



# Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley

## Member of Zonta International

*Advancing the Status of Women Worldwide*

ZONTA BOG NEWSLETTER MARCH 2015 SPECIAL EDITION

This special edition of the Zonta Bog chronicles the adventures of our colleague, **Mary Ann K. Rubis, Zonta International Membership Committee Member, 2014-2016**—who traveled to the **European Interdistrict Zonta Seminar in February of this year.**

Every month, a new ZI topic is featured. Please share your ideas and questions for future newsletters with Mary Ann at [maryannrubis@yahoo.com](mailto:maryannrubis@yahoo.com)

### Additional Updates

**March 12th**—A group of Zontians attending the CSW in NY will be gathering for the taping of The Today Show at Rockefeller Plaza. The occasion is "Celebrating 95 years of ZI in the US and Zonta Rose Day". Watch for Dr. Rubis!

#### April 13, 2015 Dinner Meeting

**\*\*\*Please bring a donation for the Top Floor Learning Golf Basket. Marge will buy items with any cash donations received.**

**\*\*\* Please bring Silent Auction items received so far. [See pg 6 of this newsletter!!](#)-**

**May 1—2, 2015 District 1 Spring Retreat will be held in Wells, Maine. Details to follow!**

**May 4, 2015 Silent "No More!" Auction (1st Monday of month)** Start getting the word out for attendees and donations.

**May 29, 2015 \$1000 Jane M. Klausman Scholarship deadline.** Details at [zontaqv.org](http://zontaqv.org)

**June 8, 2015 Dinner Meeting**



## INFORMATION



As Zontians around the world work to empower women through service and advocacy, more than 320 seminar attendees learned how women can empower themselves in decision making situations. We left Brugge with new perspectives and ideas to share within our clubs and districts.

### Leadership Development Training

Topics included Conflict Management for Zonta Clubs, Zonta Board Basics, and the workshop that I attended: Body Language and Voice in Leadership Communication. **Marie-Louise Zeisig** a member of the Zonta Club of Stockholm IV, herself a voice coach, opera singer, and consultant/trainer engaged all of us with this unique topic in leadership development. We learned how to find our "high power" in every situation in order to connect with our audience, eliminate stage fright, and deal with any challenges that arise. Zeisig asserted that every second in a presentation provides an opportunity to make an impression. While it may take time to connect with an audience, (of one or hundreds), it is important never to give up until the last person leaves. Tying in with the seminar theme, she shared research showing how empowering women leads to better health. We even received some pointers on voice training and breathing techniques.

### Welcoming Reception



The **Stadhuis**, (City Hall), with its neo-gothic architecture and paintings/sculptures depicting religious and cultural themes, was an exquisite location for the welcoming reception.

*(Left to Right) Zonta International President Maria Jose Landiera-Oestergaard, Alderman of Brugge Hilde Decler, and Chairman of the ZI Subcommittee Council of Europe Karin Nordmeyer at the welcoming reception.*

### Business Sessions

With its medieval exterior, modern interior, and location in the heart of the beautiful city of Brugge, **The Congress Center Oud Sint-Jan** was a unique setting for all business sessions.

### Opening Remarks

During her opening remarks, **ZI President Maria Jose Landeira-Oestergaard** focused on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which will be finalized by UN member states at the Commission on the Status of Women this March. She emphasized that Zonta needs to focus on Goal 5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". This goal must be achieved in order to reach any of the other 16. She stressed that the important question now is, "How do we do this"? Two keys are adopting/enforcing laws and policies that allow for equal access to education and adopting human rights based approach. She concluded her remarks by saying, "We cannot change the past. We have the obligation to build a new future. Let's do it together".



