



## **A Brief History of the Zonta Club of Anchorage**

The Zonta Club of Anchorage, Alaska was chartered on August 29, 1961 with 51 members. The charter number is 488. Of the original 51 members, only one is still an active member: Virginia Augestad.

### **EARLY PROJECTS**

#### **Anchorage's First Airport Information Booth**

On May 28, 1962, General Jimmy Doolittle was on hand to sign the book for the opening of the Anchorage International Airport Information Booth. Avis Rent-a-Car donated space to the Zonta Club of Anchorage for the booth in the lounge of the terminal building, where it was easily accessible to all inbound and through flights. Zonta members familiarized themselves with tourist and housing information to air tourists and new arrivals. A file of linguists was established for travelers not familiar with the English language. Anchorage Chamber of Commerce members, agencies and local clubs donated strollers, buggies, cribs, jumpers, toys, children's' books and disposable diapers for the comfort of travelers. The booth was enlarged, moved and eventually there were two booths. Zontians spent many hours volunteering at the Information Booth. Now the booth is staffed by volunteers from the Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau.

### **FIRST FUND RAISER**

Our first fund raiser consisted of selling raffle tickets for one of Fred Machetanz' paintings, done especially for the club. The money went to a scholarship for training practical nurses called "The Dorothy Thompson Scholarship" in memory of a member. The first fund raiser earned over \$400.00

### **THE NEWSLETTER**

The Oonipak was initiated in December 1962. Harriet Penwell wrote to a senator in our legislature and a Catholic priest from New Hampshire for an Eskimo word meaning "news" – hence our bulletin has a name which means "carrier of messages".

### **EARLY MEMBERS**

#### **THE FIRST NUN TO BECOME A ZONTIAN**

August 13, 1962 Sister Elizabeth Clair, Administrator of Providence Hospital, Anchorage, became the first Catholic Sister to become a Zontian. She played an important role in Zonta during her time in Anchorage.

## **THE THINGS YOU REMEMBER**

During a social meeting on May 23, 1963, held in an upstairs room of the First Federal Savings and Loan Bank, the caretaker closed and locked the doors and most of the windows. When the attendees were ready to leave they found themselves trapped inside. Three members managed to work themselves through a small opening in one of the windows. Then, after they discovered that help could not be found to open the door, they came around and opened another window so that everyone could get out. A nice police officer assisted them up to the windowsill, then down to the alley. We believe that this was the first time a Zonta Club was locked inside a bank at night.

In 1968, we held the first annual banquet with the three other women's service clubs in Anchorage: Altrusa, Quota and Soroptimist.

### **ZERO (Zonta Emergency Relief Operation)**

March 27, 1964 – CRUNCH!!!! Anchorage, Seward, Kodiak, Valdez and other Alaskan communities experienced the biggest disaster in the history of our state – the Good Friday Earthquake and tsunami destruction. J. Marie Pierce, President of Zonta International, spread the word to all the clubs asking them to aid Anchorage families. Donations of money, material, clothing, medicines and food arrived daily from around the world and continued through the fall. Six hundred pounds of nails were sent to us along with the Northwest Lumberman's Association donation to Anchorage. We had a little trouble storing the nails. The final destination of the nails was Afognak Island, near Kodiak, to aid in the restoration of the buildings that were swept away in the tsunami.

### **PREVIOUS SERVICE & FUNDRAISING PROJECTS:**

Maui-Kauai Hurricane Victims Assistance  
Eve Mobray Hostess Fund  
Marion deforest Fund  
MS Read-a-thon Billing Program  
AWAIC Christmas Gift Program  
Access Alaska  
Salvation Army- bell ringers and food and clothing donations  
Victims for Justice  
The Anchorage Center for Families  
Sri Lanka Well Water Project  
Alaska Kidney Center  
Anchorage Blood Bank  
Child Abuse Prevention  
GROW  
YMCA Campership  
Korean Orphans Airlift  
Brother Francis Shelter  
Anchorage Home for Unwed Mothers  
Alaska Women's Resource Center  
Salvation Army Clithroe Center  
High School paraplegic student  
Ramallah  
Anchorage Arts Council  
Foster Parents/Grandparents Program  
YMCA furniture purchase

Harriet Walston memorial to YMCA  
San Francisco earthquake relief  
Mary Conrad Center for the Elderly and Handicapped  
Municipality of Anchorage Police Department Drug & Alcohol Abuse Program  
Our Lady of Guadeloupe  
Robert Mahoney Memorial  
The Dorothy Thompson Scholarship for nurses training  
ZERO (Zonta Emergency Relief Operation)  
Anchorage International Airport Information Booth  
Booties for Iditarod dogs  
Anchorage Youth Hostel  
Pioneer Home  
Hugh O'Brien Youth Leadership Foundation  
Anchorage Chapter Spinal Cord Society – Jessie Owens Patents 1 & 2  
KAKM Auction & fund drives  
KSKA fund drives  
Our Lady of Compassion – bingo gifts and companions  
Red Rose Fund (memorial to Rose Golik – the instigator of the first information booth)  
St. Jude Program  
Southwestern Alaska Museum of Natural History  
Arctic Winter Games  
Sock-it-to-Beans  
Kidney Dialysis Center  
Eva Foundation  
Mary Magdalene Home Alaska

**CURRENT SERVICE & FUNDRAISING PROJECTS:**

Salvation Army Booth Memorial Home  
AWAIC  
Covenant House  
Bridges to Success program of Alaska Native Justice Center  
First Books  
Anchorage Literacy Project  
Standing Together Against Rape  
Arts on the Edge  
Amelia Earhart Fellowship  
Laurie Gail Green Scholarship  
Young Women in Public Affairs Scholarship  
Lester B. Pearson College – Canada  
Zonta International Building Foundation  
UNIFEM