

**ASSOCIATION 10: SOUTHERN MARYLAND**  
**ACTING CHAIR: J. LYNN WEINBERGER**

We the members of Association 10 offer the following thoughts for consideration:

- Revise GSCNC by-laws to allow for more than 1 Assistant Association Chair
- Increase more understanding of what an Association is and how it works. This could be conducted within Service Units or by Field Staff (short and snappy / training)
- Expand the role of the Association Delegate and Alternate Delegate to include required contact with Service Unit
- Revise Association requirements to include that each Service Unit within the Association have at least 1 Delegate and 2 Alternate Delegates
- Recognize official titles for “co”, examples: Association Co-Cookie Managers, Association Co-QSP Managers, Association Co-SHARE Managers
- Continue with tele-conference, and technology communication for meetings with GSCNC staff

Association 10 – Southern Maryland experiences, which have produced our above suggestions:

- We consist of 3 large counties in Maryland, and have very distinctively geographic boundaries. We’ve had to delay an Association meeting due to not meeting our membership quorum, because of a bridge closure (which is only 1 of the 2 ways for our Calvert County members to get to our meeting location)
- We recognize that all Associations within GSCNC have travel and time constrictions, however we in Association 10 have both at different areas. For example: Charles county members have to deal with more traffic within our boundaries, whereas, St. Mary’s county members have a travel distance issue within our boundaries. Calvert county members have both issues, depending on the location of the meeting.
- Over the past several years, the members of Association 10 have been voicing their concerns for a change within our Association. A special taskforce group has been formed to listen to the concerns and to work on developing a new strategy for our Association to improve. Our main focus is to work on splitting the Association into 3 separate Associations to work more effectively. Some reasons for this suggestion comes directly from what our members have said.
  1. “I have to drive at least an hour, just to sit in on a 1 ½ hour long meeting”
  2. “We don’t have any idea what the association is or how it can be helpful to us”
- Several years ago, GSCNC staff recognized our vast geographic area, and added a second Field Director to Association 10.
- To better serve our Association members, we have recruited “helpers” for each of the Council sponsored product sales positions within the Association. This position is held by members from each county and has been a benefit to all involved.

**ASSOCIATION 21: SOUTHERN PRINCE GEORGE'S  
CHAIR: SANDRA EDMONDS**

We in Association 21 feel that our current association structure should adopt a 'CARE' approach in trying to balance the roles of fulfilling its corporate responsibility and addition value to girls and volunteers. The structure of the CARE should be as follows:

**C – Communication**

- More improved ways of communication via newsletters, email correspondence, and more visibility for Council Delegates at service unit meetings.
- Strong communication at troop meetings to emphasize everyone's role within the association.
- Design a brochure that can be distributed at various Girl Scouts functions, i.e. – troop meetings, back to school night, etc.

**A – Activities**

- There should be activities for all age levels to bring the association together.
- Associations should plan and implement community service projects that involve all members of the association.
- More association meetings other than the 2 required each year.

**R – Recruitment**

Recruitment and training of adults and Girl Scouts.

With regards to delegates, there should be an even amount of girls and adults.

Strongly encourage attendance at association meetings and at troop meetings.

New policies that emphasize inclusion of all registered girls and adults, regardless of their position within the organization.

**E – Education**

Clearly defined roles how the association works and our role within it.

Using the basic leadership training classes to give new leaders an overview of the complete council structure.

In conclusion, we feel that current association structure is more than adequate to meet the needs of fulfilling its corporate responsibility and adding value to girls and volunteers. It would be the responsibility of CARE to ensure that the appropriate marketing and education of the association's roles and responsibilities are communicated to both adults and girls within the organization.

**ASSOCIATION 22:           CENTRAL PRINCE GEORGE'S**  
**CHAIR:                       KAY SLONAKER**

When responding to the question: “What bold ideas do you have for re-designing our council wide association structure...?” our first reaction was “ Is there something wrong with the existing structure?”

First, we went to the GSCNC website to see if we could find a definition of what the association structure was as any person unfamiliar with the corporate set up may do. We found no bold link directly to Associations. We had to click on “Volunteers” and then the 12<sup>th</sup> item on a drop down menu was Associations. Perhaps the first “bold idea” would be to rework the web site and how information about the association structure is presented for public inquiry and our own membership.

Secondly, it would appear that there are no set standards by which our associations operate except for the required Fall and Spring Meetings. Each of our Associations are run by the interpretation of guidelines given to the elected chairs. These interpretations are as varied as the men and women organizing the associations and their individual leadership styles. Perhaps it is time to develop a mission statement for our Associations council-wide with required minimum standards. For example, have a consistent standard for elected leadership positions beyond the Chair and Assistant Chair to include a secretary and treasurer. Our Council provides us with standard requirements for things like Super Service Unit, and Honor Troops—why not Associations?

Finally, communication and opportunities to meet should be examined. Many associations have established teen groups. However, these teens are not afforded opportunities to meet regularly with girls in other Associations. Do not the same issues and concerns affect all of our girls? Corporate communication from council to associations and associations to council could also be improved. Is the current twice a year communication realistic and effective enough to meet corporate goals and reach the greater Girl Scouting community? We would like to suggest a GSCNC report card with feedback from the Association Chairs based on input from their membership. After all in the business world an active review process is a two way street staff(ASSOCIATIONS) reviewed by leadership (COUNCIL) and leadership(COUNCIL) reviewed by staff(ASSOCIATIONS).

Thank you!

**ASSOCIATION 23:           NORTHERN PRINCE GEORGE'S**  
**CHAIR:                       TERRI WALLACE**

Association 23 feels that Associations are a positive asset to the Girl Scouts and that instead of doing away with them we need to utilize them so that they work as they were intended. In our Association, we have many volunteers who have been involved at the association level for many years and through our activities we are able to attract others including teens of voting age. We have chosen to share what works for our Association and to offer suggestions of areas where we believe the Board needs to take a closer look.

At our Association meetings we offer enticing activities to increase our attendance so that we are assured we meet quorum. We offer dinner or snacks, short trainings on a variety of subjects, and door prizes. At our Spring meeting, a portion of the meeting is used to recognize the volunteers by presenting awards and to recognize girls who have earned a higher honor in Girl Scouting (Bronze, Silver, Gold). Each Service Unit is responsible for a part of the meeting from providing the opening or closing, arranging food or supplying door prizes. This ensures that we have individuals attend from all of our Service Units. The Association also offers re-energizing leader retreats and other activities.