*Formerly a hospital during the Middle Ages, the Congress Center Oud Sint-Jan hosts conferences, trade shows, and events. Its charming canal views, multiple museums - including a Picasso Museum, and various restaurants, attract locals and visitors alike.*

**Chairman of the ZI Subcommittee Council of Europe Karin Nordmeyer** noted that Zonta has a participatory status, rather than a consultative status within the Council. Serving as the spokesperson for the 400 international NGOs at the Istanbul Convention, Karin was able to bring agenda items before the meetings and comment on the discussion, ensuring that the government representatives heard women's issues. Ultimately, the member governments had the final vote. **Ambassador of Finland** during the Istanbul Convention, and **Member of the ZC of Helsinki II, Irma Ertman** signed the Convention as her government's representative. She expressed her enthusiasm in signing this document as her government's representative, as a Zontian, and as a woman!

### Keynote Speakers

**Former Vice-President of the European Commission, Member of the European Parliament Vivianne Reding** was the first Keynote Speaker, addressing "Women in Politics". She emphasized that in order to effect change we must eliminate the mindset of women against men and embrace the idea of women and men working together.

### Legislation:

Reding herself introduced a proposal, which was adopted, legislating that by 2020 there would be a 40% minimum of each gender represented at the top levels of large companies. Five thousand companies in Europe must comply. Under this proposal, if a man and women are equally qualified for a job, the position must be offered to the under represented "minority", female or male. This was the first proposal of its kind to be included in a European text. Her proposal triggered women to action throughout Europe. It has been an uphill battle. In 2010, 11.9% of board members of multinational companies were female, today 20.2%. She also noted that parental maternal leave is bad for economic development and contributes to the 17%/ hour European pay gap between women and men. The solution? Divide parental leave equally between men and women. She shared many ideas on how we can affect change. The point she underscored was the importance of women bringing their views before a corporate board. Buying one share of a company entitles the owner to speak at shareholders' meetings.

### Women supporting women – not always:

In her conversations with corporate women executives nearing retirement, Reding learned why these executives did not help women advance in their companies. Many felt that they had paid their dues in their rise to the top and wanted to hold on to that feeling. As those women neared retirement, they realized that the only way forward was to help other women reach their goals. It will take some time for women to accept the fact that women banning together can achieve more than one going it alone. Reding noted that no women served in Margaret Thatcher's cabinet nor did she advocate on behalf of women herself.

### The future:

Studies have shown that careers with more women than men, such as education, are typically lower paying and considered less prestigious. In 10-15 years, the job market will change, due to automation and other societal factors. We will need to retrain workers.

Jobs with lower pay scales will become “feminized”.

It is crucial that parents raise their sons and daughters equally. While men will convey to an employer what they can do, women tend to focus on what they cannot. Mentoring and encouraging women and girls can change this focus and reinforce the idea that everyone can create their own opportunities.

**First female Rector of the University of Ghent Professor Anne De Paepe** was the second Keynote Speaker, addressing “Women in Education”. Her message: invest in potential, dare to make a change, and learn to lead and be a role model. She noted that the key to success in academics is international study and postdoctoral work in order to develop that ever-important network.

The panel discussions following each keynote speaker were lively and interesting. The three top areas of discussion were quotas, women executives supporting other women, and bringing women’s issues before a shareholder’s meeting.

### Plenary Sessions

**Smart women at work**, was the overall theme for these sessions.

**Board Member at ETHIAS nv/sa, Belgium and President of the Board of the Institute for Gender Equality Chris Verhaegen**, was joined by **JMK Recipient Evelien Achten** to address **Smart women at work in business**.

Verhaegen began her presentation with a December 2014 YouTube video. Entitled “Bitch in Business”, this feminist ‘All About that Bass’ parody was created by three Columbia Business School students who wanted to start a new conversation about workplace equality. It is a parody of the song made famous by Meghan Trainor. The video definitely generated discussion throughout the day. During her presentation, Verhaegen posed the idea that “sticky floors” may be more effective than “glass ceilings” in keeping women from advancing in business. She noted that trying to achieve a work/life balance, driving for perfectionism, and staying in one position too long holds women back. We become “stuck” to that “sticky floor”. In presenting ways to avoid becoming stuck, Verhaegen emphasized the importance of building and nurturing networks. An interview with men and women regarding their opinions on work advancement revealed that 77% of women said that hard work, long hours, and education were important; 83% of men said relationships. It really is whom you know. Once the networks are in place, it is important that women continue to “make themselves known”, ask for what they want, and become politically savvy. Verhaegen also offered advice on shattering that glass ceiling.

