, Issue 3

## Author Shares Hiking Experiences

Joan Griffith, author of *Force of Nature*, recently shared many of her memories of traversing the John Muir Trail back in 2006.

Joan is a third generation Californian and a UCLA Bruin who now lives in Colfax. She is a past Olli board member and is currently an Olli teacher.

The hike involved three women in their fifties. One of the group was only with them for a week, but then, the women ran onto a woman who had been left by her male friend and offered to let her join them. They quickly became known as “The Three Women” on the trail.

The Muir Trail begins in Yosemite and ends atop Mt. Whitney, some 200 miles away. It took the group 27 days, and according to Joan, “The Sierra Nevadas are the most beautiful mountains in the world, and the John Muir Trail is the most beautiful long-distance trail in the world.”

After retiring from junior high teaching, Joan decided to write about the life-changing experiences that she and her friends had on the trail. She began by creating a 55-page outline of the trip. Then, she had to learn how to write and publish a book. “Learning how to write the book was as hard as the trip,” explained Joan.

The goal for writing the book was to not only capture the hike and the adventure of it but to let readers know that all can have an adventure.

The book is an inspiring memoir, which was evidenced by the excerpt that Joan shared about Silver Lake.

Joan explained that while on the hike, whenever she was tempted to quit, she would just walk off the trail then end up at the next impressive site.

Her boots created blisters, but Joan’s Tevas, which she still wears and had with her, carried her well over 100 miles of the trip.

Since the women began their journey on July 19<sup>th</sup>, there was still a lot of snow on the trail, especially on the north falling slopes.

When asked about where they slept, Joan explained that they slept in meadows in camping areas that are clearly marked along the trail.

Food was freeze dried, which she described as “super good.” Joan also explained that the rule in the wilderness

is that food could no longer be hung in trees. Food had to be stored in childproof containers. Advanced planning had their food mailed to them. One day, Joan shared that their food was delivered by a cowboy.

One fear that Joan finally overcame was walking across water by balancing on a log. On the morning of day two, they were stuck at 10,000 feet, on Donaghue Pass, during a thunderstorm. “One of them glides across the river, and the second crosses beautifully,” said



Author Joan Griffith takes questions about her 2004 hike of the John Muir Trail.

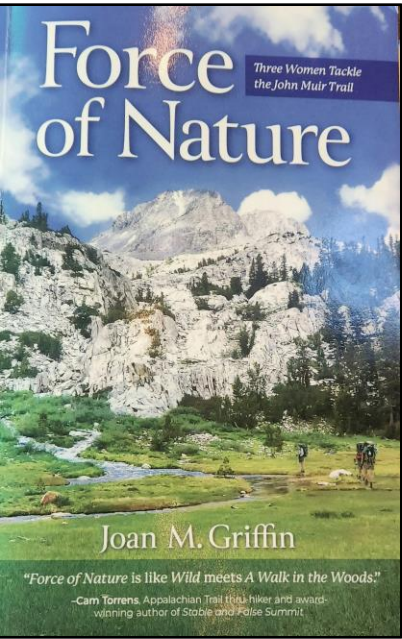
Joan. She said she then threw her poles across the river and left her self-respect on the other side. Her ego was bruised, but



Joan displays the Teva’s that she wore for a hundred miles of the Muir Trail Hike. She explained that her hiking boots created bruises that made much of the first part of the trip miserable. She met someone on the trail who was wearing Tevas and convinced her that they were the way to go. She still wears that pair of Tevas.

Cont. on p. 2





A decade after hiking the John Muir Trail, a 200-mile trek, in 27 days, Joan Griffith shares her story in a published book titled *Force of Nature*.. She and two other women had many memorable experiences while seeing some of the most beautiful sites in the world. Joan admitted that her main goal was to have readers realize that they can achieve their dreams. Joan also shared her personal reason for choosing this particular goal and that she hopes to encourage others to pursue their own personal goals.

# Valentine’s Wishes Delivered with Meals on Wheels

Susan Rasmussen delivered bags of Valentine’s cards and treats to Meals on Wheels recipients in hopes that those who were having tasty meals delivered would not feel alone and/or forgotten this Valentine’s Day.

