

Zonta Members Among 2,000 at International Convention

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For immediate release: July 26, 2010

The Zonta Club of Sanibel-Captiva was well represented at the most recent Zonta International convention, held in late June in San Antonio, TX. Among the more than 2,000 attendees were local club president Linda Robison, accompanied by Carolyn Gray (past president); Karen Pati (Area 6 director and club board member); and Nola Theiss.

Zonta International, a service organization for professional women dedicated to improving the status of women, has more than 31,000 members and over 1,200 clubs worldwide, and is found in 66 countries and geographic areas ranging from North America to Australia, from South America to Mongolia, and throughout Europe. Founded in the U.S. in 1919, ZI spread to Canada and many European countries by 1950 and to Russia by 1991. The most recent addition is the British Virgin Islands, established in 2009 and part of District 11 which includes Sanibel-Captiva.

The international gathering is the opportunity, every two years, for Zonta members from around the globe to come together and celebrate the organization's achievements over the previous biennium and set its goals for the new one. Conventioneers hear internationally renowned speakers and attend business sessions where the organization's governance and financial status are reviewed and, where necessary, amended. Delegates vote on leadership appointments, rules changes, and goals for the new biennium of 2010-2012.

The official delegates from Sanibel-Captiva were Linda Robison and Carolyn Gray. Robison commented: "Attending an international convention with others from around the world gives those of us from Sanibel a new appreciation of how similar we all are. The world's needs are our needs and we share many of the same issues."

Zonta's International Service Program for the biennium will receive a total of \$1.5 million in funds, apportioned as follows: \$500,000 for prevention of gender-based violence and mother-to-child transmission of HIV in Rwanda (in cooperation with UNICEF); \$500,000 for elimination of obstetric fistula and reduction of maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity in Liberia (in cooperation with UNFPA); and \$500,000 for the Safe Cities for Women project in Guatemala City and San Salvador (in cooperation with UNIFEM). In addition, ZI provides thousands of dollars in scholarships for young women with career goals in such areas as business, aerospace and public affairs.

The Zonta Club of Sanibel/Captiva is a service organization of professional women working together to provide hands-on assistance, advocacy and funds to strengthen women's lives on the islands, in Lee County and around the world through Zonta International. For information, visit www.zontasancap.com.



#2 (From L) Nola Theiss, Linda Robison and Karen Pati in San Antonio



#1 Zonta members Linda Robison (L) and Carolyn Gray (R) with past international president Beryl Sten from Sweden.