**2013 District 12 Conference**

October 4-6, 2013

Cañon City, CO

**Sheila Davis, Governor**

**International Representative Observations**

**What worked well**:

* **Location** – Although there wasn’t a hotel attached, and too small a community for air service, the venue for this conference worked well. All of the space was fully utilized, access was easy, and it fostered positive communication and interaction
* **Program Book** – Very comprehensive, professional looking, and easy to follow
* **Organization** – Meetings were organized, well-run, and on time. Nothing was rushed and there was ample time for discussion where needed.
* **Individual club reports** – In this size group, there was time to hear from individual clubs about various projects and membership efforts. The format also allowed multiple presenters from individual clubs providing variety and public speaking opportunities for club leadership.
* **Mission-oriented content** – All of the speakers and breakout sessions were focused on Zonta’s current mission and goals, and provided solid reinforcement of why we do what we do.
* **Zonta Store** – Well-organized, good club participation, nice variety of items offered for sale and door prize drawings. Adds value to the conference
* **Social Events** – The informal wine tasting on Friday night allowed members to mix and mingle in a comfortable atmosphere. The “Wear Orange” Saturday night banquet made a visible statement about the power of the color orange and its anti-violence message for Zonta Says NO

**Things to consider for 2015**

* **Board composition and program listing** – While we always want to be inclusive in Zonta, the composition of the District board is very specific and spelled out in the ZI Governing Documents (p. 21). Only those individuals should be referred to as “Board Members”.

The title of “Board Member” carries with it specific legal and fiduciary responsibilities that do not apply to other positions. Consider listing all other committee chairs and appointments under the heading, “District Leadership”.

The Governor may invite non-board members to sit in on official board meetings, however, they typically sit in a designated area, do not participate in discussion unless specifically invited, and do not have a vote. Tent cards with names and titles at board meetings can be useful not only to arrange seating, but to reinforce people’s identities and roles.

* **First Timers** – Consider identifying first time attendees in some way – green star, green “first-timer” ribbon – so that others, especially district leadership, can make a point of making them feel welcome and answer any questions. A short (30 minute) orientation on arrival day would be a good idea and help the first timers bond as a group. Consider asking the Lt. Governor to organize that session.
* **Event Seating** – At all sit-down functions it’s generally a good idea to have assigned seating for district leadership and special guests, including the Governor, Lt. Governor, International Rep. and guest speaker(s). This insures they have ready access to the podium or stage if speaking, the proper number of seats are reserved for people you wish to sit together, and the inter-mixing of clubs and areas if it’s desirable.
* **Teller’s Report** – Consider adding a Teller’s report in the program on the same (or facing) page as the credentials and registration reports. Although in recent years there aren’t many contested races besides the Nominating Committee, it gives attendees a place to record the results and lends more credibility to the process. Always make sure you get an official, signed Teller’s Report from the Chair of the Teller’s Committee to be part of the conference proceedings.

**Overall impressions**:

In spite of significant geographical challenges, District 12 is a cohesive collection of clubs who seem informed and committed to Zonta International. Participants work well together and have formed strong bonds. There is a “can-do” attitude in this group. The age diversity of attendees – 20’s and 30’s to 80’s and 90’s – along with highly qualified and committed leaders, is another strength of this district. Continue the focus on Zonta’s mission and the twin goals of Credibility and Visibility and all signs point to continued future growth.