Each club member was asked to bring 10 signed Valentine’s cards to be delivered with each Meals on Wheels meal.

The cards were personally signed and decorated by members and included little gifts like candies, tea bags, hot chocolate packets, etc.



Susan delivers bags filled with Valentine’s cards to the Meals on Wheels office in Grass Valley.

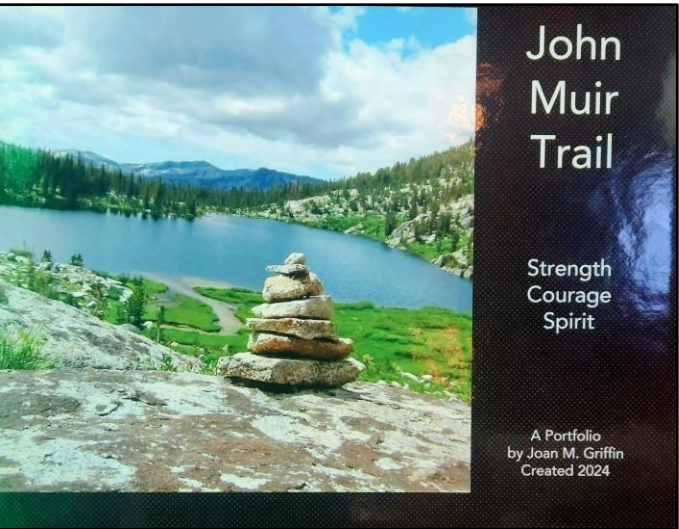
but she made it. She admitted that while facing her fears, she wanted to go home, but by the end of the hike, she didn’t want to go home.

When asked why she chose to do this hike, Joan explained that she realized it was because she had lost her very best friend and confidant and had fallen apart. The summer following her loss, she camped and hiked in Yosemite, and it helped her but in small doses.

Joan’s friend died in 2004. Joan was going to hike in 2005, but there was too much snow. As well, the people who were going to accompany changed, which all worked out for the best.

When asked about cell phones on the trail, Joan said that they only worked on top and that satellite phones were the most effective. She also carried a GPS unit that turned out to be useless. She did add that the trail is extremely well marked, and that there are so many people on the trail that hikers are never alone for very long.

Joan concluded by passing around copies of her book, a photo book of the trip, and her well worn Tevas.



Joan Griffin also shares a copy of a portfolio book of the John Muir Trail. She explained why this 27-day hike is worthwhile for anyone who makes the effort.

Gas Cards on sale NOW!!!

Thanks to Robinson’s Gas

\$100.00 Gas Card  
1 ticket for \$5.00  
5 tickets for \$20.00

Drawing to be held on June 5, 2025



# Presidents' Message Together Just Because



Daylight Savings Time is in full affect, which means that we are all looking forward to awarding grants then working hard toward another highly successful Garden Tour.

Between the two events, we are throwing in another fundraiser, one that seems to be effortless. This is a trial run on this fundraiser idea, which we envision taking place each fall after this, and one which will involve a gas card valued at a minimum of \$500.00 and redeemable at a major brand company.

The current five 100-dollar winners will be able to redeem them locally, at Robinson's Gas, in Nevada City, which assures all who buy tickets that they will be able to fill up right here. Thank yous are in order; first to Margie who called on Don Hoffler at Robinson's, then to Don who made the gas gift cards a reality. All each of us has to do is sell, sell, sell!

Consider this as a reminder to continue selling garden tour sponsorships and tickets. Also, if a business isn't in a position to fund a sponsorship, suggest a donation of some kind to one of the raffle baskets.

We would like to recognize the Awards Committee for their work on choosing the Live Your Dream and scholarship recipients. Word is out there about the Live Your Dream program, since in the past, very few gals applied for consideration, and we often had to rely on applications that other clubs had received. As well, the committee was presented with more than 80 applications from girls hoping to be considered for one of our scholarships. Obviously, this committee has been busy seriously considering each and every application.

