

# **GIRL SCOUT COUNCIL OF THE NATION'S CAPITAL**

## **COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING**

**APRIL 19, 2008**

### **PRESIDENT'S REMARKS**

**ANGELA LANCASTER**

When I set out on my journey as President three years ago, change was beginning to brew at Girl Scouts of the USA with talk of a new strategy to invigorate our movement.

Here at home we were focusing on completing our Capital Campaign and getting our arms around the large construction projects that were up ahead. Membership was on the increase and we were just launching our Young Leaders Program (which held great promise) along with new strategies to serve our growing Latina population. We were looking ahead to our 95<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the National Council meeting and launching efforts to secure funds from new donors to support important programs for girls.

We did not know that Frederick County would be joining us. We did not know that Bylaws would be on our mind. And we certainly did not know that construction at our camps would present so many challenges. But isn't that what Girl Scouting is about? It's about opportunity – it's about learning – it's about turning every challenge into success. This is what we expect of our girls – and certainly what we expect of ourselves and our council.

Looking back over the past three years, I see a few important themes emerge – themes that have guided this Girl Scout Council and indeed all of Girl Scouting to remarkable and lasting success.

- We care first and foremost about the girls we serve. We are committed to their growth – and their success.
- The resources we develop belong to the girls and it is our responsibility to use those resources to insure their future, the future of our council and the future of our movement.
- We are all one family. Each of us is equal to the other. Our strength depends upon our ability to welcome all to our table – to be grateful for all ideas – and to make decisions based on our shared commitment to all girls.

This is what courage, confidence, and character is all about.

Over the past year I am pleased to report that the Officers and Board have demonstrated courage, confidence, and character in every decision that was made. Never forgetting that the decisions we make today are the building blocks of the future.

### **Capital Construction**

As many of you know, our camp construction did not move along as quickly as we hoped. At last year's Annual Meeting I proudly "held up" the ground water discharge permit for **Camp Winona** as a sign of progress. This year I can hold-up our temporary occupancy certificate for Cafritz lodge (we will get our full occupancy permit as soon as the grass gets a little thicker!). I can tell you that we are up to our ears in constructing our new road and that's a good thing. But what is most important is that we will welcome our first session of Sleep-Away Campers at Winona before my term expires. Jan and I will be there, on June 22, when camp opens. We do not want to miss that first dinner in the Dining Hall (regardless of what is being served) so we can celebrate the opening of our **fourth** Sleep-Away Camp.

Sleep-Away Camping in this council is booming which is something we can all be proud of. But it has come at a cost. When all is said and done, we find that construction of Camp Winona will cost nearly a million dollars more than our projections, with the majority of costs directly attributable to changing codes and the rapidly rising cost of construction. The sewage system alone (due to changing state codes) will cost over \$800,000.

Construction at all camps has been challenging. At **Brighton Woods** we have faced challenges on many fronts not the least of which was a county traffic engineer who thought we (we) might need to widen Brighton Dam road and build a left hand turn lane onto our property. This very expensive possibility has been replaced with a much more reasonable solution – the installation of warning signs with programmable flashers. Much better. I can also report that as of April 10<sup>th</sup> – just last week – we received unanimous approval from the Montgomery County Planning Board to "amend our existing plan for the camp" and begin the permitting process. Hooray!

At **Coles Trip** we are working on both building design and permitting for the Multipurpose Building – further work is needed – and we promise to keep you up to date.

Courage, confidence, and character describe how our Board faced the challenge of rising costs of construction at our camps. In December, the Board agreed to do the following:

- To embark on a "value engineering effort" on all construction yet to be completed, to make sure that we were getting the "most" for every dollar spent.
- To tap into the financial reserves that we have built together – established for reasons just like this – so that we can continue with the work already underway.
- Knowing that we would be drawing on reserves, we agreed to develop and implement a plan to repay the funds that we will borrow from reserves and to begin that plan in FY'09.
- And, lastly (and this was a hard decision), we agreed to put construction at **Camp Aquasco** on temporary hold until the reality of remaining costs became clear.

The Board was unanimous in their commitment to our camps, our girls, and our long term financial health. I would like to personally thank Susan Ross and the Property Task Force for their tireless efforts to bring our plan to completion. Thank you.

### **Office Space**

Also in the property arena, we decided to “take advantage” of the market and re-negotiate our lease at 4301 Connecticut Ave. This felt like full circle for me, having chaired the Board Task Force eight years ago that selected this space for our central office.

I am reminded that our original philosophy was to limit our central office space in Washington and “grow” by opening satellite offices throughout our region. While talking about satellite offices is usually part of Jan’s report, I think our work in expanding satellite offices is positively connected to our overall office strategy. I am pleased to report that over the past three years we have:

- Opened the first “Fairfax County” office in Lorton, Virginia.
- “Adopted” the office in Frederick, Maryland (we love our new friends in Frederick).
- Moved and expanded the office in Leesburg.
- And most recently moved the Fort Washington office to new and expanded space in Waldorf.

I understand that Manassas is next. That doesn’t mean it will be tomorrow...but it will be next.

At this point more than a third of our staff is housed outside the Washington office. (When I first started with this council, the only “out-based staff” were camp caretakers). This fiscally wise strategy makes it possible for a large portion of staff to work where rents are lower – offices are more accessible to volunteers – commuting time for staff is less – and our growth potential is unlimited.

### **Fund Development**

Over the past three years we have had many successes. We finished the Capital Campaign and posted significant growth in Corporate and Foundation giving, which included raising an additional \$196,000 to support the 95<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Sing-Along.

