



## HISTORIAN'S REPORT FOR SEPTEMBER 2020 BOARD MEETING

By Mary K Yunker      September 5, 2020

First, I want to say thanks to the following ladies who have agreed to join the history committee: Lisa Lumley of Toronto, Ann Laubacker of Cheektowaga-Lancaster and Karol Jaworek of Erie. No, we have not held a meeting yet.

The report sent for the May meeting mentioned the fact that we/the world is in the midst of a pandemic caused by the Covind-19 virus. People around the world were self-isolating in their homes and wearing masks in an attempt to stop the spread of the disease. The closure of the border between the USA and Canada meant that clubs members in our district would not be traveling between the two countries to participate in any Zonta events.

I ended that report with the following line --The world will slowly open again, a "new normal" life style will be developed, we will come back stronger and with renewed commitment.

We are now in the month of September and although there are numerous positive changes with many businesses reopening, the grip of the pandemic is at various levels of control and wearing masks is still the basic way to slow the spread of the illness. The border is still closed, no large group gatherings means no physical club meetings and no special fund raising events. Social Distancing policy is 6 feet apart – not easy to do in a crowded space – plus all that sanitizing of tables and chairs.

However, the technology for internet communications has enabled club meetings to take place and access to websites means we can still do advocacy messaging. So, while we isolate ourselves physically, we are not silenced.

As district historian, one major point in being a Zontian stands out to me – members didn't automatically lose their membership because of loss of a job in this current crisis. Employment was a key factor in the early days of the organization and for around 80 years. During the Great Depression (1929 through most all of the 1930s) hundreds of Zontians were devastated, first in losing their job, and then knowing that they would no longer qualify to be a Zontian.

According to the July 1939 Articles of Association and By-Laws of Zonta International - Qualifications for Membership: any Woman of good character and good business reputation; engaged as proprietor, partner, corporate officer or manager of any worthy or recognized business; or holding an important position, or acting as the local agent. And, be a woman devoting at least 60% of her time in a recognized business.

In 2012, employment was still an essential element for membership: A candidate shall be or have been actively engaged in a decision-making capacity in a recognized business or profession.

Move forward to 2018 and we saw a change in qualifications: Membership shall be drawn from women and men with experience in a recognized business or profession. So, the economic conditions that could have resulted in a major loss in membership didn't happen. How the economic conditions effect future fund raising events and donations from businesses is still an unknown factor.

Although the Convention was canceled and no one traveled to Chicago, the elections still took place and delegates still voted on the many proposals & resolutions. Delegate training was done through digital communication and we watched the candidates give recorded speeches. Electronic communications allowed us to do all that was necessary, Lori Robinson of the Brampton-Caledon club was a candidate for the International Board, but lost by 4 votes for one of the positions. And when it was over, we could even see/hear the Memorial Service where Nellie Brown of the Buffalo club was featured harpist.

Hopefully the January Report will state that the pandemic is over and all is good.