We are all excited to meet and interact with the awards recipients, which always makes us want to work harder at our fundraising efforts in hopes that we can increase the number of grant and award recipients.

These awards breakfasts always come at the perfect time for all of us so as to energize us to commit to making our fundraising efforts as successful as possible. That said, let's all get selling gas drawing tickets, garden tour sponsorships, and garden tour tickets!

Lynn and Linda

The Program Committee organized a social for the group, and Liz offered her lovely home as the location.

The event was billed as an opportunity for members to simply spend time together and become better acquainted. There was no other agenda.



All enjoy having time to be together at the McAteer's home.



Susan and Linda enjoy quiet time to visit with each other at the social.



Liz welcomes SISF members at her home. She recently joined the club and agreed to serve as the Vice President in charge of scheduling monthly speakers. All appreciated the time to gather and visit with one another, especially knowing that we will be moving into our busiest time of the year, which means preparing for then working the annual garden tour.

# Transcontinental Railroad in Nevada County Newest National Landmark

This past December, Secretary of the Interior, Deb Haaland, declared the newest national landmark for Nevada County, the 1869 construction of the Transcontinental Railroad.

Terry McAteer, the Secretary/Treasurer of the Summit Tunnel Conservation Association, shared the story behind the tunnel that is a historic treasure.

“The Transcontinental Railroad transformed the West, and Nevada County was intimately involved,” began Terry. The first proponent of the railroad was Aaron Sargent, a US Senator who lived at the top of Broad Street in Nevada City. Terry also explained that Sargent wasn’t popular with Native Americans because he had advocated killing them.

In 1863, President John P. Fremont finally signed the Transcontinental Railroad Act, the funding for the railroad proposal, when California vowed to throw their electoral votes his way.

The plan was for the routes to be St. Louis west, the Union Pacific, and Sacramento going east, the Central Pacific.

The construction overseers were Crocker and Hopkins. They were responsible for 10,000 employees.

When Leland Stanford became governor of the state of California, he managed to get everyone into buying into the project. The biggest hurdle was getting the rails over Donner Summit, an undertaking civil engineer John Judah was hired to achieve.

Prior to the railroad option, a trip from Omaha to Sacramento took six months by wagon and cost 1500 dollars, but by railroad, the same trip was completed in six days and cost 65 dollars.

Terry explained that the first major hurdle during construction was in Auburn. A climb could not be more than a one-and-a-half-degree pitch per mile, or the train would slip. Thus began what is referred to as Bloomers Cut, which is still there today. There was no mechanical machinery involved, which means that the cut through the rock was all done by pick and shovel.

Most able-bodied men were fighting in the War or were mining, so Chinese workers were employed to do the job and were paid half what white workers were paid. As well, white workers were provided housing.

Once Chinese labor organizers got involved, the Chinese workers managed to earn 80 cents per day. They then had to spend part of their daily wage on food, since food was not



Liz presents her husband, Terry, with an SISF mug, thanking him for taking time to share Nevada County’s connection to the Transcontinental Railroad. It recently earned a National Landmark designation, something that Terry, who serves as the Secretary/Treasurer of the Summit Tunnel Conservation Association, explained was long overdue.

provided for them. The Irishmen became the foremen over the Chinese who lived in tents while the white men were housed in train cars.

In all, 16 tunnels, the longest a quarter of a mile long, were constructed.

Many of the Chinese workers came from Canton. They were fleeing violence at home. They landed in San Francisco, where they would go into bars then be picked up at 2:00 a.m., which resulted in them being “Shanghaied,” taken and put to work for the railroad construction.

According to Terry, there is a natural granite pond up on the summit at the first Donner encampment. The Chinese planted it with catfish.

The Donner tunnel is the second National Monument in Nevada County. The construction of this tunnel was tedious to begin with because it was initially constructed six inches per shift until the design of a pulley system involving a railcar was created.

Another interesting fact that Terry shared is that the railroad brought about the watch. People had to get to the train station on time to pick up things like produce and necessary supplies. In the 1880’s, Time zones were set, as well.

