

HISTORY OF THE ASSOCIATION OF GIRL SCOUT EXECUTIVE STAFF

PROLOGUE

The roaring twenties, the 1929 stock crash, the great depression of the thirties: these helped sow the seed that grew into today's Association of Girl Scout Executive Staff. Those were the years when competition for jobs was keen; years which saw the closing of banks and selling of apples on street corners. During these troubled times the demands on public and private agencies mushroomed and the need for professional services became urgent.

In Girl Scouting, those were the days of the lone executive who did everything from organizing troops and conducting fund drives, to identifying local sparrows and directing camps. Only in the large cities could one find a few field executives (called field captains then). A feeling of aloneness made association with fellow workers mean so much. It was perhaps the beginning of a more professional look at ourselves.

Informal Study clubs evolved as a product of the times. They existed, in one form or another, wherever there were enough professional workers to gather together. As Study Clubs progressed, a two-fold purpose became evident.

1. Improvement of job techniques through group self study.
2. Enhancement of job prestige.

Programs of Study Clubs included supervisory techniques, community planning, book exchanges, camping, and the emerging field of group work. Some clubs concentrated on training, council problems, and requirements for professional work.

From the north, south, east and west, Girl Scouting was growing and Girl Scout professional workers were feeling the need to join together. Schools of Social Work began to offer group work training and organizations of social workers were gaining strength and status. Girl Scouting professional workers were striking out for this same acceptance and status. The Study Clubs of the thirties offered a way.

Prologue, Our First 21 Years, Postscript, Our Second 21 Years
By Elizabeth Sheehy

A View of the Eighties
By Agnes Quinn

FORWARD

Back in 1958, while relaxing after a superb steak dinner in a Kansas City restaurant, several old-timers began to reminisce about the early days. Tales of fun and struggle, courage and adventure fascinated those of us who had not been around when our professional group was started. This was history! Barbara Hallman, Association President, felt strongly that the story of our past should be preserved in writing. She asked me to write a history. The date for completion and distribution was 21 years after the official organization of the Association. Now, 21 years later, Association President, Miriam K. Healey asked me to write an updated history.

I wish to thank all those who helped by supplying information, clues and interpretation for that first history, especially Berenice E. Hess, who had compiled an early Chronology of NAGSE; also Katie Lee Johnson, Vivian Carter Johnson, Leila L. Adams, Carolyn Duke, Helen Gould, Frances Greene, Virginia Hughes, Carolyn T. Lyder, Eunice Prien, Jo Fay Ricketts, Ida May Smith, Vaal Stark, and Barbara Hallman.

Thanks also to those who helped with facts and personal recollections on our second 21 years, especially Marion Burns who filled in many gaps in the information I was able to get; also Sue Peters, Jane E. Howland, and Miriam K. Healey.

Working on the Association's history has been an enjoyable assignment, and I feel privileged to have been able to write both the 1960 and 1981 editions. This task recalled for me many, many stimulating and happy experiences during my 37 years as a member.

Elizabeth Sheehy
1981

PRESIDENTS OF THE ASSOCIATION

1940 – 41	Vivian Carter Johnson, Rockford, IL
1942 – 43	Berenice E. Hess, Milwaukee, WI
1944 – 45	Carolyn T. Lyder, Baltimore, MD
1946 – 47	Catherine V. Richards, Detroit, MI
1948 – 49, 1950 – 51	May Kay Myers, Denver, CO
1952 – 53, 1954 – 55	Martha Prendergast, Los Angeles, CA
1956 – 57	Elizabeth Sheehy, New Haven, CT
1958 – 60	Barbara F. Hallman, Redwood City, CO
1961 – 63, 1964 – 66	Marion G. Burns, DuPage County, IL
1967 – 69	Gilda Markowski, York, PA
1970 – 72	Sue Peters, Nashville, TN
1973 – 75	Jane E. Howland, Geneva, NY
1976	Anne Jones Steele, Savannah, GA
1977	Anne Jones Steele/Betty Beene
1978	Betty Beene, Houston, TX
1979 – 81	Miriam K. Healey, New Haven, CT
1981 (Oct – Dec)	Merle Neal, Kansas City, MO
1982 – 84	Kathleen m. Genaitis, Salem, VA
1985 – 87	Sandra Kautz, Fort Worth, TX

OUR FIRST 21 YEARS: 1939 – 1960

As early as 1936 the National Personnel Department suggested consideration of an organization, national in scope, for Girl Scout professional workers. First a committee of council staff workers provided suggestions and input. Girl Scout professional staff clearly expressed a desire to raise standards, make careful staff selections, and to work toward putting Girl Scout work on a par with other professions.