Communication needs to begin within the Service Unit. By talking about the Association, its responsibilities and activities, more volunteers will get involved. They also need to feel comfortable that their concerns will be addressed with council through the Association Chair and that they will receive follow up information. Council also needs to make sure the communication filters back down to the Service Unit level. Many issues that normally would be addressed at the Association level are now received directly by council through the suggestion button. Sharing these questions or concerns and their responses with the Association Chairs needs to be done.

Association Chairs and/or Delegates need to be readily available to the Service Units. This could be accomplished by ensuring that each Service Unit has at least one delegate. This way every one is represented and that there is a voice within the Service Unit for the Association.

If Associations are struggling, consider pairing a strong Association with a struggling one so that they can look to their peers for support and ideas to make their Association work. Another means of providing support to all Associations would be to set up a message board on the Council Website for Association Chairs to share ideas on what is working for them.

How can you increase adult attendance at Association meetings? For those that are struggling take a look at the levels of the troops within the Association. Many volunteers at the Daisy and Brownie level are already overwhelmed and do not feel that getting involved at the Association level is something they can handle. To help them justify another night out and away from their children, offer babysitting for their children. They are the future of Girl Scouting.

Equally important is involving Teen Girl Scouts for they are our future leaders. They should feel that they are an active part of the Association and are connected and valued by Council. Ask the teen girl advisors to bring their troop to the Association meetings. Just by attending the meeting girls will meet multiple IP requirements. Once at an association meeting, teens can see first hand the process for electing delegates and other positions within the Association. They can see that the Association is another link to Council so their voices can be heard.

Teen girls would also be more inclined to get involved if there was a more positive image of them throughout the council and their concerns are addressed and dealt with. For years, teen girls have faced comments from customers during cookies sales saying aren't you too old to be a Girl Scout. The teen Girl Scout needs to be portrayed in a positive way so that their communities know what the girls can accomplish. Many when asked have no idea what a Gold Award is but if asked what an Eagle Scout is they can tell you. Teen girls do great things for their communities. Make sure the community knows.

**ASSOCIATION 31:           GEORGIA CROSSING**  
**CHAIR:                       JANICE STRACHAN**

Association 31 has three main points concerning this question. First, we have comments about the question itself. Second, we have information about how associations are currently perceived by the members. And third, we have suggestions about what the members want from an association.

**The Question Itself:**

No one felt ownership of this question. What is the girl's role in this question supposed to be? The girls felt this was a leader issue, and the leaders felt this was a question for Service Unit Managers and Field Directors and, possibly, the Association Chairs and/or Co-Chairs. Last year's question had more overall appeal to the membership. In the future, the Board should pose questions that reflect, and appeal to, the girl-centered orientation of Girl Scouting. Perhaps the girl representatives on the Board should write the question.

When the question was posed, most of the discussion time was used trying to explain what an association is, what the current structure is, and what the corporate responsibilities are. Delegates felt inadequate to really explain an association despite the background information that was provided during their training meeting.

Once the girls and leaders got an answer to why associations exist, then they expressed anger. What do **they** (the association) do for us? Council does everything directly that girls and troops need, who why do we need another layer? We have four levels of structure now (troop, service unit, association, council). Does this question imply that Council wants to have only three layers and do away with associations?

Another aspect of this question was "why ask this question and why now?" Many people did not know that GSUSA is going through a major restructuring process. They were concerned about how our Council will be split. They were told that we probably would grow along the edges, not split. They also believe that Council already knows the answer to this question – or at least Council already has a preferred structural change in mind. With this belief in place, most people felt no need to provide feedback to this question.

**Current Perceptions About Associations:**

During discussions, no one seemed to know what an association is. But they have lots of impressions. One impression is that the Association is a form of government that is **handed down** by Council, rather than suggested upwards (from the membership to Council). They were confused about restructuring the Associations because they do not know how other councils may organize themselves at this level (or if other councils have

this level). In order to conceive of a better structure, they felt they needed to know what other structures were possible.

Another impression is that the Association does not do anything except hold two meetings per year. What else do they do? They do not sign papers (and we don't want them to). Election of delegates and other association personnel is not enough. Recognitions are not enough. What is the value of the Association to the service units? To the troops? To the girls? If you can't explain that, then we don't need associations.

One of the perceived problems is that only the Associations Chair and the Assistant Chair function within an association. There is no association team. Service Unit Managers do not participate in the Association. This is similar to leaders who do not participate in the Service Units. How involved is the Field Director?

Service Unit Managers and Field Directors do all the work. Service Unit Managers go to monthly meetings to get information from Council. Why do we need to go to Association meetings? We only want to go to meetings if it will help the girls or help the leaders deal with girls. It is hard for new leaders to find age-level appropriate activities from council before the deadlines are past. New leaders need help or mentors. Although Service Unit Managers are key to this issue, the Service Unit Manager volunteer role is a thankless job. If the Association is not doing much, then why not have the Association do this?

There is an Association Cookie Chair and an Association QSP Chair. People can understand what they do and that they have a function. A Council person talks to the Association person, and the Association person talks with the Service Unit person, and the Service Unit person talks to the troop person. There is a definite chain of command. In contrast, the Association SHARE Chair seems to do nothing and have no purpose. This is because Council does most of the SHARE work. The Council person (most often personified in the Field Director) deals directly with the Service Unit Manager, and the Association person is by-passed.

What is "corporate responsibility?" Currently, the Association goes up to Council, not down to Service Units. Girl Scouting seems to have two functions. There are operations, which seem to concern the service units and the council staff, and there is policy, which seems to concern the Board and Associations. Girl Scouts already have lots of rules and paperwork and policies, so additional corporate policies are excessive and unwanted. One of the duties listed as a corporate responsibility is fund raising. The Association should **not** fund raise.

At the same time, the Association has little effect on Council. For example, the Annual Meeting needs to have real substance. Now it is just a bunch of dry reports. Nothing

controversial is said or done here. In order for girls to want to be delegates, they need to know that their participation is important. Girl input needs to go up to Council and the Board, and create real changes. **Girls need to feel and see girl ownership of Girl Scouting.** The political structure of Council needs to change to make this more obvious.

Another role that Associations have is to facilitate Adult Recognitions. This process is currently too hard. It needs to be easier to get awards for volunteers. There are too many paperwork hassles. It is hard to get a record of service. It is hard to get people to write letters in support of the award. Letters are rejected or need to be rewritten to meet the criteria of certain (higher) awards. For most letter writers, this process is too intimidating.

Associations also do nominations and referrals. So what? Who cares? If these people did not get elected, the troops and program for the girls would not be affected.