It took the Department of the Interior six years to get the National Landmark designation for the Donner Summit Transcontinental Railroad Tunnel, half in Nevada County and half in Placer County.



# Sunday Game Afternoon Was a Fun Social

Recently, the Gold Vibe Kombucha welcomed SISF members for a Sunday “Game Afternoon” social filled with fun, food, and laughter, thanks to the Program Committee.

Those who attended agreed that Gold Vibe Kombuch was a great place for a gathering.

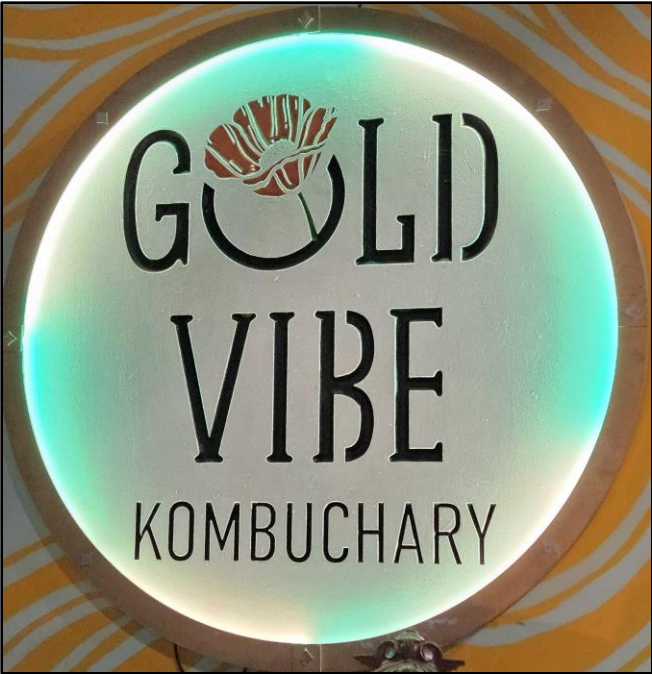
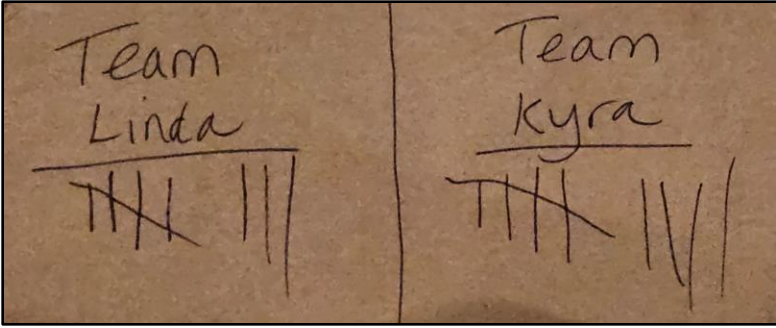
The location was a huge, fun space filled with music, art, and video games.

They served yummy chips, green apple salsa, and a variety of Kombucha.

All agreed, as well, that the “Vegas Circus” and more was perfect for the outing.

The group enjoyed playing Charades and Right, Left, Center.

“All of us are hoping to return for another fun event!” shared Kyra.

