



Chapter 4

North American Inter-district Meetings¹

1993: The North American Membership Meeting in Dallas, Texas, organized by Mary Good, the members of the Zonta clubs of Dallas, Dallas II and Dallas III, and the Zonta International Organization, Membership and Classification (OMC) Committee.

2003: The Zonta International North American Summit, July 22–23, St. Louis, Missouri.

2005: The Inter-district Seminar of the Americas, June 24–26, Denver, Colorado.

2007: *A Time to Grow—In Leadership and Membership*, June 22–24, Detroit, Michigan.

2009: The Zonta North American Inter-district Membership Meeting (with a North American Zonta International Board Member Panel), June 5–7, Cleveland, Ohio.

2011: *Building a Better Zonta* (featuring round-table discussions about functional matters with Zonta International committees), June 3–5, Reno, Nevada.

2013: *BE the Change—the Zonta Change* (Zonta International North American Board Members Panel), June 14–16, Niagara Falls, Ontario.

2015: *Zonta—Leaders of Excellence: Empowering Women with Conviction, Commitment and Courage*, June, 12–14, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

2017: *Be Part of Zonta ACTION for Advocacy, Leadership, Membership and Service* (with advocacy action at Capitol Hill on Friday morning), June 2–4, Washington, D.C.

2019: 10th North American Inter-district Meeting, June 7–9, Irving, Texas.

Background to North American Inter-district Meetings

2002: Following Karin Nordimeyer's presentation about the European Seminars at the Gothenburg convention in 2002, the North American governors began talking about organizing a similar event in the U.S., led by District 07 Governor, Kerry Dixon.

¹ Research and text Eva Nielsen.

The proposal sent to governors included the following text:

While in Sweden, several of us went to the presentation put on by the European districts talking about the European Seminar that was held in Stuttgart this winter. Over dinner one night, we got to talking about doing something like that for the North American districts. I guess I'm writing to see what the overall reaction is. The good news is that I had the presidents of two clubs attend and they were so excited that they are willing to host such an event, should we decide to go ahead—the St. Paul, Minnesota, club or the St. Louis club. Should we concur on holding a North American Summit, we would have to get approval from International. Karin Nordmeyer, past governor and member of the International Nominating Committee, organized the European event and has volunteered to assist in any way she can. Their seminar was held as a 1 1/2-day event (Saturday and Sunday morning), and the sessions were facilitated by the members of the districts involved.

2003: The governors agreed it was a great idea, and Kerry Dixon put the proposal to the Zonta International Board for consideration at the January 2003 board meeting. The meeting was approved, and planning began. The District 7 treasury loaned seed money for the event, with the District Board's approval. After the meeting, registration money that had not been used for the meeting was passed on to the next committee as seed money. That process has continued.

The 2003 workshops included:

- *Building Leaders — The Next Generation* (Rita Cousino and Karen Macier, co-chairs of the District 2 Leadership Institute).
- *Cookbook for Growing Clubs – Soup to Nuts!* (Lieutenant Governors Dr. Sue Halsey, District 3, and Gloria Wristen, District 2, with Darlene Kurtz, Zonta International treasurer/secretary). The workshop featured experiences and proven techniques for organizing new clubs and growing existing clubs as models.
- *Incorporating International Projects into your Local Club* (Carol Rainey, Zonta International status of women/service coordinator and Mary Lou Shippe, District 3). This workshop covered how to link up with other countries, both as part of approved international projects and externally to give members a sense of being part of an international organization.
- *Legislative Awareness and Advocacy in North America* (Connie Deckert, District 2, Mary Benoit, District 12, and others).
- *Membership Potpourri* (presented by the Organization, Membership and Classification Committee of North America). This was a *PowerPoint* adaptation of Olivia Ferry's OMC presentation from the Gothenburg convention, with updated information for the districts.
- *Putting a Public Face on Zonta* (Karen Herman DeMuro, District 6) presented a workshop focusing on best practices, publicity strategies and creating good communication within a club and the community.
- *Women's Health Issues* (Mary Frances Gardner, District 10). The workshop discussed some of the challenges facing women's health in North America.

2005: Governors Sue Halsey (District 3) and Evelyn Haskell (District 12) volunteered to work on the Inter-district Meeting, hosted in Denver, Colorado. Glenne Harding, Zonta International membership chairman, and Jacquie Gudmundsen, Zonta International Membership Committee member, joined the organizing team. The event featured keynote addresses from:

- Glenne Harding, Zonta International OMC Chairman – “Membership: Where We are Today”, and
- Karen Beeks, founder, Global Partnership for Humanity – “Trafficking in Humans: A Problem Among Us”.

The four types of workshops had various options, including:

- “A” line—Recruiting
 - Tips for scouting prospective Zontians.
 - Re-finding prospective Zontians.
 - Diversion: How can we and should we?
 - Connecting clubs to service projects and missions.
- “B” line—Retention
- “C” line—New clubs
 - Locating new clubs—how, where and when.
 - Lessons from Europe—its OMC/extension philosophy.
 - Club/group building—forming solid ground.
 - Mentoring needs for new small clubs; what and how long?
- “D” line—Skill-building

2007: Sally Bean, governor of District 6, and Carole-Calvert-Baxter, District 15 governor, volunteered to work on the meeting with Jacquie Gudmundsen who had been part of the organizing team for the 2005 meeting. The event was held in the Detroit area, and a Friday evening reception and activity were added.

At the time, Zonta decided organizing the Inter-district Meeting was too time-consuming for a serving governor, and the core committee would instead plan and produce the program and reach out to past governors to volunteer to host and help organize the meeting.

2009: Past District 5 governor, Elaine Swanson, volunteered to host the meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, and formed a local team to help the core committee with organizing the event. The North American members of the International Board participated in a panel discussion.

Topics the event covered included:

- *Zonta in the — what is the vision for Zonta in 10 years and beyond?*
- a legislative awareness and advocacy panel
- *The Zonta International Foundation and local service*
- *Leadership secrets and the importance of consensus building*
- *The mechanics of club revitalization*
- *Generational diversity within Zonta membership.*

2011: Past District 9 governor, Joy Orlich, volunteered Reno, Nevada, for the Inter-district Meeting location and formed a local committee to work with the core committee on the event. International President Dianne Curtis was a keynote speaker, and roundtable discussions were held on Friday night to give attendees an opportunity to ask international committee members any functional questions about how Zonta works.

2013: The Inter-district Meeting was held in Canada for the first time. Past District 4 governor, Kathleen Douglass, offered to chair the hosting committee and assist the core committee. The program continued to include roundtable discussions and a panel of North American International Board members.

2015: Past District 7 governor, Barb Thorsen, volunteered to host the 2015 Inter-district Meeting in Minneapolis. International President Maria Jose Landeira Oestergaard decided to hold the June International Board meeting in conjunction with the meeting, enabling the entire International Board to attend the Inter-district event. Special training for leaders was added to the event agenda, keynoted by President Maria Jose and President-Elect Sonja Hönig Schough.

2017: Judy Johnston, past District 3 governor, offered to host the Inter-district Meeting in Washington D.C. Her local committee also planned an advocacy action on Capitol Hill for United States Zontians to meet with congressional representatives. President Sonja Hönig Schough convened the International Board in Washington D.C., and all board members participated in the Inter-district Meeting. Sonja as International President, and President-Elect, Susanne von Bassewitz, opened the event on Saturday with their presentations.

2019: The 10th North American Inter-district Meeting was held June 7–9, in Irving, Texas, chaired by past governor and International Board Director, Judy Kautz.