#### **What We Want From An Association:**

We suggested that people flip the question – to make the Association more. What **should** Associations do? What do people **want** them to do? Overwhelmingly, the answer was to provide program to girls and support the Service Units. Associations will get support from Service Unit Managers if they see that the Association supports Service Units. Adults and teens will be excited about a group that appears to have relevancy to them personally.

#### **PROGRAM:**

Although our association offered several program opportunities this year, these events were perceived as Council events because of how the announcements were distributed (email from the Field Director, flyers distributed during cluster meetings, etc.). Most events were planned by a service unit for their own people and then opened up when pre-registrations appeared to be too low. In order to be perceived as Association events, the events need to be planned and advertised by the Association. The work needs to be done by the Association Chair, Assistant Chair, an Association Committee, or the Delegates. The Association can be a think tank for program ideas.

Associations should form association-wide interest groups for younger girls to bring girls together. These groups would need adults to organize and run events. Association members could form self-initiated subgroups which disband when the activity is done. Younger leaders asked that Associations share information through the internet. They find it difficult to find age-appropriate activities from Council before the deadlines are past. For example, one leader reported that there are 10 new IPPs on the GSUSA website and their structure is different from older IPPs. Few leaders have time or energy to search web sites for this information. For those who do have time and energy, how do

they share the stuff they learn? The Association could provide this information in a more accessible format.

[Older girl leaders did not see the need for the Association to do programs. MCOGL (The Montgomery County Older Girls and Leaders) already provides lots of activities for teens. There are so many activities being offered that there is not enough time to do it all. They looked at each other and asked “**what** is not being done?”]

### **THE BOARD:**

We need to connect the two directions of GSCNC: policy and operations. Members need to know how the Board operates. This may be done as short training modules during service unit meetings. Such on-going education should be encouraged and rewarded.

The Board needs to get into action. For example, how do they use girls? Are these girl Board members just “yes” girls, so the Board can say that girls were involved in decisions? The girl Board members should pose the two-minute question. Girl Board members should serve terms that are longer than one year. It takes one year just to learn how the Board works and how to be an effective member of the Board. We are a big enough Council that there should be a third girl Board member added to better represent girls from the entire Council.

### **UNIQUE USE OF DELEGATES:**

\*Use delegates more. Have regular meetings, not just one or two to get ready for the annual meeting.

Make the two-minute question more appealing to girls. This year’s question does not engage girls. This is supposed to be a **girl** organization. Girls were not sure how to respond to this question.

\*Form a Girl Board separate from the Adult Board. The girls who are on the Adult Board would be members of the Girl Board and bring issues from the girls directly to the Adult Board. [It was reported that the “By Girls, For Girls” group still needs more members. Others asked: What is this group? Where is there information about it?]

### **OTHER ISSUES:**

The Association should **not** fund raise.

The Association should increase Girl Scout visibility. Perhaps Local Press Rep’s should be association level not SU level.

The Association should facilitate recognitions and make this process easier to do.

**ASSOCIATION 32:           NORTHERN MONTGOMERY**  
**CHAIR:                       BARBARA HARNER**

Association 32 had a difficult time addressing this question. We struggled with identifying and understanding both the real and the perceived roles of the Association and, at the least, we came away from our discussions with a better awareness of both.

For the most part, we are satisfied with the current Association structure. As far as we are aware, it meets our needs as a channel of information – both from and to the Board of Directors. We appreciate the opportunity for the Chairs and Assistant Chairs to meet with and hear from the second vice president and the deputy executive director on a regular basis: the information and updates they share about board meetings and the operational updates at the Association Chair meetings are insightful, educational and helpful.

We also appreciate the opportunity afforded the Associations to respond annually to a question that, in turn, guides the Board in its direction and work. Although individually we may not agree with the response, Operational Suggestions and Association Proposals are solicited, reviewed, addressed and returned with comments and/or proposed resolutions in a thoughtful, timely and respectful manner.

We strongly believe, however, that there is a real need to increase the awareness and understanding of the current role and function of the Association, for both leaders and Service Unit Managers.

While information about the Association is presented in the initial training for both of these positions, these individuals are often so overwhelmed with learning the day-to-day responsibilities of becoming a new leader or Service Unit Manager, that the details and relevance of what an Association is and does becomes that ‘one thing too many’ when confronted with the immediate needs and questions inherent in getting a new troop of girls up and going.

Toward this end, we would encourage the development of a ‘Short and Snappy’ discussing the role of the Association and the duties and responsibilities of the Chair, Delegates, N&R and Recognition positions that the Association Chair can present at Cluster meetings and/or Service Unit Managers can utilize to increase the awareness and understanding of the Association. Additionally, this information should be disseminated at future Leaderfests through a workshop creatively answering the question “What is the Association (and Why Should I Care)?”

As we increase the awareness of and knowledge about the Association, we strengthen the role it plays in supporting the Service Unit, the leaders and ultimately the girls of GSCNC.

**ASSOCIATION 33: HEART OF MONTGOMERY**  
**CHAIR: SHARON BANKS-TARR**

The members of Association 33 feel that without associations, the leap between the 140 Service Units and the Girl Scout Council would be too extreme. Associations are necessary in that they help close this gap by communicating the council's policies with other girl scouts in their area. By keeping the associations in place, troop leaders and older girls will continue to have the opportunity to understand how the council works. Being part of an association has the added benefit of increasing friendships and gives members a chance to make a difference.

While the members of Association 33 feel that associations are a necessary component of the Girl Scout organization, we also feel that certain changes need to be made. First, the association needs clear communication from the Girl Scout Council in order to effectively communicate with its membership. We also need support from the council in advocating the importance and increasing the visibility of the association at the service unit and troop level. This will encourage everyone to have a chance to learn about the Girl Scout structure and how to make their voice count.

The council also needs to pay more attention to helping its members understand the structure of the association. Girl Scout leaders need to understand the whole picture of Girl Scouting so that they are better prepared to fulfill the requirements of the organization. We feel that leader training at the basic level does not offer enough information about these requirements. Instead, we propose a short and snappy training given at the service unit meeting, as we have found this format has worked well in the past. We feel that this method of training would be a good way for adults to learn more about the association and to come up with some ideas on how to improve it. For example, we would like to see new badge work developed, as well as older girl and adult recognitions for becoming more involved in the structure of the association. These changes would help aid members in learning and understanding the association process.

