

Memories by Julie Bell and Sheryl Hopkins

POINSETTIA TEA & BAZAAR

2003 – 2012

Our Poinsettia Tea and Bazaar was held late November or early December for 10 years – 2003 to 2012. Our first one was held December 6, 2003 at the Shriner's Club on Sherbrooke Street West. Three years later we moved to the Loin's Centre on Burnham Street in East City. This turned out to be a great venue as reflected in our profits.

Early on cold winter Saturday mornings – 6:30ish am – you could find many Soroptimists arriving at our venue to welcome the delivery trucks carrying Poinsettias, members dropping off items, others setting up to get ready for a busy but fun way to get us all into the holiday spirit of giving, sharing and also some great fundraising!

This yearly event was a real club effort with everyone participating in one way or another whether selling poinsettias, helping deliver poinsettias, baking treats for sale and for the tea room, knitting, preserving, crafting, donating items for our tables, but most of all working together, attending and shopping. We even had a set up and cleanup crew – with some husbands and family members assisting.

Our initial committee consisted of – Julie Bell, Sheryl Hopkins and Gisella Schubert –with all members pitching in where needed whether dropping off items or to help with set up before the crowds came and they did come – sometimes before we wanted them to!

Each visitor was warmly welcomed by our President and encouraged to buy raffle tickets, visit our bake table, book table, poinsettia display, browse our vendor's tables and be sure to visit our tea room. The final year we had 24 vendors – all different varieties and even had to turn some away. Julie Bell recruited the vendors and many returned year after year.

It was Sheryl's idea to sell the **POINSETTIAS** as a fundraiser and this she did very well with her great business sense. We would all breathe a sigh of relief when the truck would arrive with the poinsettias which were mostly presold. The day was off to a great start! A crew of us – including Dianne Hutchison and Judy White who were Sheryl's faithful assistants each year – would help with the unloading of the flowers.

Our **TEA ROOM** had the reputation of being a super treat that could not be beat. It was run very efficiently in the hands of Gisella Schubert along with her assistant Val Choffe. It was typical Gisella style with fancy linens, nice dishes and the sandwiches and desserts were delicious. (Sad to say that Gisella passed away a few years ago and Val is no longer a member).

These bazaars were a great way to bring all our So optimist together for a busy but fun event and put us in the holiday spirit of giving, sharing, and enjoying do this which certainly helped us to make a difference for the women and children in our community. Over this 10-year fundraiser our profit was over \$30,000.00.

Well done Soroptimist!

Submitted by: Julie Bell & Sheryl Hopkins