



Zonta International District 2

Advancing the Status of Women Worldwide

59th Zonta International Convention Report Rotterdam, Netherlands June 27 - July 2, 2008



**Margaret C. Mitchell
Governor
Zonta International District 2**

**Report
on the
59th Zonta International Convention
Rotterdam, Netherlands
June 27 – July 2, 2008**

May I say at the outset, what a privilege it was for me to have attended the **59th Zonta International Convention** in Rotterdam, Netherlands as Lt. Governor of District 2. The convention drew over 2056 Zontians (and guests) representing 1232 clubs with 17 enthusiastic members attending from District 2.

The theme of the convention was **Global Empowerment through Local Action** with a focus on international understanding, justice and peace. The program included reports of the Zonta International Service Projects, the Zonta International Foundation, the Zonta Budget and Membership Strategic Plans, the Proposed By-Laws and Resolutions, the Inspirational Guest Speakers and the names of the Zonta International Award Recipients. The delegates and alternates, as well as 1st timers, were given orientations and briefed on the usage of the electronic voting devices to record their votes during the business meetings. Each District's members had the opportunity to meet separately as a group.

Dolly Dastoor, Yvonne Quintyn and I represented the **Zonta Club of Montreal** at the convention. The Rotterdam Zontians were excellent hostesses and offered support and guidance as well as having an information center with a relaxing lounge and computer systems available. International President, Olivia Ferry, conducted the business meetings very professionally. It was a privilege for the delegates to meet the incoming International President, Beryl Sten, from Sweden. Our own Gloria Wristen was re-elected Zonta International Treasurer/Secretary, while I was installed as District 2's Governor. The installation ceremony was a memorable moment for me, as I was inducted as the Governor of District 2, while being surrounded by a talented and professional group of fellow Governors and supportive District 2 Zonta members and friends.

From the **Opening Ceremonies** with the parade of sixty-seven flag bearers chosen from the newest club of each country to the **Closing Gala** with the galvanizing performance of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Xian Zhang, who trained at the Beijing Central Conservatory, the convention was a high quality experience. A '**special**' highpoint was the unveiling of the '**Zonta Plus Yellow Roses**' as International President, Olivia Ferry and Minister of Economic Affairs, Maria van der Hoeven, christened them with champagne. They are now known in the global flower market as the '**Zonta Plus Roses**'.

There was a variety of interesting workshops with the following topics: Advocacy in Action: Trafficking and Education, Membership Satisfaction: Where Do We Go From Here?, Integrating Education and Micro-Finance to Empower Women and Reduce Poverty, Servant Leadership: How to Motivate, Lead and Manage Volunteers Successfully, Women's Empowerment through Health Education, as well as a Zonta International Foundation Orientation Presentation for the Governors of 2008-2010. Each of the workshop leaders offered exceptional presentations and interactive experiences for all of the participants.

A very talented and professional group of new Zonta leaders was elected this biennium. The following candidates were elected to serve as the Zonta International Directors and Officers:

President Elect

Dianne K. Curtis (USA)

Vice President

Lynn McKenzie (NZ)

Treasurer/Secretary

Gloria Stootman Wristen (USA)

International Directors (2008-2010)

Ingeborg Geyer (Austria)

Ma. Victoria Vergel de Dios

(Philippines)

Heddy Tangen Steffensen (Norway)

Lynne Goodhue (USA)

International Directors (2009-2012)

Sonja Hönig Schough (Sweden)

Kirsi Nickels (Finland)

Beryl McMillan (Australia)

International Nominating Committee

North, Central, South America

Sharron Miles (USA)

Europe

Anu Hämäläinen (Finland)

Africa

Josephine Kolapo Obedina (Nigeria)

Australia / New Zealand

Elizabeth Woodgate (Australia)

Asia (Chairman)

Olivia A. Ferry (The Philippines)

At Large

Irene Wiese von Ofen (Germany)

Ronda Walker (Australia)

Mary Benoit (USA)

Sally F. Rankin (USA)

Current International Directors (2007-2009)

Ragna Karlsdottir (Iceland)

Dilruba Ahmed (Bangladesh)

Kerry Dixon-Fox (USA)

Noeleen Heyzer, former Executive Director of UNIFEM, now the Under-Secretary-General to Head the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, was named a Zonta International Honorary Member.