**ASSOCIATION 34:           MONTGOMERY CRESCENT**  
**CHAIR:                       KAY BEHALL**

Association 34 feels the structure of Girl Scouts needs to better reflect today's society and time constraints. Time is limited for all adults and the requests or demands for that time are increasing. Volunteers feel overwhelmed between their job, family responsibilities and activities, Girl Scout, school, sport, religious and other interests or commitments. The same people end up volunteering for several different jobs in the SU, Association, Council and training commitments in addition to troop involvements.

The current Girl Scout structure appears to be based on the outdated concept of "stay at home moms with few other responsibilities" and children with few extra-curricular activities requiring parents to drive them to the activity or volunteer for an additional function.

Communication from Council to the adult volunteers has increased with the use of emails and information posted and training available on the council web site. More information from council wide panel meetings should be posted by this means to dissemination information or answers to questions or proposals from associations in a more timely fashion. A balance in using electronic communication and training needs to be reached since many new leaders see no need to go to a Service Unit meeting feeling they get everything they need on-line.

Increase interaction between associations. Associations are only active when there are active volunteers planning events in it. All associations within a large area could operate as a unit to coordinate and plan activities such as the adults and girls who plan events and activities for Montgomery County older girl troops active in MCOGL. Alternate meetings so service unit troop leaders meet bimonthly to receive information from Council and the other month Program Coordinators/Association adults meet to plan events. This might improve the service to troops in weaker service units and associations.

The association and annual meetings are too structured. Change how the quorum number is determined. Many adults register with their girls and never participate in Girl Scouts beyond the troop level but they are part of the calculation in determining an Association's quorum number. Allow changes in how votes are taken to include an electronic ballot (on line, chat line, message board, forum or other controlled ballot) so more people would have the opportunity to participate.

It has been suggested we could operate without the association layer. Associations could meet once a year to vote for delegates to the annual meeting or voting could occur at the Service Unit or Area level. Satellite based offices could be the basis of the meeting areas.

The SU within that area use the satellite offices. The service unit would then become much more important in the governance of the council. There needs to be a more compelling reason to be involved in the association than voting on a slate of delegates every few years and waiting a year or more to hear what happened to a proposal made at an association meeting.

We would like to see more events planned and run by paid staff to take some of the pressure off of the leaders. These could be activities for large groups council wide or activities for smaller groups with multiple sites around the Council, such as an annual senior night, bowling, etc. rotated around the council. Volunteers could supplement the work done by paid staff. Set fees either by troop or by the registered Girl Scout to pay for the staff necessary to plan and run activities. Funds collected to pay the program and staff should be collected before the event and be non-refundable regardless of attendance. Consider a council dues per girl to pay for increased council staff to plan Council sponsored programs.

We would like to see less emphasis on girl numbers and more emphasis on program and retention of existing registered girl scouts. We need a retention plan to keep existing scouts active. Perhaps this might be accomplished by having an additional paid staff person in the area who is program orientated to retain scouts. How do we have retention of leaders? How are we pulling new adults into Girl Scouting and retaining the older adults.

When the GSUSA programs change drastically with some regularity, what is the legacy we are leaving our current girl scouts and the newer Scouts now coming into the program. Core traditions should not get lost in the goal to meet modern trends.

We still see the need for volunteers at all levels and want and need to have people to meet as Girl Scouts. An important part of the organization is meeting current Girl Scout friends, forming new friendships, and working and planning together for our girls.

**ASSOCIATION 42:           CENTRAL CITY - FRIENDSHIP**  
**CHAIR:                       DELORES THURSTON**

The Council-wide Association structure could improve in some areas. First, the Association's Structure of Area Managers needs to be improved. We have 22 Associations and we only have three Area Managers. We suggest increasing the number of Area Managers. This would help the Area Managers to better focus, and to fulfill their corporate responsibilities and provide more valuable time to girls and volunteers.

Second, improvement is seriously needed in the process for handling membership and conducting training throughout the Association. Technology enhancements and technical support to the Association is strongly recommended to help improve membership processing and registering for programs in the Mosaic. One option would be to solicit volunteers from corporations to assist with technical support.

Third, the current structure does not seem to include enough activities for the Daisies. The Girl Scout program has been designed with 4 year-olds as the starting age. There are many activities listed in the Mosaic that the Daisies could participate in, but they often are not included in the groups listed. When planning activities, a little more focus on activities for the Daisy level is needed.

We believe that the Girl Scout program is one that encourages girls to stay away from drugs, gangs and activities that will take them in the wrong direction. This is especially important for the teenage girls. All girls, however, regardless of their age or where they live, need a program like Girl Scouts. It is painful when young girls go in the wrong direction and don't try to better themselves. Improvements to the overall Girl Scouts program and specific improvements at the Association level, like those suggested today, are important to making Girl Scouts a positive tool for the future of young girls.

**ASSOCIATION 43:           MID-EASTERAN WASHINGTON**  
**CHAIR:                       DEBORAH BROWN**

We value the opportunity to provide input on the governance system for our council, GSCNC. Good aspects of our current system include having:

- Delegates to represent the body;
- Board members actively participate in association meetings;
- Annual meetings as a general body; and
- Bi-annual association meetings.

Perhaps for, Association 43, Mid-Eastern Washington, the current governance structure is not a problem. But we do have ideas that might be implemented to enhance the current system. Our ideas are:

1. Amend the by-laws to allow flexibility in scheduling the bi-annual Association meetings. This might help to increase attendance.
2. Go to a system that only requires one association meeting annually as opposed to the two meeting requirement we currently have. A second meeting could be optional.
3. Incorporate technology in the meetings. For example: conference calling capability, as a way to increase participation in meetings.
4. Allot the same number of delegates per Association.
5. Institute a proxy system that will allow members of an association to conduct elections and/or vote on important issues.

Business meetings are the vehicle used to make sure members are informed about key issues facing the organization. As a grass roots organization, we should continue to provide the girls with an opportunity to participate in a formal business process that's common to the business world. It is great that currently, they have the benefit of experiencing this in either the comfort of their Association or in a bigger setting, like today.

**ASSOCIATION 44: DC EAST OF ANACOSTIA**  
**ACTING CHAIR: NATALIE BRANNUM SMITH**

We liken the Association to the State in the United States governance structure. There are States which are small due to their geographical area (land mass) or population. However, these States are to carry out the same basic State functions as its Sister States that have a larger geographic area or population.

