



Historians Report for the May 2020 Board Meeting

From: Mary Yunker and Vivian Cody

The two years of the Centennial Biennium are drawing to a close, perhaps all too soon. It seems like only a couple months ago that our members in District 4 were gathered in Buffalo for the grand Conference – celebrating “where it all began” 100 years ago. We were also looking forward to the BIG celebration to be held in Chicago in July. Unfortunately, the long planned for Convention has been canceled – the United States and the nations around the world have been shut down by a pandemic.

Oddly, the Zonta organization was founded one year after the Influenza Pandemic of 1918 – getting everything set for The Confederation of Zonta Clubs to move forward and charter more clubs meant having to work through many challenges, including the harsh winter and lingering concerns of the influenza moving through the country again. Like the strong women who started the organization, the current group of Zontians will surely work through our challenges.

Two years ago, at the beginning of the biennium, the six Area Directors met and during their meeting decided it would be fun to think of our clubs in two countries (USA and Canada) as being a “district without borders” and they did a good job of sharing that idea. But now, with the travel

restrictions, we are still unsure as to when the border between Canada and the USA will be open to “non-essential traffic”. It is the same throughout the two countries; only essential businesses are open, citizens are hunkered down in their homes, limiting the exposure to others as we try to hopefully minimize the ability for the Coronavirus (Covid-19) to spread throughout the communities.

Zonta Clubs are learning new methods to hold meetings and deciding which form of “teleconferencing” they will use. Timing could either work for or against a club as states and provinces began to close down businesses and limit the size of public/group gatherings – some clubs were lucky and did hold fund raising events while others found that they had to completely cancel or postpone an event. Club budgets and planned service dollar donations took a direct hit. An event that had been going on for 20 or 30 years couldn’t take place. The ability to hold the high school scholarship award night was no longer in the hands of the club – no more than 10 people became the “new normal”.

Zonta International itself is still a strong organization, as is District 4 – we have functioning websites, face book pages, twitter and many others forms of electronic communication tools, things not available 100 years ago. Zonta still holds their Zonta Talks – these webinars open to all Zontians. Although our district had to cancel the three spring Workshops, all district members could still login to the D4 website and view postings from the various committees. The much anticipated video about Marian deForest and the founding of Zonta is posted there for everyone to learn about Marian and to better understand how the organization came about. Everyone still has access to the individual club’s webpage and face book page – communications have not been closed at all, this may be the opportunity to make them better and to entice members to visit them.

The world will slowly open again, a “new normal” life style will be developed, we will come back stronger and with renewed commitment.