Special Guest Speakers at the Zonta International Convention

The 59th Zonta International Convention Committee organized outstanding speakers in a variety of fields and backgrounds. The 1st keynote speaker, Judge Akua Kuenyehiya, Vice President of the International Criminal Court, The Hague, honoured everyone in the audience when she said that she was proud to be a Zontian! She elaborated on significant gender disparities existing throughout the entire world. She believes that change will come about through local action in advancing, developing and empowering women. In conclusion, she emphasized and I quote:

“Women’s empowerment is central to human development and it cannot occur when the choices of half of humanity are restricted.” She offered a powerfully infused message for ALL Zontians.

The next keynote presenter is a European Union Commissioner for Competition, Neelie Kroes, who is one of nine European Commissioners! She was named as one of the world’s most influential women by ‘**Time**’ magazine. Her message was about the inequality of employment opportunities in the labour market. She related to us that companies with the highest proportion of women in leadership roles perform better financially. A most dynamic, gracious and personable women leader of the 21st century and we felt fortunate to be in her presence and to hear her speak.

The next guest speaker is a former Amelia Earhart Fellow, Monika Auweter-Kurtz. She is President of the University of Hamburg and spoke on ‘Improving Career Paths for Women in Science and Technology’. She pointed out, from her perspective, that equal rights are still not sufficiently realized in German society. Her talk focused on five theses which can be read by going to www.zonta.org, logout, click on www.zonta2008.com, under Newsletters, click on Number 6, edition Wednesday 2 July, Page 2. It was reassuring and heartening to hear from one of the Zonta recipients of the Amelia Earhart Fellowship.

The final guest speaker was Thea Hilhorst, a professor of Humanitarian Aid and Reconstruction at Wageningen University. She spoke to us about the roles of women in conflict and peace. She referred to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 which highlighted the impact of war and conflict on women and girls. She talked about the importance of women’s involvement in peacemaking processes citing examples. She also suggested we access **1000 Peace Women Across the Globe** by going to the website, www.1000peacewomen.org. Even though she was the last convention keynote speaker, she overwhelmed us with her work and asserted that even though more men are killed and maimed in war, women are true victims.

An amazing wealth of knowledge and insight was presented in each of these gifted women’s presentations. For more detail about their talks, go to www.zonta.org, logout, click on www.zonta2008.com and then, click on to their individual speeches.

Special and Unique Activities at the Zonta International Convention

The organizers of the ‘**Special**’ events are to be commended for their creativity and extraordinary planning. Incredible memories include the initial ‘Flag’ Raising ceremony to the sacred Memorial Service, read about it by going to www.zonta.org, login, click on www.zonta2008.com, under Newsletters, click on Number 4, edition Monday 30 June, page 3); to the multi-diversified workshops to the magnificent ‘Opening’ Ceremonies in pomp and pageantry with the Volendam singers to the Corporate Social Responsibility Events to the Oasis of the ‘Lustful’ Luncheon to the wonderful variety of booths to the memorable, friendly ‘Picnic in the Park’ (I want you to know that I did ‘Sun Dances’ all week)...to the serious Zonta International Business Meetings under Olivia’s capable leadership to the Civic Reception at The Great Church, as waves of women from all over the world passed the statue of the famous philosopher, Desiderius Erasmus, where we were moved to tears as the Chairman of the convention, Inge, received the Decoration of the Order of Orange Nassau by the Mayor of Rotterdam, Ivo Opstelten to the awe-inspiring ‘Closing’ gala with the galvanizing performance of the Rotterdam Philharmonic Orchestra to the final ‘Good Bye’ in the Doelen, as 12 youngsters with torches in hand, waved farewell! All these activities were magnificent undertakings organized with such precision and from the ‘heart’. Bless you **ALL!**

Zonta International Biennial Goals for 2008-2010

The goals for the 2008-2010 biennium are aligned with Zonta International’s objectives and strategic plan. They offer a framework for **Districts** and **Clubs** to develop their goals focusing on Zonta’s Mission!

The areas of focus of the **Zonta International’s Goals** for 2008-2010 include:

- Governance
- Financial
- Operational
- Credibility and Visibility
- Membership
- United Nations
- Legislative Awareness and Advocacy
- Service
- Amelia Earhart Fellowships
- Jane M Klausman Women in Business Scholarships
- Young Women in Public Affairs Award
- As the Corporate Member of the Zonta International Foundation

For details about each goal, go to: **The Zontian**, Issue One, July 2008, pages 15-16.