With that assumption, we think there are ways to improve the Association process:

- **Do not stretch the fund raising base within the Association.** In a small Association, there is not the breath of organizations to tap money from. Within a matter of one month after the end one Girl Scout fund development activity, Girl Scouts are asking the same organizations (i.e. parents, business) again for money the next one ( i.e. SHARE, COOKIES, GSP). Girls are relying on the same organizational base as the schools, Boy Scouts, and other non-profit organizations.
- **Conduct only one formal business meeting annually.** It is increasing the number of outside commitments that are competing for the Association membership time.
- **Provide an incentive for the Association Officers, Chair, Secretary and Treasurer, to turn paperwork to GSCNC on time.** In cookies, the Troop receives an incentive when the cookie bill is paid on-time, an average number of boxes are sold per girl and all paperwork is turned in on time
- **Remove the record keeping for determining the Recognition Award for Girl Scout longevity from the Association Nominating and Referral Committee to the GSCNC Association Nominating and Referral Committee.** GSCNC receives the Girl Scout Re-registration annually. The number of years in Girl Scouting can come from that Girl Scout registration data base.
- **With much technology having mass appeal, use technology to hold meetings.** Small Associations can use conference calls and e-mail to express ideas, receive information, and even to vote.
- **Redefine Association lines with respect to space available and capability of all of the Council's military installations.**

As was stated at the last year's Annual meeting, we are in the place to make changes happen – the Nation's Capital. Our girls, our volunteers need us to step up to the challenge.

**ASSOCIATION 50:       ASHGROVE EAST**  
**CHAIR:                   PAMELA JELINEK**

The volunteers of Association 50 Ashgrove East believe that the association structure serves an important management function but may not always effectively meet the needs of its volunteers.

Our members identified the following as the positives within the current arrangement:

- Our active Older Girl group TOGA which we do with Associations 51 & 56
- Built-in framework provided for fundraising & staff/volunteer interaction
- Our training blitzes and enrichment opportunities also arranged with Associations 51 & 56
- Opportunity to provide feedback to the Board and staff through the annual Two minute question, operational suggestions and proposals, committees and panels

**Suggestions for Council**

- Help associations with website development. Let the girls do it to earn council hours! Train them to help us and allow them to use the hours in a way meaningful to them.
- We need to find effective ways to deliver training closer to the volunteers. This is not new. Why aren't we in the forefront of developing an online training model that is consistent, meaningful AND interactive?
- We need more flexibility in who is qualified to train so training is not tied to the few currently available trainers
- Help volunteers to be able to quickly recognize Association volunteers with a designated adult position pin
- What determines the effective size of an Association? Geography? Membership? In our association, some of the things we do well we do by combining with 51 & 56.
- Sponsor opportunities to increase communication among all stakeholders

**Suggestions for Associations**

- Make the association structure meaningful for all volunteers, especially new leaders
- Look at jobs in which the manpower effort is being duplicated. Use the association to consolidate some jobs done at the service unit level--why can't we have association press representatives who publicize service unit and troop events and accomplishments. Instead of each service unit offering several trainings to its troop cookie managers why can't the association offer training at a variety of locations and times expanding the opportunities for people to be trained in a timely fashion?
- Associations need to do a better job of marketing what they are doing to their membership, especially brand-new volunteers.
- Look for ways to improve communication throughout the hierarchy
- Association leadership needs to be visible throughout the service units.

- Sponsor joint service unit activities
- Sponsor regular program roundtables
- Sponsor more events
- Develop association resource lists of people and places, such as canoe instructors and outstanding field trips
- Develop girl leadership opportunities at the association level
- Develop a process for developing future Service Unit and Association team leaders through mentoring

**ASSOCIATION 51:       ASHGROVE WEST**  
**CHAIR:                   MARY SAUNDERS**

Associations can be a major element in improving the effectiveness with which we make Girl Scouting available to the girls in our community. In Association 51, we've identified 5 initiatives we think would make our association more useful:

1. **Define** a clearer role for the Association as a coordinator of community-wide initiatives for our Service Units.
2. **Develop** strategies for leveraging resources across the Association, including:
  - Useful information about our community and the Scouting opportunities
  - Resources that Scouts can share with the community
  - Useful Contacts
  - Special capabilities
3. **Increase** visibility of Girl Scouts in the community through Association-wide service projects. One example might be to
  - Identify a resource need, such as food, clothing, school supplies, or books
  - Target a weekend for an Association-wide collection
4. **Demonstrate** the benefit to our SU's by creating Association-wide special interest programs or groups. Functionally-organized groups that can cross SU's can provide many kinds of additional capability. Groups focusing on Hiking, Outdoor Skills, or Camping could bring together Scouts from many different schools, allowing them to deepen their appreciation for their local opportunities.
5. **Develop** strategic partnerships with non-profit organizations in the community to share opportunities, support local needs, and create new programming activities. Examples include Reston Interfaith, LINK, FISH, Herndon's Runnymede Park, and Fairfax County's Frying Pan Park.

We also believe that the relationship between the Girl Scouts in our community and GSCNC can be improved by strengthening the role of the Association as a conduit for feeding new ideas, issues, and concerns from our troops to the Council. We think that there are many ways to make the Association a more vital part of the Girl Scout management organization; these are just a few of our ideas.

**ASSOCIATION 52:            SOUTH CENTRAL FAIRFAX**  
**CHAIR:                        PATRICIA HICKEY**

Good Morning! We did a lot of brainstorming with this issue and asked ourselves “what is our Association” and “what does it do for us”? We focused on what it can do and we found many ways to make our Association more active and relieve our Service Units from carrying a heavier load. We believe there needs to be a more active role between Council and the Associations, and that each Association needs to be free to define their own role based on local needs.

We found few problems in our Association and general satisfaction with our operations and offerings; however, we appreciate that each Association has its own personality and issues. We are primarily focused on governance, while others focus on program level activities. There is a “life cycle” in the Girl Scout organization and when there are healthy, thriving Service Units, the Associations are not as involved; but when Service Units are experiencing new or struggling leaders, the Association is there to help.

Many of our volunteers view the Annual Council Meeting as a rubber stamp as far as policy and elections. We give a two-minute statement each year and often never know what happens to that information. We see our statement printed out a year later! For our time and effort, we would like more timely and direct feedback. The Board could report at the annual meeting the results of the two-minute statement from the previous year. It would also help to see results posted in familiar places for volunteers to find it. We know you listen, but we need more effective feedback.

Defining our own role is crucial to each Association. We need to be flexible to react if one or more of our Service Units need help. Associations and the Council need to be agile and able to shift quickly as needed. In addition, with a Council as large as ours, the grass roots volunteer needs a recognizable face of governance. An Association provides that. For many of our valued troop-level volunteers, “The Council” and its leadership are just someone far away and far removed. Radical change to Associations risks limiting the face of the Council to the average volunteer, the link from the troop to the Council, and the one organization that is flexible and spring-loaded to help where and when needed.