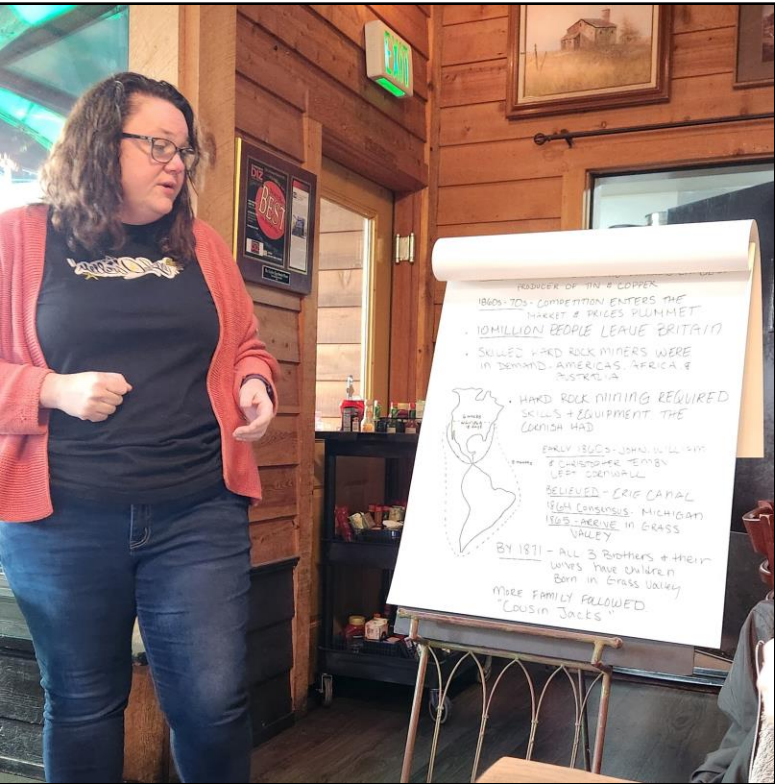




# Jenny Shares Husband’s Rich Local Family History

Our very own Jenny Darlington, former Director of Music in the Mountains, who is currently the Executive Director of the Placer County Arts Council, shared some of her husband’s rich family history.

Jenny’s husband’s family connection to the Cornish miners has him related to the Tembys, a family that had a street named after them. Temby street is located between Pleasant and School streets.



Jenny explains a map of Cornwall, the home of 10 million Cornish miners who left their homeland for a better life in the United States where they could mine for gold. The Cornish, because they came as families, are responsible for the foundation of our local community.

The Tembys migrated to America in the 1860s from Cornwall, a county located at the western tip of England. Incidentally, Jenny shared, Cornwall is the largest producer of copper and tin, which meant that the Cornish were trained miners.

Once gold came into play in America, 10 million left Cornwall to mine here. The appeal from the miners’ side was logistics. In England, the gold is far down in the earth, so much so, according to Jenny, that after long shifts, the miners had to look forward to an hour-long trek just to exit a mine.

Three Temby brothers, John, William, and Christopher,

headed to America. They began their stay in the state of Michigan and by 1871 were all living here in Grass Valley, taking different modes of transportation which involved a six-week wagon train trip, a five-month ship journey involving going through the Panama Canal, and eventually, an 18-day train trip.

Although mining in California was a bit easier than doing so in England, it still provided many challenges. Hardrock mining was dangerous, because it involved the use of chemicals and resulted in erosion. It was also responsible for displacing indigenous people.

Jenny explained that Chinese immigrants were credited with perfecting hydraulic mining and for helping build the infrastructure of the community, as well. Sadly however, mining taxes were imposed only on them.

Prior to the arrival of the Cornish, most miners were itinerant single men, which meant that after work, entertainment meant drinking and gambling. The Cornish, however, came as families, so the community was referred to as a “moral and peaceful village,” an unusual community during this time period.

The three Temby brothers worked at different mines here and in the state of Nevada, and their families have mined till this day.

An interesting fact that Jenny shared is that one of the Tembys is responsible for spearheading the eight-hour work day. ”I can’t imagine working eight hours mining, let alone more,” said Jenny.

Near and dear to Jenny’s heart is the contribution the Cornish have made to music in our community. Since 1869, they have participated in 14 different choirs, as well as in a number of Cornish bands. In the 1940’s, the Cornish Choir performed from one of the mines and was featured on National Radio.

Last, but not least, was the mention of Cornish pasties. These complete meals initially consisting of meat, potatoes and rutabagas, butter, salt, and pepper wrapped in dough, were crimped in such a way that miners could eat them so that their hands didn’t touch their mouths. An interesting variation was that during World War II, ground beef and bacon replaced the usual meat.

Jenny also brought Temby family photos and memorabilia that her mother-in-law entrusted her with for her presentation. All were encouraged to take a look but not touch.