During a staff meeting at Camp Edith Macy (now Edith Macy Center) the group gave a vote of confidence to the formation of a nationwide organization. Present were local and national staff from Maine to Virginia. They voted unanimously, on September 20, 1938, to present the proposed constitution for adoption by professional workers throughout the country during the coming national convention.

In historic Philadelphia, on October 26, 1938, progress reports were made, the first constitution adopted, and the National Association of Girl Scout Executives (NAGSE) came into being. An organization was born! Dr. Lillian Gilbreth was its first guest speaker, Vivian Carter Johnson its first President, and \$1.00 its first annual dues.

The terminology Committee reported on recommendations from Study Clubs. They suggested title changes as follows:

Girl Scout Executive instead of Local director.

Field of District Executive instead of Field Captain.

Leader instead of Captain.

Assistant Leader instead of Lieutenant.

President instead of Commissioner.

Vice-President instead of Deputy Commissioner.

Board of Directors instead of Council.

What foresight had our predecessors! More than forty years ago they developed titles appropriate to this day.

National staff officially supported this first national organization for Girl Scout professional workers. The purpose was "...to create and maintain standards of selection, performance, and training of the professional staff of the Girl Scout organization, both local and national; to establish a group force that will bring about acceptance and recognition of these

standards; to provide a channel through which policies and practices in relation to the professional worker may be studied and projected.”

Study Clubs and NAGSE existed independently for a time, and many members were active in both. NAGSE had its first general meeting September 19, 1930. Signatures of 212 participants, 66 from national headquarters and 146 national and local staff throughout the country, have been preserved in the files of the Association. This meeting launched a study on affiliation with Study Clubs, all of which voted to become section of NAGSE during the next two years.

Time moved on and the young organization made progress. Groups looked into personnel plans for professional workers; areas of the professional job such as training of volunteers, office management, and finance; and opportunities for professional education. The Professional practices Committee of the Association worked closely with the National Personnel Department on the confidential recommendation plan, salaries, content of professional training and recruitment of professional workers. By the end of 1945, membership in the Association reached 810, 77% of all professional workers.

In the carefree days of the early forties, before Girl Scouts membership reached the million mark, not much stress was put on which group should do what. When an assembled group had the qualifications it might be called on for opinions and decisions. The rapid growth of Girl Scouting and the increased number of professional workers created the need for channels with all professional workers. Since NAGSE membership requirements at eh time excluded some, regional meetings for all professional workers were instituted. Unfortunately the distinction between the purposes of the Association and the purposes of the regional professional staff meetings were not clear in the minds of many.

During these same years the new profession of social group work was busy forming a professional association. The Social Welfare Council sought cooperation of NAGSE in a membership campaign for the American Association for the Study of Group Work. By 1946-47 some believed that NAGSE had fulfilled it's purpose and should be disbanded. The NAGSE leadership at the time, as well as members of the National Personnel Department, felt it was in the best interest of professional workers to affiliate with a broader association open to group workers of all agencies. The issue was brought to a vote at the 1947 Convention in Long Beach, California.

Many members of NAGSE did not consider the issue an “either-or” matter and held that individuals who chose could be active in both groups. Others, because of their education and interests, did not consider themselves social group workers. Still others looked to the future and saw countless Girl Scout professional workers who would be ineligible for membership in the new group work organization because of lack of a graduate degree in social work. Remembering the comradeship, stimulation, and real benefits they had received from NAGSE, they were determined to preserve this for the future. Members of NAGSE did not vote their Association out of existence!

The years following Long Beach saw many changes. Group affiliation with the American Association of Group Workers was explored, and membership requirements for NAGSE were changed to include an educational major in the social sciences and employed experience in group work. Speakers, consultants, and NAGSE professional education committee put great emphasis on taking education leaves to attend graduate study in an “accredited school of social work.” We peppered our language with social work terminology.

Another phase of NAGSE's work during this period was that of the social action committee. Perhaps the issue that struck home most forcefully was that of licensing social workers in some state. At its convention in Cincinnati, 1953, NAGSE drafted recommendations to the National Board of Girl Scouts of the USA: to reconsider the policy relating to legislative action; to appoint a committee to study professional classification of the Girl Scout professional workers. Although these proposals were not acted on officially, the second point did not go unnoticed. At its March 1954 meeting the GSUSA Board of Directors established that Girl Scout professional workers do not represent any one profession by are drawn from many different professions. This immediately removed all threat to Girl Scout staff related to licensing of social workers.

