

## **REPORT ON INTERNATIONAL INNER WHEEL CONVENTION 5<sup>TH</sup>-9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2009 KOTA KINABALU SABAH MALAYSIA**

The International Inner Wheel Convention in Kota Kinabalu was attended by 25 members and 7 husbands.

Shirley Hope	IIW Constitution Chairman
Carole Young	IIW Board Director
Annabelle Valentine	IWNZ President/National Representative
Marion Patchett	IWNZ Past President
Wendy Knight	IWNZ Editor
Dorothy Booth	District NZ294 Chairman
Hazel Hunter	District NZ291 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman
Bronwen Rogers	District NZ293 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman
Lyn Jensen	District NZ294 2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman
Jill George	Auckland East
Sue Gibbs	Auckland East
Ann Harris	Auckland East
Jan Langford	Auckland East
Sylvia Millard	Auckland East
Elizabeth Donaldson	Howick
Barbara Millen	Howick
Joan Swift	Howick
Chantal Marconi	Noumea Plaisance
Bev Brennan	Parahaki of Whangarei
Jean Currie	Parahaki of Whangarei
Jill Morrison	Awapuni
Frances Burrus	Tawa
Dorothy Lomas	Tawa
Jacqueline Sandford	Blenheim
Almond Royds	Ashburton

The Convention was held in the luxury Sutera Harbour Resort and was spread between the 2 hotels in the complex. Weather was in the mid 30's and very humid and everyone was pleased to escape to either the air-conditioned rooms or swimming pool!

This Convention was a totally different experience to the one held in Christchurch 3 years ago. There were only 791 registrants which included husbands and partners, a very small Convention by previous Convention numbers. We were warned by the IIW Treasurer in her report to expect there to be a loss. We were entertained with a lot of the local dancing and also the drummers of Sabah. The food was a mixture of Malaysian and Western and all was delicious. Bottles of water were consumed in copious quantities to keep us well hydrated.

President Suzanne Neilson ran an extremely efficient business session and her English was clear and heard by all. It was disappointing that so many of the proposals did not go through as a 2/3 majority is need for a proposal to pass. But we were delighted that our New Zealand proposal on Honoured Active membership sailed through with the backing of the IIW Governing Body. Nobody spoke against the proposal and we had a good majority. We were thanked by IIW for making the position of Honoured Active Membership clearer and thereby ensuring that the award is given the recognition that it is due.

Only 14 proposals were passed and the only proposal passed that will now widen the membership was proposal 18 which allows for females who have participated in a Rotary programme such as GSE, Ambassadorial Scholar etc. It was interesting to listen to the impassioned pleas of the European members pleading for delegates to vote for the proposals that would widen the membership or allow more honorary members. In many of the countries such as Denmark, Norway and Sweden Rotary numbers are falling and Inner Wheel members aging and they fear for the future of Inner Wheel in their countries unless we widen the membership criteria. It would appear that the only country with real growth of members is India where virtually every Rotary Club sponsors an Inner Wheel Club. The membership of India is now larger than that of GB&I and yet they only had about 44 members there compared to GB&I's 155 members. Inner Wheel is in danger of being run by India as they have a very large vote with the majority of them being proxy votes. It is important that for the next Convention we look carefully at any proposal to change membership and be open minded to widening our membership net and not be reliant on Rotary as we have in the past.

With India's large number of members and votes it meant that proposal 4 which was "that if a candidate is elected IIW President the District Committees of her Governing body cannot nominate another President within a period of 5 consecutive years" was lost. This means that we are now in a 3 year cycle of IIW Presidents that is GB&I, India then one from another country. This will mean that every 3 years there will be a large bunch of nominations from all other countries and votes will be split and it will be hard for us to have another International President.

