

(This message from 'The Bridge - Summer Edition')

Zonta International conventions are inspiring from the impressive opening ceremony to the closing banquet. Every time I have attended a Zonta International convention I returned with enhanced enthusiasm for our potential to accomplish our mission. Attending a convention with women representing 66 countries is a vivid reminder of our extensive global reach and of our shared desire to improve the lives of women.

The convention this year was no exception. It was a great opportunity to meet Zontians from throughout the world, to receive up to date information about Zonta International operations and projects and to be a party to decision making about our goals and service projects for the biennium. Much of this newsletter contains articles with valuable information related to the convention. I was pleased that of the 100 persons who were recognized for recruiting 2 or more members between September, 2009 and March, 2010 District 15 had 10 members receiving this special recognition. Also, as you will recall, districts were encouraged to make contributions to the International Foundation during the convention. While members of our district did not make the largest overall contribution, our donations were significant. Additionally, the convention this year was particularly memorable for me because, along with 31 other women, I had the privilege of being installed as district governor. What a great start to the new biennium!! Areas of Focus - I look forward to implementing my goals for the district and pursuing activities for the two areas on which I would like the district to focus – women’s health and violence against women. Much of the district conference was planned with these 2 areas of focus in mind.

There are so many ways in which Zontians can work to improve the lives of women. With such widespread and varied need, clubs are often times trying to decide on which issues to direct their service and advocacy efforts. If your club is looking for pertinent mission oriented projects I encourage you to focus this biennium on projects related to violence against women and/or women’s health. I have had a long career in criminal justice and for several years I have served on the Board of an organization providing service to victims of domestic violence. Therefore, I have a heightened awareness of and interest in the various ways in which women are targeted for violence whether by domestic partners or others.

As we learned from the “Say No to Violence” campaign, violence affects women of every race, class, culture, ethnicity, age and country. One in three women in the world may suffer from abuse in her lifetime. Whether we are addressing breast cancer, heart health, death and injury of mothers during the birthing process or a myriad of other health issues, we know that women have a critical need for health care education and services. While we focus on helping women in need in this regard, we should remember to help ourselves. With our busy professional lives sometimes we may not take the time for routine health care. We can best help others if we take care of ourselves. If you haven’t taken the time to have some basic health screenings performed, you may choose to take advantage of an opportunity which will be provided at the district conference. Arrangements have been made with a public health care service to provide medical professionals who will, free of

charge, conduct a few simple, but vital health screenings for such things as blood pressure, blood sugar and bone density.

Goals - At the conference I will outline my goals for the biennium. However, I would like to now make note of one of the goals which is enhancing professionalism and service to the district membership through the use of technology. As an example, I have discussed with Webmaster Joanne Lose my desire for greater efficiency in communication between the district and members and having the district website serve as a conduit for clubs to sell fundraising items. I am pleased to say that through her diligent research Joanne has been able to identify methods to accomplish this goal. The manner in which you are receiving this newsletter is one of the new initiatives. Details of other new processes are outlined by Joanne in this newsletter. Newsletter Features Book Corner - As a child my mother enrolled me in book clubs to teach me the benefit of reading as a means to broaden my interests and to increase my knowledge of issues. As a book lover I am initiating a Book Corner so that members can share information about books they have read that can serve to enlighten all of us about mission oriented issues. Commentary on books can be submitted to newsletter editor Jaqui Stoneman by the newsletter submission deadline dates.

For Your Attention - This addition to the newsletter will serve as a reminder of ongoing matters which require the attention of individual members and clubs. If we are to have the best district wide impact to accomplish the Zonta mission, we can join together to recruit new members, publicize our good work and to share ideas with each other about successful club efforts. Enlisting the assistance of district committee chairs can also be helpful in this regard.

Most importantly, all of us can be most effective if we make a concerted effort to educate ourselves about critical problems impacting women. Attendance at International conventions, the district conference and spring workshops are just a few of the ways in which this can be accomplished. We must remember that we are part of a large Zonta world which has a major impact on improving the lives of women. Indeed, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. I look forward to this biennium and all of us working together as a team to advance the status of women.