In ways that are difficult to understand now, NAGSE found itself an organization apart during the late forties and early fifties. When suggestions, opinions, input from local professional workers were needed by national staff, these were gathered from various groupings but not from NAGSE. Previously established channels had broken down during the controversy about the group work association.

After meeting a lively enthusiastic group of NAGSE members at an earlier convention (Boston, 1951) the National Executive Director became a member of the Association. At the request of the President, the National Executive Director attended NAGSE's 1954 Board meeting to help resolve strained relationships. She was most supportive and offered to serve as a channel to and from GSUSA. Together the group analyzed the association's purpose and membership requirements. Being realistic about he increasing number of functional staff in councils, and the need for more specialists

on the national staff, the NAGSE Board realized its membership requirements had been excluding a large number of professional workers. After a long, hard look, the Board proposed that all professional workers accepted by Girl Scouts of USA be eligible for Associations membership. Further the name should be changed to Association of Girl Scout Professional Workers (AGSPW) to make it clear that the growing numbers of district directors and specialists were included.

After lively discussions in section meetings over a two-year period and after considering recommendations from every part of the country, proposed bylaws were sent to members for action at the 1955 convention in San Francisco. One might expect routine acceptance. Never fear! Delegates analyzed, reworded, rehashed, added, deleted, and then took action adopting a new name, a new purpose, and new bylaws.

Channels between the Association and GSUSA were officially established in 1956 after the Association President met with a committee of GSUSA Board of Directors. The National Board voted unanimously that AGSPW was rightfully part of GSUSA, that it will observe GSUSA policies, that it would make periodic reports of its activities. Channels of communication would be through the Association President and GSUSA Nation Executive Director.

Interest of GSUSA National Board Members in the activities of AGSPW was most heart warming. The Association was happy to welcome several National Board members at its opening convention session in Philadelphia, 1957. The keynote speaker, Dr. Lawrence A. Appley, President of the American Management Association, spoke on "A New Look at Our Administrative Skills." Both the National President and the National Executive Director sent notes of congratulations to the Association on its fine meeting. The 1958-60 theme, "You Can Count on Her, Can She Count on Us—the Professional Workers," was carried out with the help of consultants from community councils, universities, management groups, and Girl Scout national headquarters.

On the 21st anniversary of its founding in 1939, the Association, with its convention theme "Gateways" looked forward to its second 21 years of serving the Girl Scout movement.

POSTSCRIPT

The history of our first 21 years was written prior to the convention in St. Louis. For that reason it couldn't include a most important matter awaiting resolution at the convention. During the years preceding, the Association President and Board of Directors had been very concerned about the shaky financial future of most Girl Scout council staff. A few group retirement plans existed in connection with National Health and Welfare Retirement Association or with local non-profit agencies. What was needed was a plan that Girl Scout professional workers could carry from one Girl Scout job to another. In those days small councils with one or two or three staff still existed. How could one ever expect to get group rates with a group on one? Or two? Or three?

The Association President and other officers explored and negotiated and traveled at their own expense, trying to establish a uniform plan for all Girl Scout staff. Joining the existing national staff retirement plan, unfortunately, was not feasible for actuarial reasons. Next best would be a uniform Girl Scout plan available to all council staff. The Association conferred with various insurance firms on this, and met with the controller of Girl Scouts of the USA. Key national staff worked with National Health and Retirement Association specialists in group retirement for non-profit organizations, and developed a Girl Scout retirement plan.

It can be said very simply now, but there were months of anguish and dedicated work by many. GSUSA National Board of Directors agreed to sponsor the plan for all Girl Scout council staff pending its acceptance by members of AGSPW at its convention. The development and acceptance of this retirement plan for all Girl Scout council staff, members and non-members of AGSPW, was a fitting crowning glory of the Association's first 21 years.

OUR SECOND 21 YEARS

Our second 21 years began with enthusiasm and vitality. Membership was growing and the Association had just won its incredible struggle to obtain a Girl Scout retirement plan for council staff. This was an era of optimism and a promise for the future.

Regardless of when the second 21 years began officially, at the fall 1960 convention or January 1, 1961 when the new president took office, the real beginning was when the crates and files from California arrived in Illinois. The “moving the office” happened with every change in president, of course, and many times the boxes and records and supplies moved from one end of the country to the other. But there was something special at this time: an organization completing its first 21 years and heading into its second. This was no longer a new, fledgling organization, but a sturdy, established Association—one to be taken seriously.

This period of the early sixties saw the greatest continuity in the Association's history. The same president over a six-year span (two three-year terms) and employment of a good administrative secretary for the same period, added strength and purpose. Membership continued to grow, from the high of 1960 to the all-time high of 1138 in 1966.

