



# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS...

FOR ZONTA CLUBS

Volume 2, Issue 7

March - April 2009

## GETTING AHEAD IN ZONTA

For all of us in Zonta, this is an important time, as we are nearing the end of our Zonta membership year. Why is this? Well, now is an excellent time to be recruiting for new members whose membership will start June 1. Now is when we should be approaching those prospective members who have been attending club activities and ask them to join Zonta International. Of course there is still time to invite others to meetings and to participate in projects so they can learn about Zonta. By joining now, they will get the full value of membership for the 2009-2010 year.

Since membership in Zonta International is by invitation, it is up to each club to make decisions about membership. When asking a woman (or man, if the club so chooses) to join, it is important to keep in mind the principles that should guide us in this process. Zonta International has set out requirements for joining our organization, which apply to all clubs. Since each Zonta club receives its charter from ZI, we must keep these membership requirements in mind:

1 - Zontians **support the Objects of Zonta International**. This is the most essential membership requirement of all. While many people support various local and national charitable efforts, Zonta is focused on women and girls. This is one of the things that makes Zonta so appealing. We are also an international organization; our focus is worldwide, not just local. When recruiting and orienting a new Zontian, it is critical to emphasize these unique aspects of Zonta, in addition to the entire mission statement of Zonta International.

2 - Zontians come from a **business or a profession**. This covers many different types of careers. Each club is required to have a diverse membership. The *Zonta International Marian de Forest Membership and Classification Manual* explains how this diversity is to be achieved and how occupations are classified. In looking for new members, it is good to consider what classifications the club currently has and then invite members who bring a new classification to the club. This promotes a wide range of experiences and knowledge and makes for a strong club.

3 - Zontians are **decision-makers**. When considering a person for membership in Zonta, we need to evaluate the type of experience this person has or has had in their business or profession. Is this person a decision-maker or has this person had decision-making experience? While this is a broad term, it has implications for the strength of a club. A decision-maker in one arena will be comfortable making decisions in a Zonta club and will have the skills needed to do so.

4 - Zontians are "**actively engaged in or have experience** in a recognized business or profession in a decision-making capacity". This change in our Zonta International Bylaws was approved in 2008 by convention delegates. Today's Zontian can either be working or have had experience in one of our classified occupations, as long as that experience included the decision-making function.

In addition to Zonta's requirements for membership, we should keep in mind some other qualities that will make it more likely that a person will be an active and valuable member of your Zonta club.

MC 2009, Z, 112, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200



Here are things to look for in a prospective Zontian:

5 – Has this person demonstrated interest in **issues similar to those supported by Zonta?**

This could include charitable efforts, advocacy projects, any assistance to women or girls, and so on. Previous activities are a good predictor of future activities. Most people's values do not change, and continue to direct their behavior over a period of many years. Plus a past history of being active in the community means this person would most likely be an active Zontian.

6 – Has this person **worked with other people to accomplish a goal?**

If so, this means the skills for working with others have been developed. The process of working in a group is different than working alone to achieve a goal. Familiarity with the give and take of the group process is a big plus when being an active part of a Zonta club, especially since Zonta is a democratic organization, both locally and at the international level. This is another unique aspect of Zonta.

Zontians use parliamentary authorities according to what is the practice in their part of the world. This allows differing opinions to be heard before the group's majority decides the question. This is the democratic way, and good Zontians are comfortable with it. They understand that their opinion will not always be the majority opinion, but they are still willing to support the club's decisions.

7 – Does this person have solid **interpersonal skills?**

Working with others requires the ability to be considerate of others and be aware of other points of view. Can this person listen to others? Do differing points of view make this prospective Zontian uncomfortable? We work with many different people in our Zonta clubs because of our dedication to diversity. It is critical that any Zontian, especially one who may end up in a club leadership position, be able to interact with others from a position of equality.

8 – Has this person demonstrated the **ability to lead others?**

All Zontians lead, as we are all trying to improve the lot of women and girls through action and advocacy. Most Zontians will be asked to accept a leadership position within a club, whether it be as an officer, director, committee chair, or project coordinator. So it is most important that a person interested in Zonta be aware of this and willing to accept responsibility, even if it means learning a new role. Actually this is one of the most engaging aspects of Zonta---the opportunity to learn new things and develop oneself. As we already know, membership in Zonta brings lifelong learning.

Leading in a Zonta club means having a vision for helping others and implementing that vision. Leadership enables a club a Zonta club to thrive and carry out the Zonta International mission.

In addition to recruiting new members, this is also a good time to look at current members. Zontians who are less active can be contacted to discuss how they see their role in the coming year and to reassure them of the need for their participation in the club. Perhaps they just need to know that they are valued members or perhaps there is something in their personal lives that is an issue. In any case, we cannot assume that all current members will renew membership, but we can increase the chance of this happening by maintaining contact with everyone.

***The Zonta International Organization, Membership, and Classification (OMC) Committee***

For membership issues, contact your District OMC Chair. She works with the ZI OMC Liaisons who are:

Africa	Gloriastene Agboola	<a href="mailto:gtagboola@yahoo.com">gtagboola@yahoo.com</a>
Americas	Bea Weaver	<a href="mailto:beamiami@aol.com">beamiami@aol.com</a>
Asia/Aus/NZ	Jane Wilson O'Brien	<a href="mailto:janeowo@optusnet.com.au">janeowo@optusnet.com.au</a>
Europe	Francine Dieltiens	<a href="mailto:fran.dieltiens@skynet.be">fran.dieltiens@skynet.be</a>