Evelien Achten underscored the fact that recruiters would ask her about the JMK Scholarship listed on her resume. She said, “It broke the ice. I described it and maybe they felt that it gave me something more”.

**Former President of the Belgian Senate, Member of the Flemish Parliament Sabine de Bethune** was joined by **YWPA Recipient/International Winner 2006 Anne Soisson** to address **Smart women at work in politics**.

Sabine de Bethune informed the audience that of the 37 European countries with women elected legislators, 30 used quotas. She echoed Vivianne Reding’s earlier comments, when she declared that sanctions were needed to address non-compliance with the law. She also stressed that a campaign was needed to educate people about this issue.



**Managing Director DELL Belgium and Luxembourg, Pascale Van Damme (left) speaks to seminar attendees.**

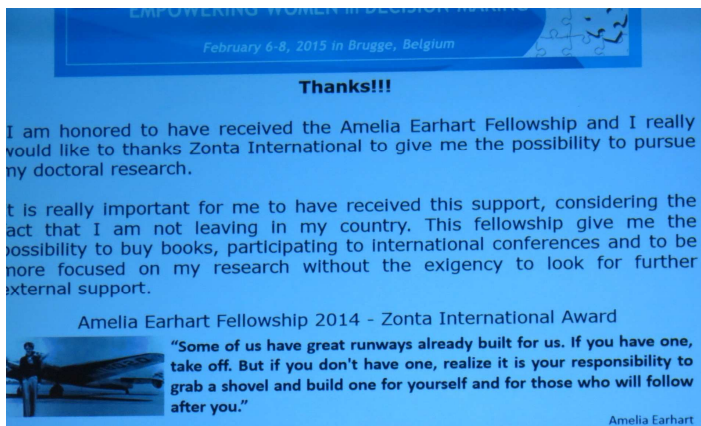
Anne Soisson provided insight into the important role that winning a YWPA Scholarship has on a young girl. In addition to receiving the financial aid, recipients also benefit from the confidence and recognition that they gain. Like Evelien before her, Anne agreed that listing the award on her resume generated a more relaxed and open discussion with college, and even work, recruiters. Recruiters gained a better understanding of who she is as an individual.

**Managing Director of DELL Belgium and Luxembourg, ICT (Information and Communication) Woman of the Year 2014, Pascale Van Damme** was joined by **Amelia Earhart Fellow 2014 Alessia Simonini** to address **Smart women at work in technology**. Van Damme’s passion and commitment to helping women advance in technology and business was evident from the beginning of her presentation. In her role as mentor, she asks young women to answer the following questions: What do I love doing? What are my strengths? What experience do I have? Where will the future jobs be? What is my pas-

sion? What is my personal elevator pitch? What is my plan? Like the speakers before her, Van Damme highlighted the importance of creating a plan, stepping out of our comfort zone and establishing a network. In addition to including professionals who can help advance a career, this network should also include peers. She said, "People need mentors to guide them, but they also need a network of peers to reassure them that they are not on the path alone".

Members from the Zonta Clubs of Brugge, Brussels, and Gent were so inspired by Van Damme's presentation that they decided to host a seminar for their own daughters. One member summed it up best when she said, "We empower women all over the world, why not empower our Zonta daughters"? The seminar will be held in September. In the spirit of the day, Zontians invited Van Damme to attend.

Alessia Simonini explained how being selected as an Amelia Earhart Fellow gave her the confidence to apply for another prestigious fellowship in her field. She also spoke of the impact that the fellowship had on her resume and declared it a "stepping stone for her future".