Among the highlights of the period were the following:

Membership

In addition to numbers, the Association concentrated on recruitment of new, young staff. These young people added a fresh viewpoint. Greater membership involvement and participation in both section and national meetings was evident.

Program

Strong program direction, guidance, and support went out to sections, and sections responded superbly with regular feedback. The focus was on strengthening and sharpening our administrative skills, looking toward the eighties and facing up to the changing demands of staff in voluntary agencies in the sixties. In addition, the Association began work with the University of Michigan, Center for Research and Scientific Knowledge, on a professional development program for AGSPW.

Professional Leadership

The three-year cycle of planning was relatively new to the Girl Scout organization, having been launched in 1957. Nevertheless, the Association was able to make the transition to triennium planning smoothly along the sound administration and management. The Board formed an Executive Committee to act for the Association between board meetings. This ensured ongoing involvement of officers, section presidents (chairmen), and others rather than putting the entire responsibility for continuity on the president's shoulders.

Working on the triennium basis brought some changes in the structure of board meetings. Spread over a three-year span it was possible to rotate terms of nominating committee and section presidents, creating a good working team and a knowledgeable board. Scheduling their own meetings immediately before or after attending board meetings to observe, gave nominating committee members insight on qualifications needed by nominees for the next slate.

A new handbook given to board members, nominating committee, and sections outlined all the new procedures including changes in financial practices and fiscal management.

Close Working Relationship with GSUSA

A new National Executive Director arriving in the early sixties continued the official channels of communication between the Association and GSUSA. She elected not to become a member of AGSPW so that she could be in a stronger supportive position for the Association. This enabled her to speak for the Association without being put in a vulnerable “vested interest” position as a member. Roles were clear; conferences were held regularly, and reports sent via the National Executive Director were mailed to members of the GSUSA National Board. The channels established in 1956 were reaffirmed and strengthened.

“Increase the importance and effectiveness of AGSPW as an association of professionals.” This major objective was adopted by the membership at the Detroit Convention in 1966. To support this objective, members' also voted to continue

work with the University of Michigan on a comprehensive professional development plan. Strategies of the original plan were:

- I. Collecting effective professional practices from Association members and to practitioners in related field of work.
- II. Developing, disseminating, and utilizing individual small groups skill training and self-study materials for continuing professional development.
- III. Developing a corps of trainers within the Association to implement and sustain a continuous program of human relations and problem-solving skill development in all sections of the Association.

A survey questionnaire was mailed to AGSPW members, with 291 useable returns received. Some questions dealt with how Girl Scout professional workers spend their time and what their roles or functions were. Others asked for indications of pressing problems about which respondents wanted to find successful practices.

The next step, implementing the findings, proved to be more difficult than anticipated. The hope that the University of Michigan would accept the funding for Strategy II did not materialize. Alternate plans, including approaching the Northwest Training Laboratory in Oregon, were considered but the question of funding remained.

Strategy III, as first envisioned, underwent some changes. Instead of developing our own corps of trainers, the Association decided to budget money for section so that they could engage consultants for their programming on professional development.

Funding was also needed to provide technical help to retrieve and follow up for members and sections on professional practices. It soon became evident that the work involved in administering and implementing survey results would require extra personnel. Whether this was to be done by an outside service or by an employee of the Association, increased income would be necessary.

The whole idea of the Association employing someone on the executive or professional level was a new one. However, throughout our history, all through the Study Clubs, the 18 years of NAGSE, and over a decade of AGSPW, our purpose had been to serve the Girl Scout movement through high standards of professional service. Perhaps now was the time to take a fresh look at the times. Councils were becoming larger both in size and geography; and their operations were becoming more complex. The Girl Scout council of the sixties put greater demands on staff, particularly Executive Directors. At the same time the Association's efforts to chose officers with broad experience quite consistently resulted in electing Executive Directors as Presidents. Perhaps the dual job was becoming too big for one individual.

Some large professional organizations employed administrators to handle ongoing business. AGSPW explored this idea – an Executive Director to administer the Association's work, in a permanent office, under the president's direction. The board prepared a cost analysis indicating that \$35.00 annual dues would be needed to defray the cost.

While members agreed in principle that some relief for Association presidents should be provided, some feared that a dues income from \$15.00 to \$35.00 would result in membership loss – especially among the younger members. Young members themselves disputed this, pointing out that dues of other professional associations were even higher. Others questioned the wisdom of having the Association's office at a place other than the president's location. Action was to be taken at the 1969 Convention in Seattle. After discussion, the membership voted (136 for and 70 against) dues of \$35.00 effective January 1, 1970.