# Live Your Dream Recipients Recognized



Tanya Franklin accepts a Live Your Dream award from Shelley. Tanya explained that her goal is to first work with combat veterans who are experiencing PTSD. She intends to help them by taking her life's energy and giving it back, which will mean they will experience nature as a means of healing.

All three of this year's Live Your Dream Award recipients were recently honored during a breakfast meeting and shared a little bit about their backgrounds and where they are headed in their futures.

On behalf of the Awards Committee, Susan Warner began the recognitions by refreshing our minds about the Live Your Dream Award, which has been in existence since 1972. The goal of this award is to recognize women who are heads of households who have overcome challenging obstacles and are moving forward with their educations as a means of bettering their situations.

Jill and Carol explained that we were honoring three remarkable women who inspire us with their achievements despite the odds being against them. "Everyone here today supports you and believes in you. We want the best for you and your families," Jill shared.

The first award was presented to Tanya Franklin by Shelley Bryan. Tanya has earned a triple associates degree, and her goal is to help others heal through nature. She is a recreational therapist who has experienced domestic violence and trafficking. As well, she has suffered a traumatic brain injury and is a cancer survivor. She wants to encourage broken people to help other broken people by teaching what they can do rather than what they can't. She has purchased land, the nature, and hopes first to work with combat veterans who are dealing with PTSD. Her award will allow her to have a well on the property.

The second award recipient was Moustapha Anday who was introduced by Susan VanSteenkist. Moustapha explained that she is a Haitian immigrant who came to this country with her two children. Her goal is to earn a degree in English. With this degree, Moustapha's desire is to be able to teach other immigrants English so that they will be

able to successful in this country. After receiving her award, she assured the group, "I will not let you down!"

Dalcha Martin-LaCombe, the third Live Your Dream awardee, was introduced by Susan Warner. She explained that she has two children and a grandchild she is raising. She is hard working and determined to realize her goal which is to become a traveling nurse. She has gone to school in pursuit of her Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN) license while working part-time as a Certified Nurse's Aid (CNA). She explained that she was originally in school and left to care for her terminally ill husband. Her LVN pinning ceremony is scheduled for April 4<sup>th</sup>. After a vacation, she will go into the Registered Nurse (RN) program.



Dalcha Martin-LaCombe accepts her Live Your Dream award from Susan Warner. Dalcha shared the story of her journey in the nursing world. No matter what life has thrown at her, she has not lost sight of her goal, which is to become a traveling nurse. She assured the group that she will become an RN.



Moustapha Anday, Tanya Franklin, and Dalcha Martin-LaCombe are this year's Live Your Dream recipients. They shared their stories and how they will utilize their funds. All three intend to help others once they realize their goals.





Crown Point Venues Board Secretary Barbara Drew leads a tour of the facility.



Moustapha Anday is introduced by Susan VanSteenkiste. She explains that her goal is to earn a degree so that she can help other immigrants.



Jill and Carol welcome all to the Live Your Dream celebration. They explained the award itself and the fact that it has been in existence since 1972. These awards are intended to help women who support their families so that they can improve their educations, skills, and employment options.

SISF members were recently given an opportunity to take part in a guided tour of the Crown Point Venues construction site located in the Whispering Pines area.

Board Secretary Barbara Drew conducted the tour of the 42,000 square foot facility, which will include an acoustic concert hall, a dedicated theater space, and a large conference center.

The building was acquired in 2023, and within hours of being purchased, the roof collapsed due to "snowmageddon."

The work is under the direction of a local, Keoni Allen of Sierra Foothills Construction who was also the lead architect and contractor of the original building that was constructed for Anthem/Blue Cross.

The construction project will cost 18 million dollars, and 14.2 million has already been raised. To this point, every bit of the the work that has been completed and the materials have been paid for in full.

The acoustic concert hall will seat 500 guests, the conference center will seat 300, and the black box theater will accommodate 180 guests. As well, the facility includes a large catering kitchen.

Also impressive is the fact that parking is not going to be an issue. There are ample spaces on the grounds and in the vicinity.



Susan Warner tells the group about Dalcha – Daisy-Martin-LaCombe, one of our LYD awardees.