Association 52 provides our service units with the governance aspect of GSCNC. Knowing and trusting that they are our link to Council is important to us and without this layer, we feel that our input could get “lost in the shuffle.” We would like to see the Associations stay and have their role kept intact.” Thank you and we look forward to getting direct feedback soon!

**ASSOCIATION 53: MOUNT VERNON**  
**CHAIR: RUTH DRICKEY**

In the past, the Association has been a key step in the information flow between Council and the Service Units, particularly for product sales and the process of electing our delegates and making recommendations to Council. These functions were not well understood by the general membership and centered around semiannual meetings, not always well attended. No, however, when emails can pass information in greater detail and faster than actual meetings, we have to question whether the 2-business-meetings-a-year model still works, or whether we're having a meeting "because it's time to have a meeting." Our volunteers need to feel that attendance at an Association meeting is well worth the time out of their busy schedules. The dry, business report style of the current meetings just doesn't do that.

We do, however, see a continuing need for a "middle level" in three key areas; new leader development and support, significant recognition for the work of our girls and adults, and older girl coalitions.

Leader Support – Change the Fall Association Meeting to a big "meet and greet" for new and returning leaders, filled with fun and enthusiasm-building workshops – less like a meeting and more like a "Kick-off Karnival" – to let each leader know she had lots of support for the upcoming year.

Recognition – The Spring Association Meeting should be another fun event to recognize the girls and the leaders/volunteers that make the program happen. We always wish we had more frequent publicity for the great things going on in Girl Scouting. Too often we recognize our wonderful leaders and girls at a poorly attended business meeting. Well, let's make it a big deal – do it in front of all the girls and their parents. Invite girls (Bronze and up), and adults being recognized, to a special celebration in their honor. Girls who have a sense of recognized accomplishment and volunteers who feel need and appreciated will remain in Scouting.

The more routine business functions of an Association Meeting; committee reports, elections and policy recommendations; can be handled via email, voted on at Service Unit Meetings or discussed at Cluster or Area Meetings. Usually the attendees at these meetings are the same as those who attend the Association Meetings and this would also increase the value of Area/Cluster Meetings. Consider changing the proportion of delegates to reflect both the girl and adult membership; girl delegates based on girl registration and adult delegates based on adult registration.

Teens – Establish Teen Scout coalitions in each Association where they don't exist. Typically, each Service Unit has only a few teen troops. Working with larger numbers of girls encourages all of them to stay in Girl Scouts and reinforces the benefits in networking, career exploration and fun in a safe environment with a circle of their peers and a cadre of caring adults. Only at the Association level can there be regular events and activities for Teen Scouts in quantities. Council-wide is sometimes too big, Service Unit is too small, but Association is “just right” for teen programs. Advisors of these troops can use the strength in numbers, too, to ensure they are providing the best possible program and helping the girls discover what they'd like their experience in Girl Scouting to be. Particularly for the girls who have decided to reach for the Gold Award, it is so helpful to have additional resources to guide the girls through selection of a project and its successful completion. An inexperienced leader may not be able to provide this guidance and the girl stops short of her goal out of frustration and the process.

Perhaps the new face of the Association needs to be a super resource center for older girl issues, new leader mentoring and our ever-important product sales campaigns. We see experienced leaders forming a directory of specialty skills to improve training, recognition, program opportunities and retention. Then each girl and volunteer will know the importance of our Associations and be directly affected by its work.

**ASSOCIATION 54:           CENTRAL FAIRFAX COUNTY**  
**CHAIR:                       CYNTHIA KOSHATKA**

This question generated energetic discussion as well as highlighted the fact that many leaders and girls are unfamiliar with the Association's role and activities. New members have a steep learning curve regarding troop leadership and participation. As they become more seasoned, some have not followed Association activities and are not drawn to them. Association 54 split between those who said "Why fix what isn't broken?" to those who wanted an innovative redesign that would make scouting less labor-intensive on its volunteers and help reduce burnout.

Several members appreciated having a means to get our opinions to Council, wanted to continue with elections where members from each Service Unit can represent us, and valued Association meetings. How can our Association accomplish its large mission while providing added value?

- 1) Don't approach potential candidates for jobs and tell them they involve little or no work. Give them a job description and ask, "Are you able to do this?" Also, tell them they are appreciated.
- 2) Train everyone, including girl members, on the importance of organizational procedures, such as parliamentary procedure and the budget process. Association meetings show the democratic process in action with its interplay of ideas as well as participation in debates that lead to meaningful changes.
- 3) Value the volunteers' time. Meetings must start on time, have a purpose, and progress efficiently.
- 4) Add the voice of younger girls. Use progression of skills for the democratic process by starting with decisions to which younger girls can relate to prepare them better to use their voice when they become voting Association members.
- 5) Communicate often through web sites and e-mail and complete tasks on-line.
- 6) Pool resources and volunteers--
  - a) provide a list of volunteer specialties so leaders can find volunteers to provide activities where they do not have interest or expertise
  - b) advertise troop interests to all Association girls so each can find a match for her interests
  - c) Have multiple troops share managers for specific functions such as QSP and SHARE
- 7) Focus on girl retention by having members solicit volunteers to help with on line activities as well as additional mentoring.
- 8) Add Association-sponsored training events to increase accessibility and cohesiveness.
- 9) Research how Councils without Associations accomplish their tasks. Then "borrow" successful components of their structure.

Thank you.

**ASSOCIATION 55:           LITTLE RIVER**  
**CHAIR:                       ROXIE RASEY NICOLL**

I am Virginia Harrod, a Senior Girl Scout with Troop 4289 from Association 55. In response to this question, we suggest that the main work of the Association be moved to the Service Unit level. It is harder and harder in today's busy society, with both men and women working outside the home and taking on greater shared responsibilities for their children, to find time to attend additional meetings as required by the Spring and Fall Association meetings, as well as delegate training and discussion meetings.

Service Units are closer to the scouts, their parents, troop leaders, as well as other volunteers. Service Units are more aware of their needs and more able to approach individuals with requests for special help in their areas of expertise. With the introduction of the Internet, email, websites and other electronic means of communication, we feel that it is no longer necessary for the Association to act as a distribution point for information to the troop leaders or from the troop leaders to Council. This is a function that may be best performed on Service Unit level, working with 400 to 500 people rather than on an Association level with about 2,500 people. In addition, there appears to be a trend to conducting events for girls and recognizing service by adults and girls on the smaller, more intimate Service Unit level, rather than the large Association level. It is significantly more difficult to locate a place, date and time to conduct an event for 2,500 individuals than for 500.