Zonta International Foundation’s Fundraising Goals for 2008-2010

Total (excluding the Endowment Fund*)	US\$4,020,000
International Service Fund	1,650,000
ZISVAW Fund	600,000
Rose Fund	800,000
Amelia Earhart Fellowship Fund	650,000
Jane M Klausman Women in Business Scholarship Fund	150,000
Young Women in Public Affairs Fund	190,000
WHPPI Fund	30,000
* In addition to the operational fundraising goals for 2008-2010 Biennium, in celebration of Zonta International’s 100 th Anniversary, the Zonta International Foundation proposes a US\$10 million Endowment Fund by 2018. During the 2006-2008 Biennium, the Foundation Board and Development Committee focused on plans to achieve this goal. The Endowment Fund goal for 2008-2010 Biennium is US\$500,000.	

Zonta International Service Programs for 2008-2010

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- US\$600,000 to **Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission of HIV in Rwanda**, a project in cooperation with UNICEF.
- US\$600,000 to **Safe Cities for Women Project in Guatemala City, Guatemala, and San Salvador, El Salvador**, a project in cooperation with UNIFEM. *
- US\$450,000 to **Reduction of Obstetric Fistula in Liberia** within the context of Maternal and Newborn Health, a project in cooperation with UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund).

* (This project is funded solely from the donations given by Zonta clubs and members.)

Zonta International ZISVAW Programs for 2008-2010

- US\$300,000 to Ending Violence Against Women through Community Action (EVAWCA) in **Cambodia**.
- US\$200,000 to Combating physical violence against women and supporting the implementation of protective and anti-discriminatory laws and policies in **Egypt**.
- US\$100,000 to Community-based centre for housing and rehabilitation of women victims of violence in **Syria**.

Zonta International Education and Leadership Programs for 2008-2010

Note that **increases** were announced for the 2008-2010 Biennium:

- **Amelia Earhart Fellowships**—in total US\$700,000 is apportioned as 35 international awards at US\$10,000 each year of the biennium.
- **Jane M Klausman Women in Business Scholarships**—in total US\$120,000 is apportioned as 12 international scholarships at US\$5,000 each year of the biennium
- **Young Women in Public Affairs Award** —in total US\$94,000 is apportioned to 32 District awards at US\$1,000 and 5 international awards at US\$3,000 each year of the biennium.

Note: For more details about the Zonta International Service, ZISVAW and Education & Leadership Programs for the 2008-2010 biennium, go to **The Zontian**, Issue One, July 2008, Pages 16-26.

Zonta International Liaisons and Headquarters

Zonta International President Beryl Sten will advise District 2 of the **ZI Board Liaison** in the near future. Contact will continue with our present liaison, **Ragna Karlsdottir**, Zonta International Director, 2007-2009, until the ZI President advises us of the 2008-2010 placements. We welcome Betty Jane Bourdon, Zonta International Foundation President, as District 2's liaison for 2008-2010. We anticipate that all District 2 Clubs will continue to donate 1/3 of their service funds to the Zonta International Foundation.

The Zonta International Board has completed due diligence on purchase of half a floor at 55 West Wacker Drive, Chicago for US\$1,715,000 and has a Letter of Intent to purchase 557 West Randolph Street at US\$1,950,000.

You might be interested in knowing that there are 14 full time staff personnel who implement policies, administer programs, develop publications and tools, process revenue and contributions. Their outsourced services are for IT, sales fulfilment and accounts payable. The archives are being updated in preparation of the 100th anniversary of Zonta International and the relocation of the premises. Forty percent of Zonta members are registered in using the website. It is going to be 'remodeled' this biennium. It was also pointed out that clubs should be encouraged to use the "share our story" site on the website more frequently, as a means of sharing stories about our work in service, advocacy and membership. The Membership database, iMIS, has been in use since 1998 with a major upgrade in 2007. We are fortunate to have such a dedicated team at headquarters.

Results of the Bylaws and Resolutions

After Zonta International President, Olivia Ferry, Zonta International Foundation and Service Chairmen, Mary Jane Bourdon and Dolly Dastoor and Executive Director, Janet Halstead presented their reports, we proceeded to begin voting on the proposed bylaws and resolutions. The following is a summary of the results:

a) Items for clubs to understand and implement:

- Referral and transfer privileges for club members, which states that "a member who moves to the geographical location of another Zonta Club may transfer membership to that club provided the required dues have been paid".

This means that transfer rights are an entitlement, which differs from the previous wording of referral privileges, which permitted a club to invite a member from another club to join their club after relocating.

- Classified member definition, which states that "to be invited to membership, a candidate shall be actively engaged in or have experience in a recognized business or profession in a decision making capacity".