Four different Seminar topics were held but timing was such that it was not possible to attend them all. The topics were: Fundraising/Charities, Speechwriting and Public Speaking, Zoning and New generations. I was privileged to co-lead a seminar on New Generations with the Board Director from Norway. It was interesting to learn that countries such as India, Egypt, Jordan and Bulgaria have many young Clubs or Mother/Daughter Clubs whereas in Europe the concept has not really been embraced as they find that most of their daughters are not living in the same centres as they are.

Zoning was a very popular topic but did not perhaps deliver what many had hoped for as the concept is still in its infancy. It was more a time of people asking questions as to how zoning would affect their country and how it would work. The basic idea is to decrease the number of Board Directors to about 12 and divide the world into Zones – we would be in a Zone with Australia – a Board Director would be elected to represent our Zone. It is not fully decided what her role would be but it appears that she would not take over any of the work of the National Representative. This topic will no doubt be discussed again in 2012 with perhaps a proposal to that Convention.

Other items of interest from the Convention were:

A cheque for £150,000 was presented to the UNICEF Executive Director Mr Steen Anderson from Denmark for the Girls Education project in Madagascar. The International Project for the next 3 years will again be Education for Girls but this time IIW would be supporting Girls Education in Bolivia.

Convention 2012 will be held in Istanbul, Turkey, hopefully close to ANZAC Day so that New Zealanders and Australians could perhaps include this in their travels.

The IIW Treasurer warned us that Capitation Fees would have to be increased at the next Convention in 2012 as interest income has gone down dramatically and income for the year ending June 2008 was down £4000.

The International Directory is being cut down to the first 36 pages of the present one listing just the countries and the Districts and Clubs to save on costs. It was felt that if people wanted contact addresses for Clubs they could contact their National Representative or perhaps have a contact person on their Countries website who could give them the information.

The international newsletter costs are down by having only 1 printed newsletter a year and having bimonthly updates of news on the web. International Editor Wendy Tyndall Shepherd reported that 47 different countries have had news published over the past 2 years either in the 2 issues or on News on the web. In Past President Kamala's report on her year it was lovely to hear her talk about her visit to the Fairfield Club in Hamilton project at the Special Needs Unit at Fairfield school.

IIW Vice President Anne Fryer gave a very interesting report on the work our representatives at the United Nations are involved in and asked that everyone ensured that members had a chance to read the UN reports that are sent out.

The Convention itself was full of interest and culturally so different to Christchurch! The opening ceremony got off to a very slow start as the guest of honour the Chief Minister of Sabah was about  $\frac{3}{4}$  hour late in arriving! We had the first part of the programme and then the wait began after awhile we were all handed out bottles of water and peppermints, then newspapers and finally cups of tea and coffee as we sat and waited for the proceedings to get under way again! Following his speech of welcome and the official opening by President Suzanne we had an amazing display of local dancing and singing. The costumes were beautiful including one man dressed as a peacock with a full

peacock tail held up by his arms. A very colourful and noisy start to the Convention.

The friendship evening was held in the open air about 20 minutes from the centre of Kota Kinabalu. We all climbed on buses and went by convoy, about 8 buses at a time, with a police escort who held up the rush hour traffic to let us through. At this function we sampled many different types of the Malaysian cuisine and once again were entertained by some wonderful dancing. The evening concluded with a very large fireworks display paid for by the City of Kota Kinabalu before we were all bussed back to our hotels.

The Gala Dinner was a festival of colour and the ladies were all given a lovely artificial flower to wear on their wrist. The members of the Inner Wheel Club of Kuala Lumpur entertained us with dancing and there was a fashion parade of clothes by a local designer. Dancing and frivolity finished the evening.

The Closing Ceremony drew to a close a Convention full of interest and the opportunity to meet old friends and make many new ones. The 2 entertainment spots were the young drummer boys and the children from a preschool dancing for us.

I was proud to represent New Zealand at the Convention as your National Council President/National Representative. I encourage you all to start saving now and make plans to attend the next Convention in Turkey in 2012.