In lieu of a large Association, a committee could be created, consisting of delegates and alternate delegates, Service Unit Managers, as well as an Association Chair. This committee could meet face-to-face or by electronic means. Each individual Service Unit would elect its own Delegates and Alternate Delegates to this committee, thereby guaranteeing equal representation across the Association. By being elected by the local Service Unit, the Delegates and Alternates should feel a closer responsibility to those individuals who elected them, as well as an ownership in the governing process.

Because we recognize that the adoption of this suggestion would necessitate major changes in our by-law, we recommend that the Council create a task force to study this issue and determine the most efficient method of governing the members of the Council.

**ASSOCIATION 56:       DIFFICULT RUN**  
**CHAIR:                   CAROL CROSS**

Comments from members of Association 56 centered on two themes:

**First**, they don't feel truly represented by delegates. Members often don't know their Association Delegates or understand their role. They think it would be better to have delegates elected directly from the Service Units. They don't think the current structure fosters effective membership-Board communication. They want delegates and Board members to engage in true dialog.

**Second**: "Not just another meeting!" Our members want the Association meetings to be "value-added". Suggestions included keynote speakers, training or roundtables for both Service Unit and Troop volunteers on topics of their choosing.

Hence, we offer the following changes to "shape the future" of our Council-wide structure:

Remove the Delegate functions from Associations. Instead, apportion and elect Delegates and their alternates at the Service Unit level. Well known within their Service Units, these Council-trained delegates would be better able to recognize policy issues and provide nominations and referrals to the Board. The Council could be divided into 8 to 10 regional groups of Delegates that would meet at least once a year with Board members. These regional meetings would be in addition to the Annual Meeting and should be structured to enable policy dialog between delegates and the Board, producing far better input than with the current "2-minute question".

With Board interface functions removed, Associations could focus solely on the *operational* needs of members by providing more support and program among Service Units. In fact, the name "Service Area" might be more appropriate than "Association." In place of Fall and Spring meetings, Service Area teams could organize inter-Service-Unit events with member-enhancing program.

This structure would provide better focused support to leaders and Service Units. Delegates would become true member representatives with an opportunity for real dialogue with the Council Board, not just one-way input for the annual meeting.

**ASSOCIATION 60: PRIDE OF POTOMAC**  
**CHAIR: TYNA GAYLOR**

The elected membership of the Pride of the Potomac feels that Council should focus on expanding and improving Association member involvement (both girl and adult) rather than on redesigning the Association structure. By encouraging a formal relationship between Associations and Service Units, getting girls involved earlier, drawing from a larger pool of adult volunteers, and enriching the leadership skills of both girls and adults, Council will make strides toward fulfilling its corporate responsibility and provide added-value to girls and adult volunteers.

First, the role of the Association needs to be clarified, as it is not well understood by most members. The Girl Scout Movement diagram is misleading and contributes to this confusion as it reflects a hierarchical relationship between Associations and Service Units. We understand that Service Units deliver program and are under the direction of Council staff. Associations consider matters of business and provide input to the Board, along with visibility for the Girl Scout Program. Governance and programs are treated separately when, in reality, they are inter-related and intertwined. As a result of this separation, leaders, volunteers and older girls do not view themselves as members of their Associations, but as members of their Service Units. Associations and Service Units need to function together and this relationship should be formalized and recognized in the bylaws. Let's also keep in mind that our membership exists because of our programs for girls. For the Association to be successful, it must be integrated more directly, fully, and completely with our programs and its structure.

Second, we recommend getting girls involved earlier and more completely. Why do we wait until girls are 14? Formalize education about our governance by creating a Council Governance Patch with AGE-appropriate activities to introduce girls, leaders, volunteers & parents to the Association, as well as to GSCNC, GSUSA and WAGGS. Let's figure out how to teach younger girls to take a governance role within our associations, not just service units. Let's involve girls in association affairs more completely, including them on committees, involving them in discussions, and integrating our youngest scouts in meaningful ways. Perhaps an ongoing "Girls Committee" that includes girls from pre-teen through teen to consider Association-wide events while participating in the governance structure and assisting us in creating more interactive, exciting meetings.

Third, Association roles are currently filled by the same volunteers who are leaders/advisors who often also serve in Service Unit positions. While this continuity is essential for many roles within the Association and helps to bridge the gap between Service Units and Associations, we need to expand the pool of volunteers who actively participate in Association Governance. While the beauty of the Association lies in the diversity of its membership, its value lies in the knowledge of all its active members.

Last, let's access our Association membership and use them to benefit girls. Think of all the knowledge, talent and connections of this membership! Create a volunteer coordinator contact within each association to connect with this talent pool. This person would then be the "go to" person when girls and volunteers need to connect to a local person with a particular skill or talent. This creates an association connection to hundreds of adults who might otherwise not be introduced to the Association.

**ASSOCIATION 70:           GOOSE CREEK**  
**CHAIR:                       PATTY PETERSON**

The girls and adults of Association 70, Goose Creek, carefully considered the question of bold ideas for redesigning the Council Association structure.

For many members, the first question was: “What is the Association?” Many volunteers were not sure what purpose the Association serves, they felt no sense of connection with the Association and saw it as simply another meeting which they did not have time to attend. In our discussions we decided that there is a real need to educate the membership about the functions served by the Association. It was noted that there is nothing in Green Pages about the Association structure. We always direct new leaders to Green Pages, so if they look for information and cannot find it, it should not surprise us that they don’t understand it and don’t support it. Information about the Association’s role in our democratic process should be part of the 101 Training class for new leaders.

Some of this disconnection from the Association may derive from the information structure that exists. Leaders are directed to contact their Service Unit Manager, who then turns to the Field Director for information. There is no need for leaders or Service Unit Managers to funnel information through the Association. We don’t know if this is really a problem, but feel that the connection with the Association could be enhanced by changing the name of the Field Director positions to Association Leader or Association Coordinator.

Those who recognized the value of the Association system noted that by bringing the troops together, we have a louder voice clamoring to be heard! They did question the fact that the Association only officially addresses Council once per year, perhaps this is not frequent enough to adequately address member issues.

Many volunteers feel that there needs to be greater communication from the Association to the members. They suggest that Council actively support the establishment of Association websites to facilitate communication.

Within Service Units we recognize the need to connect new leaders with experienced leaders. This same concept would lend itself to Associations. To encourage and support struggling Associations it would seem to be a good idea to pair up Associations. They could learn from each other and work together on events, badge or IPP workshops, and ceremonies. This would establish strong links and provide the girls with concrete examples of adults working together for the good of the group.