This gives clubs the opportunity to invite person(s) who are retired, work part time, do contract work or have taken leave from their jobs to look after family or study. If the individual(s) accept the invitation for membership, they would be classified under the classification they would have when they were working. **Example:** A retired teacher would be classified as a teacher.

- Resolution in honour of the 60th Anniversary of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**

We have reaffirmed our support of this landmark achievement and renew our shared commitment to advancing the status of women and promoting the human rights of women throughout the world in our global and local service and advocacy activities.

b) Items for Zonta International to understand and implement:

- Terms of international directors to be amended, all ZI Directors take office at the end of the convention replacing staggered terms, fully effective 2012.
- Duties of international nominating committee, fully effective 2010-2012 biennium
- Status of Women Service committee renamed to the **ZI Service Committee**
- New ZI Legislative Awareness and Advocacy Committee
- Resolutions – definition, duration, how proposed, powers of the Bylaws & Resolutions Committee

Note: The updated Bylaws and Resolutions will be posted on the Zonta International website three months after convention. A printed copy will be sent to clubs via the Club Mailing sent to Presidents. For an immediate summary of the results of the voting, go to the www.zonta.org website, logout, click on www.zonta2008.com, under Newsletters, click Number 6, edition Wednesday 2 July and go to page 2.

c) Other items voted on included:

- Membership dues will increase by US\$15 from 1 June 2009 to 30 May 2010.

Clubs will be billed for US\$65 per member instead of US\$50 per member at renewal time next year.

There was a lengthy discussion and debate of this motion to back date a US\$15 fees increase to 1 June 2008. In the end, individual members were asked to voluntarily donate US\$15 for this current year to assist in the organization's increased costs. (It was pointed out that since it is going to headquarters, it is not a tax deduction.)

The Zonta International Credentials and Registration Report of the 59th Zonta International Convention, 2008-2010 was:

Zonta International Credentials:

Total number of clubs in Zonta International	1232
Clubs represented by delegates	743
▪ Clubs represented by proxies	404
▪ Clubs not represented	85

Registration/Attendance:

International Zonta Board	11
Past Zonta International Presidents	5

Leneen Forde, '90-'92 (Australia), Folake Solanke, '94-'96 (Nigeria), Val Sarah, '98-'00 (Australia), Margit Webjorn, '02-'04 (Sweden), Mary Ellen Bittner, '04-'06 (USA)

▪ Zonta District Governors	31
▪ Other members	1875
▪ Guests	134

Zonta International District 2 Conference 2009

In December 2007 International President Beryl Sten approved the conference dates of October 16-18, 2009 for District 2. The conference is being hosted by the **Zonta Club of Glens Falls**. Chairman Irene Consolagio and assistant Debbie (Debra) Grobe-Searles have done excellent preliminary planning with their committee chairmen and arrangements for accommodations have been finalized at the Queensbury Hotel. We know that they and their team will host a very well-run and thought provoking conference.

Zonta International Reporting and Communication for 2008-2010

Zonta International President Beryl Sten will advise us as to the method and content of reporting required for this biennium. I'll be asking my Area Directors to work consistently with their clubs to ensure they meet requests for information, share their successes to assist us in our responsibilities of administering the District and be the link between our members and the Zonta International and Zonta International Foundation Board and Headquarters staff.

Conclusion:

In closing, it should be noted that a 'fun' and 'special' gathering of the Zonta District 2 representatives was coordinated by Governor Buffie Kelly, who kindly invited us to join Zonta District 6 in an informal get-together at the Hilton.

May I take this opportunity, on behalf of all of the delegates and participants from **Zonta District 2**, to sincerely thank you, Ingeborg van't Hoogerhuijs and your 'team'; Iesje Vermeulen, Caja Schuurman, Mimi Loorbach, Ida Koutstaal and Judith Eltoenberg, as well as hundreds of your volunteers. To our ZI President, Olivia Ferry and team, as well as the hardworking group from ZI headquarters; you **ALL** exemplified such dedication and commitment to everyone with our questions, concerns and frustrations. You are to be commended, congratulated and honoured for your extraordinary and amazing convention. Words couldn't begin to describe our 'thanks' and 'appreciation' to **you** and for **you**, but please accept them with our deepest gratitude. We have returned to our homelands and our Zonta clubs energized and rejuvenated, ready to begin the work of the next biennium. Here's looking forward to the 60th Zonta International Convention in San Antonio, Texas, USA.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret C. Mitchell
Governor
District 2