

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Meet Jovanka Harrison



This month's Member in the Spotlight is one who could be our most 'international' member...Jovanka Harrison. She is shown here with her husband Brian at West Gilgo Beach, Long Island.

Jovanka was born in Belgrade, former Yugoslavia, got her Bachelor's degree in Stockholm, and her Master's and PhD (Medical Sociology) in the United States. Jovanka speaks English, Swedish, Serbian, and some German!

Jovanka became a member of SISC in 2004, thanks to Mary Huber, who Jovanka considers a great friend and role model.

Jovanka is passionate about the issues concerning women and children. Jovanka has served on the Secret Garden Committee, Awards & Funds Distribution Committee, she has also been a Club Delegate (when we still had Delegates), has co-chaired and chaired the Advocacy Committee, and was President in 2009-10. Jovanka loves children, and frequently volunteers for child care in Project Hope and Power.

Jovanka works for the New York State Cancer Registry. Her primary responsibility is to make sure that pathology laboratories which analyze cancer tissues on New York State residents report every reportable cancer diagnosis to the Registry. Jovanka's interest in health, and health outcomes began in Stockholm, Sweden, at the Karolinska Institute, where she was blessed to have a wonderful female mentor, Dr. Nancy Pedersen. Dr. Pedersen was given a medal by the queen of Sweden for her work. Another of her mentors and role models is Dr. Margaret Gatz, of University of Southern California (USC). After getting her Bachelor's, Jovanka was invited to study at USC where she obtained her Masters and PhD. She is ever grateful to these female role models for guiding her in her career.

Having begun her undergraduate studies first as an English major, she saw the changes that computers and technology were bringing, and changed her major to Quantitative Sociology. Jovanka is a self-professed "nerd"!

Related to, but outside of work, Jovanka volunteers for the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries (NAACCR), where she is an active member of the IT Advisory Work Group, as well as the Electronic Pathology Standards (Volume V) Task Force. She is the former Chair of NAACCR's Pathology Work Group.

Jovanka moved to Saratoga in 2001. She and her husband Bryan have three children and four grandchildren. Their children live in Boston and California. Jovanka loves spending time with her grandchildren - two boys and two girls - ranging in age from 5-17.

Some of Jovanka's interests include reading, playing golf, and cross-country skiing. She loves to dance, and cook and eat with her husband and friends. She says three of her favorite things are "people, kids, and food." And of course, she is "all for empowering women and girls" and loves being part of our club.