SHARE has also continued to grow, thanks to the leadership of Becky Crouch and Wendy Wysong and thanks to volunteers who serve on the SHARE Task Force and who support SHARE in their Associations, Service Units and Troops. Could everyone who works to support SHARE please stand?

Our SHARE goal this year is \$560,000 with **\$520,000** raised to date (we are almost there!). Congratulations to Associations 37 and 53 and to the more than 31 Service Units who have all gone over goal.

We celebrated the success of SHARE as we always do at the President's Circle Dinner in March. This year we honored the Mitsubishi Electric America Foundation with the Officers Award – celebrating their financial commitment to extend Girl Scouting to girls with disabilities in Nation's Capital and nationwide through a partnership grant to Girl Scouts of the USA. We are leading the country in our effort to serve girls with disabilities...of that we can be very proud.

We are grateful to many corporations and foundations for their support. I know you read about them in Capitalk – but I would like to highlight a few in my remarks today.

- The William Randolph Hearst Foundation for their gift of \$100,000 to support the Young Leaders Program.
- Capital One for their \$50,000 support of Capital Currency, a Financial Literacy Program
- Booz Allen Hamilton for their \$25,000 gift (which we have just heard will increase next year) to support Make the Connection – a mentorship program for teen girls.
- And CareFirst for their \$50,000 gift to support our Healthy Living Initiative.

We also enjoy continuing support from the Cafritz Foundation, the Meyer Foundation, the Nancy Perry Marriot Foundation and many others.

Looking back over three years, I am pleased to report that SHARE has increased 12% and Corporate and Foundation giving has increased 75%.

At the same time, the Juliette Low Legacy Society has grown. The Society – whose members include those who have made planned gifts to the council and/or have included the Girl Scouts in their wills – now boasts 101 members. And...they are always looking for more.

Diane Tipton, who you will all get to know better when she steps forward as your new President, has also had her eye on growing our funding base. This year, she chaired a new Task Force to help increase the number of gifts we receive from individuals at a level of \$5,000 or more. The Task Force includes “old friends” and “new” who are busy “cultivating” even newer friends! Their first event, a private book signing with Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (whose daughter Bailey is one of our Brownies), was held at the home of Rose Cohen this past Monday night. More than 50 people attended – many who we were meeting for the very first time – and now will have the opportunity to become donors. As Diane would say...let the games begin!

As a demonstration of what Major Gifts can mean to this council, a new gift was received from an old and a new friend – a mother/daughter gift that is a first for us. Last year, Sara Phillips, who we all know and love, with her husband gave \$250,000 to endow our Gold Award Scholarship Fund. This year, Sara, with her daughter Barbara Sutton, contributed \$146,500 to build the Sara Phillips and Barbara Sutton River Walk at Camp Potomac Woods.

This gift will be used to develop a guided nature trail and environmental program that focuses on the Riverfront and Peace Creek area of this wonderful camp. Construction is already underway.

To continue the good news, Barbara Sutton recently notified us that she has included Girl Scout Council of the Nation's Capital in her will with a planned gift of \$1,000,000.

We cannot thank Sara and her daughter Barbara enough for their exceptional generosity.

The Board also took time this year to honor our first President, our role model, and our hero Bobby Lerch by creating an award in her honor. This award – the Bobby Lerch Legacy of Leadership Award – can be given only once a year to an individual who exemplifies all that we know and love about Bobby:

A commitment to Girl Scouting –

A commitment to growing our resources – and

A commitment to the lasting strength of our movement and our council.  
That is what Bobby means to us.

Almost all of our former presidents gathered for lunch this past summer to honor Bobby. And when we gathered – and I looked at the faces of our wonderful leaders – Lynn Heebner – Barbara Lehmann – Lois Bell – Kathy McKinless – Donella Brockington – and I think of Sue Guthridge who could not be with us that day – and I realized that if we gathered again in the summer of '08 that I would be a “past president” – a new role for me after more than 21 years of continuous involvement with this wonderful council.

Twenty-one years ago when my daughter was just a little over one year old and I was a stay-at-home mom looking for a way to get involved with my community, my friend Ricki Helfer suggested I talk to the Girl Scouts...because they were looking for a Treasurer. I said yes – and the doors of a wonderful world opened up to me. And all of you walked into my life. I cannot begin to express how it feels to stand up here and think about the work of this wonderful council...the work that all of you do.

You work miracles every day of your life – and for that we can all be grateful.

I still have 10 more weeks in my term (and, a new Sleep-Away Camp to open) – but this is my last Annual Meeting. I don't want to sound like I'm accepting an academy award...but there are several people I really need to thank.

First, I thank the Officer Team and the Board of Directors for their time and dedication. It has been an exceptional three years of hard work and exciting challenges. And lots of laughs and fun!

I would like to thank the staff who works so hard for all of us. Your high performance exemplifies Best Practices in the non-profit sector. You guys are great!

And I would like to thank Jan....my friend and partner in Girl Scouting for the last 21 years.

Jan, Jan...what can one say about Jan?

You are a shining light to us all. A leader that moves mountains through your service and dedication to the world wide Girl Scout movement.

We have laughed together; we have shed a few tears together. We have been silly and serious. We have nursed knees, and feet, and broken wrists.

You have taught me so much about positive attitudes and have inspired me and all of our community:

- to always keep the girl central in our actions
- to lead by serving
- to build resources to insure the future of our movement
- to provide a safety net for all girls, and
- to give girls a spring board so they may soar

That's what Girl Scouting is all about and why we are all here.

It has been a joy to work with you, dear friend Jan. I can not wait to see what's next!!