*This quote from Amelia Earhart beautifully captures the spirit and themes of the seminar. Slide from Alessia Simonini's presentation.*



*The Foundation of the Sint Donaas Cathedral, which stood at the site of the present day Crowne Plaza Hotel, was uncovered in 1955. The Cathedral was destroyed in 1799.*

Following the business sessions, the "cellar" of the Crowne Plaza Hotel on the Burg hosted a **Walking Dinner**. Reflecting Northern Belgium's history with the Netherlands, the Dutch term "walking dinner" refers to a standing buffet. The cellar of the Hotel is a unique setting for any function, as it contains the excavated foundation remains of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Sint-Donaas church, the vestiges of a thousand year-old city wall and other archeological displays. **ZI Young Women in Public Affairs Committee Chairman Ute Scholz** introduced two **YWPA recipients from the ZC of Brugge, Loes Verhaeghe and Lieselot De Meester.**

**Farewell**

A guided walking tour of Brugge was the perfect start to our Sunday morning. Picturesque, charming, and friendly are just a few adjectives to describe this lovely city.

Following our tour, **Zonta International President-Elect Sonia Honig-Schough** shared her thoughts with attendees during the Farewell Ceremony at the **Provincial Court, located on The Markt (Market Square).**



*An evening view along one of the picturesque canals in Brugge. The Belfort, a medieval Bell Tower and a prominent symbol of the city, is seen illuminated in the middle of the photo.*



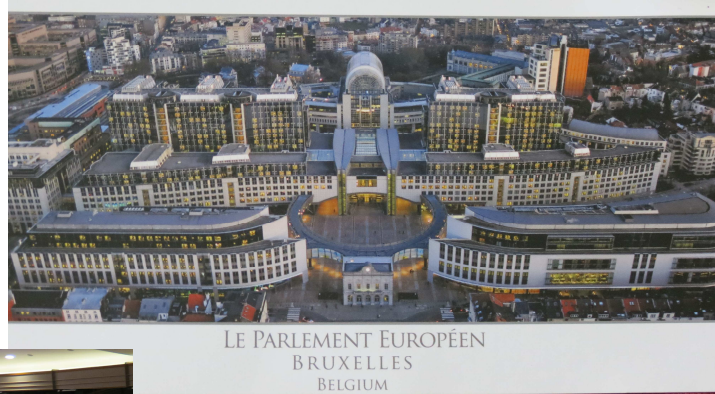
*Gothic style chandelier and stained glass windows as seen inside the Provincial Court.*



*Belgium was renowned for its handmade lace during the 19th century. A view along one of the canals in Brugge is seen through the "mist" of a machine-made lace map of the city, complete with listed landmarks at the bottom.*

### Following the seminar, I was able to spend some time exploring Brugge and Brussels.

While in Brussels, I joined an audio-guided tour of the European Parliament (EP) and visited the Parliamentarium, its Visitor's Center. With its audio guides, an interactive virtual trip through Europe, 3D models of the EP's three seats, (Brussels, Strasbourg, and Luxembourg), video wall of messages from each country's Member of the EP, 360-degree surround-sound digital projection of the debating chamber, a film guiding visitors through the legislative process, role-playing, the Parliamentarium was a unique and phenomenal experience.



*Being inside the Plenary Chamber, reminded me of the General Assembly Hall at the United Nations in New York.*


The Fashion Institute initiated **Fashion Art EU**, a special exhibit at the Parliamentarium. Artists from the member states of the European Union (EU) were invited to design a costume reflecting their cultural roots. The artists used the values of the EU as their inspiration to create unique statement pieces that were simply exquisite, incorporating watercolors, acrylic, text, fiber, and other mediums.