Many Associations struggle to establish and maintain a strong Association Team. We suggest some form of “reward” to entice busy volunteers to give even more time and energy. We use color bars to signify Girl Scout positions. A new color bar could be used to recognize volunteer service on the Association Team. We believe every service unit should have an elected or appointed representative to the Association Team.

Since Delegates and Alternate Delegates are expected to attend Delegate training, why are they not rewarded with training hours? We suggest that they receive credit for their training sessions, their attendance at SU meetings to gather responses and do follow-up reports, and the hours of the Annual Meeting. We would like a color bar to signify this special type of service to our Girl Scout community.

To encourage support for the Association and attendance at the fall and spring meetings we recommend some form of “reward.” Leaders could earn training hours, girls could earn leadership hours.

It was also suggested that Associations should develop patches and T-shirts with an Association logo to create an “identity” with which its members could connect.

There were numerous suggestions about finding ways to modify the need for fall and spring association meetings. Many busy volunteers bemoan the idea of attending another meeting, necessitating more time away from the family that lured them into Scouting in the first place! They would like to see consideration of technological advances that would allow “virtual” meetings: conduct the meeting via conference call, using the internet for individual leaders to log into a “chat” site, or having small groups gather close to home to communicate via computer/satellite link, letting members of the Association respond to a specialized invitation with a code number, assign a code number, or use the GS ID number, to allow entry to a chat site and thus verify voting member participation.

Could the Annual Meeting be conducted as regional meetings, and the vote certified at regional level?

Thank you for your time.

**ASSOCIATION 80:            PORTS OF PRINCE WILLIAM**  
**CHAIR:                        FRAN PHOENIX**

Good morning! I am Afton Schwalm of Senior Troop 1327 in Woodbridge, Virginia. At our Delegates' meeting, we had a very difficult time with this question. Most of us really had no idea what to suggest as we really had not been concerned about the structure of the Association.

We were surprised that, according to the Discussion Guide, Associations were formed to promote the visibility of Girl Scouting and to aid in the fund raising functions of the Board. We thought our purpose was to be a line of communication from the Council to the grass roots members, to recognize adults in our area for their work in Girl Scouting, and to provide delegates to the GSCNC Annual Meeting.

Article VIII of the Council bylaws verified our version. The last sentence says we are to perform other duties as assigned by the Board. Visibility and fundraising must come under that category! We did find visibility under the job description of the Association Chair and Assistant Chair. We realize that both are important, but we do not believe that they are the main objective of the Associations.

We would like Council to be more involved with the Troops and the girls. We would like direct communication from Council for important information. We would also like a direct communication method to Council. It seems like we get to discuss one question a year about what Council believes is a burning issue and not what the delegates feel is important. Maybe we should consider the GSUSA National Convention format of strategy cafés for our meetings so that other concerns can be allowed to surface and become topics of discussion.

We believe that communication is our biggest problem. We feel that Council and even the Association are too big. It is really hard to feel that we are important to the Council or to the Association. Very few people even understand that either exist, let alone what they do.

In this age of technology, we think that the way to make large seem small is to concentrate on the web site. We suggest integrated web pages and servers provided from the Council level that would have links from GSCNC.org to Association and Service Unit levels for better information flow up and down. We would love it if people new to the area could type in a zip code and find troops in their area-many girls are lost to Girl Scouting when they move because it is too hard to find new troops.

We know we have not offered you anything in the way of a new structure. But we do think that large somehow has to be made to seem small. Realistically this is hard to do in the DC area, but we feel that communication is the key. We feel that the web site is the tool on which you should concentrate! Thank you!

**ASSOCIATION 90:           PIEDMONT**  
**CHAIR:                       DIANNE CRANE**

Hello, I am Tanya Rachocki, a Senior Scout in Troop 124, and I am here today to represent my strong, successful Association, Piedmont Association 90.

Association 90 is very fortunate to have two (2) very strong Associations as its source. We were created from a restructuring of Goose Creek Association 70 and Ports of Prince William Association 80. We continue to reap the benefits of such strong Associations, including participation in 80's outstanding older girls' organization, POGO (just look for the purple kangaroo logo!).

As noted in Council's discussion guide, the Association structure is one of several "grass roots" governance systems developed by GSUSA for use in local councils. While it may be used with varying degrees of success in other areas of the country, Association 90 believes that it is an outstanding structure in use in GSCNC.

Our experience with the Association structure is as outlined in the discussion guide. Our delegates participate at the Service Unit level, the Association level, and the Council level, thus ensuring the exchange of information, feedback and ideas at all levels. We successfully hold two (2) business meetings each year, and appreciate the attendance not only of our voting members, who help us exceed quorum each meeting, but also of the Board members who provide insight and staff members who share current program information freely. Association 90 has fully participated in the process of submitting proposals and operating concerns, duly receiving responses from Council on every point.

As content as we are with the design, we do hear a distinct message from our membership: **We need more leadership opportunities for our older girls, in a true and meaningful way, at the levels of Service Unit, Association, and Council.** The Girl Scout program is focused on *shaping the future* and our girls are prepared for an active role. They need appropriate opportunities to learn leadership skills through hands-on, interactive roles alongside Service Unit Managers, Association Chairs, and Council Executives. Older Girl Organizations exist in most, if not all, of our Associations, but not all of them have responsible positions for the girls to fill. We do not want to just be "shadows" with a nominal position. We want active, responsible roles that will challenge us and allow us to gain from the experience.

Several avenues exist that might assist in this effort, such as:

1. Include fulfilling volunteer Leadership roles in the Honor Troop requirements for Cadette and Senior troops.

2. Include a Liaison position on the Service Unit team, and fill that position with a Cadette or Senior girl.
3. Create an Older Girl website and include a chat room and bulletin board to keep the girls more in touch. An online forum is not only easier to participate in, given our busy schedules, but it also allows for more girls from a diverse geography to participate at the same time.
4. Use the e-edition newslines to get the word out to Leaders and Advisors that our Older Girls are available to help. Set up an active exchange of information regarding events across the Council in need of volunteers. Broadcast the L.I.T program, spread the word that camp trained specialists = girls exist, and invite Cadettes and Seniors to take on the role of Co-Leader.

In our experience, the current Association structure works. We need to broaden the avenues for older girl involvement. This will not only aid in the retention of older girls in our programs, but will also serve to recruit new leadership, right from within our Council.

Thank you.