

Governor's Newsletter

Nr. 2 - December, 2008

Dear Presidents
Dear Zontians of District 28

The first months of the current biennium are already past and the year 2008 is coming to its end. Time for a short glimpse at the activities of the past weeks and months.

District 28 - Getting to know each other

I am very happy to have participated in all three *Area Meetings* in our District. In this way we could relate personally and many of your names appear now with your face and at times also with interventions and positions. Thank you all for your friendship! And special thanks to the Area Directors who led those meetings with high efficiency and professionalism.

... At this place I wanted to put a picture of Area 2 Meeting in Giessen – but no way! I am not able to send one pdf with the picture. But the good thing is this picture was published in the local newspaper together with an article on Zonta – congratulations to the Giessen Club for very good PR work!

Thank you also for letting me know what is going on in your clubs, for sending me invitations and minutes of your Club meetings. In that way I follow your activities, even though I am not always able to be amongst you.

The *District Board* held a first meeting in Frankfurt, on August 30th. All the members were attending, and so were the District Committee Chairs. The topics discussed were mainly getting to know each other and each member's duties, then finance – unfortunately, the Balance of the last biennium is still not finished and audited. For this reason, the Budget was only shortly looked into. Another point was Public Relations, we came to

the conclusion that these are best done in the Areas, as different languages and countries can be taken into account much better that way. The Union Intercity of German Zonta Clubs has established quite a range of PR material that can be used by Area 02 and to some part also by Area 04. Area 03 is now establishing its Italian Website, working together with Area 03/30 in view of intensifying PR work in Italy. - In the afternoon, the Board attended the Service held in memory of our much regretted Past Governor Elke Duriez.

Zonta International - ZI Board and ZIF Board

Lately, upsetting news came from our headquarters. In the following I am trying to sum up, to give some explanations and especially to point at the direction to follow in the communication with our Zontians and the public.

What happened

- 1) Executive Director quits end of October
- 2) This was published on the open site of ZI
- 3) In November ZIF Board is dismissed by ZI Board

What to think of it

- 1) The ending of the contract of Executive Director Janet Halstead was unusually fast and very dryly commented - at least for European ears. We do not know whether she gave notice herself or was given notice by President Beryl Sten. Many of us have appreciated Janet's efficient and friendly handling of business, but we have to realize that personnel matters at that level are the sole responsibility of the President and it is normal business practice that the causes leading to the rupture and the conditions involved are not divulged to the public. Actually, I myself had to take similar steps when I was an Executive in the Public Administration - and it always happened with a heavy heart and after long reflection. - For the time being, former ZI Director Judy Johnston is Acting Executive Director at Zonta Headquarters. Business is going on as usual.

We do not know whether or not there is a connection between the leave of the Executive Director and the dismissal of the ZIF Board.

2) Publication on the Website Front Page

The message of President Beryl Sten regarding the leave of the Executive Director was published on the front page of ZI Website – not only in the Membership section. This was a mistake. We do not want messages concerning personnel on our website for just anybody to read. The front page is intended to be an attractive introduction into the Zonta World. According to President Beryl, ZI Board is changing the website in order to make it more informative and at the same time they are moving to another system. In this context, the mistake happened. As President Beryl says, it should not happen again. The message was removed from the website after a few days.

3) Dismissal of ZIF Board

On November 25, all of us, Presidents and Governor, got a special message from President Beryl saying that some of the individual members of Zonta International Foundation Board had been dismissed by Zonta International Board. This message is also published on the ZI website, in the Members' section. There you also find a memorandum dated December 2 with questions and answers to the same topic.

The quarrel is about the sale of the old Zonta Building, belonging to ZIF, but rented out (at least partially) to ZI for their offices, and the purchase of a new condominium.

Up to the present day there is a general understanding that the old building does not meet Zonta's requirements any more. Also the urgently needed renovation would be too expensive. - ZI and ZIF Boards together have informed all Zontians about their intention to sell the building during the last biennium.

Early 2008, at the occasion of the Governors' training, the participants had been informed by ZIF jointly with ZI Board that the sale of the old building was well under way and that a condominium in a big office building was being purchased to meet Zonta's office requirements. - Since then, things have taken a bad turn, mainly the sale failed. I cannot help thinking that the current housing crisis in the U.S. also played a part. Furthermore, the new ZI Board found the new condominium not suitable at all. But the purchase had been finalized by the ZIF Board. So ZIF is now with two office buildings but with not enough liquid means to pay for the new one. In this situation, the ZIF Board pledged funds for getting a credit to bridge

the gap until the sale of the old building - The ZI Board found this action far too dangerous. Revoking these transactions led to the dismissal of the individual members of the ZIF Board. Also, there was a complete lack of communication between the two Boards during the whole process.

For the time being, ZI Board will act also as ZIF Board, which is legally quite o.k.

Please keep in mind two aspects of the story:

- There is no fraud involved
- Zonta International Board is committed to minimize the damages

I hope this helps you finding answers to questions that are around. More informations at <http://www.zonta.org/> Member section. - The events at headquarters are to be regretted strongly. At the same time, we Zontians all over the world are confident the International Board that we have elected will settle the affair well. Now more than ever we are called to prove we ourselves are strong Zontians in strong clubs who will go on supporting our International Service programs.

ZI – Summary Report on Clubs' Survey of 2006-2008

During the last biennium, Club Presidents were asked to give detailed information on various aspects of their clubs' activities. This involved a lot of additional work and I was often asked whether and where the results of the survey were published. There is a feedback! The Last Summary Report 06-08, published in June, 2008 and containing interesting figures and graphs. - While we have to bear in mind that only 50% of the clubs contributed to the survey and that many of the questions were answered in different ways by different clubs, we can still make some quite interesting observations. There is the statement that local service hours during the last biennium reached a worldwide average of approx. 12 per member. The data on the distribution of service hours and of funds for local service projects give hints as to which Districts favour which type of initiatives in the whole field of improving the status of women through service and advocacy. Included in the survey is a graph on membership development. As I guess some of you might want to read the whole survey and possibly pass it on to your former Club president, who took the trouble of answering all the tricky questions, I am sending it together with this letter.

District Diary

Area 03 Presidents' Meeting, Venice	27-29 March, 2009
Area 02 Presidents' Meeting, Prague	24-26 April 2009
Area 04 Presidents' Meeting, Stein am Rhein and 50th Anniversary Zonta Club Schaffhausen	8-9 May, 2009
Interdistrict Seminar, Bonn Meet President Beryl Sten!	13-15 February, 2009
District Conference, Frankfurt	11-13 September, 2009

Don't forget!

January is Amelia Earhart Month!

So, this was a real long letter, I am happy I can now start baking Xmas biscuits as is our tradition in the German part of Switzerland. To each of you am sending virtually (at least)

one Cinnamon Star
one Chocolate Heart
one Milanese type Zonta  (most important of all!)
A club member baked these for our club – a real invention!

That goes to say:

**A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS
AND LOTS OF FUN AND LUCK IN THE NEW YEAR!**

In Zontian Friendship

Regula