### Personal reflections:

- As each scholarship/fellowship recipient spoke of the empowering affect that the awards had on their lives, it occurred to me that our club could also highlight these benefits during our presentations.
- Meeting three members from the Zonta Club of Luxembourg – Multicultural, (yes, multicultural is part of their official Zonta name), was fascinating. I learned that their club has members from 16 countries! Business is conducted mainly in French, occasionally English.
- Discussing world affairs, the status of women in our countries and cultural nuances in a respectful, open manner is something that I will always remember. For example, the Zonta Club of Dresden Germany teaches Syrian immigrants to ride a bike. For these women, the experience is a confidence builder that changes their lives. Empowering women can take many forms.
- The Leadership Communication Workshop was fantastic.
- We need to continue to move out of our comfort zones and have confidence in ourselves.
- Being a member of Zonta International provides us with the opportunity to enhance our own global perspectives and grow as individuals and women. As we work to empower women and girls around the world, let's not forget to empower ourselves and the women and girls in our own lives.
- Thought provoking, invigorating, and fun. The European Interdistrict Seminar and my adventures in Belgium were all that and more!

**Mary Ann K. Rubis,**  
**Zonta International Membership Committee Member, 2014-2016**



*Silent "no more!" Auction*  
 .... Because victims need to be heard

**The Zonta Club of Quaboag Valley invites you and a friend**

Date: Monday, May 4, 2015  
 Time: 6:00 - 9:00 pm  
 Location: Ludlow Country Club, Ludlow MA 01056

**Proceeds for this year's Silent "no more!" Auction** will go toward international projects aimed at stopping violence against women and children, and two local organizations:

**Soldier On Women Veterans** – Preserving the dignity, independence and quality of life of women veterans who have found themselves homeless since leaving military service.

**Palmer Domestic Violence Task Force Group** – Working in collaboration with local Police and DV Resource Groups to provide education and advocacy services with the goal of ending violence against women, while helping survivors rebuild their lives.

**Admission \$30:**

- ✓ Bid on a large array of valuable items and themed baskets donated by Zonta members and local businesses.
- ✓ Take part in a sumptuous buffet of salads, veggies, pasta dishes, a carving station, plus appetizers, desserts, coffee/tea. Cash bar
- ✓ Network with like-minded women and support causes that need attention.
- ✓ Enjoy a relaxing atmosphere and beautiful view at this private country club - a convenient location with free parking.

**RSVP by 5/1 to Marge Cavanaugh**  
 Phone: (413) 283-6448 E-mail: [mecqtr@comcast.net](mailto:mecqtr@comcast.net)

**Donations of Auction items are welcomed!**  
 Email [Loretta Dansereau, lmdansereau@yahoo.com](mailto:Loretta.Dansereau@yahoo.com)  
 with Donor name, item description, value and delivery or pickup needs.

*Silent "no more!" Auction* Donation Form

Donor Name \_\_\_\_\_

Business/  
 Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Value \$ \_\_\_\_\_

List donor on website & brochure  YES  NO

Description of Donation \_\_\_\_\_

Zonta Contact \_\_\_\_\_

**We have less than two months until our Silent auction event!**

Our Auction is on Monday, May 4th- same time, same place - The only things that need to be changed on our Auction Flyer are the date (May 4th) and the 3rd recipient. Ticket price is still \$30 per person. Menu is exactly the same as last year.

We will continue to donate a third of our proceeds to Soldier On and to Zonta International. The group decided at the March meeting that the 3rd auction recipient is the Palmer Domestic Violence Task Force.

Representatives from Palmer DV Task force and Soldier On will be invited to speak at our April Meeting. Marge and Joanne will reach out to these groups.

**All of our members are asked to begin soliciting items for our auction ASAP.** The expectation is that each member acquire at least one auction item-whether they purchase themselves or they solicit a donation. No item is too small. As we have done in the past, we will "group" smaller items together to make a nice gift package. Loretta has graciously agreed to be the "keeper" of the auction items.

**We would like our members to bring the auction items to our April meeting please-** of course, we will accept items after this. Loretta is keeping a spreadsheet of all donations. She will be sending out an auction donation form via email to all of our members – She would like this form to be filled out for each auction item: Donor name, organization, contact info, value of gift, description, etc. This was tremendously helpful last year in keeping track of each item and its value, etc.

Letters to help you solicit donations, and invitations for guests are being finalized and will be added to the website when ready. Start making a list of people to contact about this fun event!

We will discuss sharing of tasks and more details at the April meeting.

**Thanks!! The Silent Auction Committee.**