The decade of the seventies was to be one of great change – a permanent office and an Association Executive Director who could provide membership services comparable to those in other recognized professional associations. Unfortunately the dues increase did cause a drastic drop in membership (42%) causing a delay of two years before the Association accumulated enough funds to employ and Executive Director. At this time, the Association moved to it's own office in Nashville, Tennessee. This, the first in the Association's history, was to be a permanent office and the home of the Association regardless of where future presidents were located.

The early seventies were productive years in spite of financial difficulties. Membership services were expanded to include a Job Listing Service, a new professionally designed recruitment brochure, and a quarterly printed newsletter. Another accomplishment was a major survey of Girl Scout executive staff. This survey employed the use of a well-respected opinion research firm, Culbertson, King and Caudill. Its purpose was twofold: to clarify the desires and expectations of present and potential members on the functions the Association should fulfill as well as the services most likely to be

useful; and to provide a profile of both Association members and the executive staff corps in Girl Scouting. The findings and analyses were printed and have been a basis of planning since then.

Programming in section showed professional growth in various areas of management skills and communication. A management consultant's services were used in analyzing data in the survey and in developing strategies and getting membership involvement in planning objectives for the next triennium.

AGSPW discussed several major questions with GSUSA during this period. Both the Association President and Executive Director met with the GSUSA President and National Executive Director. The hoped for result was a better understanding of the purposes and potential of AGSPW, establishment of more levels of communication, and discovery of ways of dealing with concerns of AGSPW membership. AGSPW requests were:

- A statement by GSUSA defining the rationale for professional employees within the Girl Scout organization.
- Interpretation of AGSPW, in materials to councils on direct value to individual staff plus indirect value to council.
- Establishment of a plan for staff use in conflict situations.
- Consideration of AGSPW belief that full potential of the executive staff corps is not being fully used by GSUSA.

While the atmosphere of this conference reflected warmth and mutual respect, the nature of AGSPW's concerns and requests did not lend themselves to immediate solutions. The National Executive Director would follow up on some specific items by sharing them with regional directors at their summer meeting. Since it was near the end of the triennium, the parties agreed to keep in touch by correspondence and telephone, and to schedule a meeting date following the Dallas Convention.

It was at the AGSPW convention in Dallas that delegates endorsed the Equal Rights Amendment and the Association's support of the Amendment to legislators of those states that had not yet ratified it. It was also in Dallas that the wit and talent of our membership was displayed in a lively, hilarious musical spoof, "Juliette's Follies" to the delight of the 384 banquet participants. Never was a statement more true – that Girl Scouts professional workers work hard and they play hard!

Back at work the Board members asked themselves what the members needed from AGSPW, what they could gain through membership, and how the Board could best serve them. In an effort to address these concerns the Board established a study committee to implement the following emphases:

- Provide opportunities to continue professional education.
- Serve as a voice of members to secure improved employed personnel provisions.
- Serve as a vehicle through which knowledge and experience of members are made available to the Girl Scout movement.
- Provide a forum for free and open discussion of topics of mutual interest and concern to members.
- Define and promote high standards of professional practices and ethics.

Dialogue continued with GSUSA including a session with its Personnel Director. A statement on the role of employed staff, initiated by AGSPW, was distributed to all council by GSUSA. A job listing service available to all councils informed AGSPW members of job openings in councils.

Section meetings varied from place to place but all were geared to professional development and fellowship. Meetings explored such topics as management skills, awareness exercises, salary administration, effective communication, economic trends, marketing concepts, creative conflict, role of women, and mentor/conflict support needs.

Membership grew somewhat after the large drop that accompanied the dues increase of 1970, but not enough to bring about a secure financial condition. Various efforts to generate more income were tried including voluntary supplementary dues in 1973, and dues based on salary ranges in 1974. Further dues increase to bring more income might result in further membership losses – and further loss of income. Difficult decisions had to be made.

The Board of Directors, after a hard look at finances, had to conclude that the Association could no longer maintain an office and Executive Director with the current projected income. A professional administrator for a professional organization was a good idea; but, apparently for AGSPW, its time had not yet come. Reluctantly, in the spring of 1974, the Association's office in Nashville was closed and the position of director terminated. In March 1974 an office was set

up at the President's council, a part-time administrative assistant employed, and a contract made with the council to provide clerical services.

Work continued in the projection of objectives including overt support of ERA and affirmative action; long-range membership expansion plan with special emphasis on recruiting more Executive Directors, men, minorities, staff under 30; use of every means of collaboration between AGSPW and GSUSA toward common concerns.

At the Washington Convention in 1975, while discussing various issues on membership qualifications, relationships, and legal matters, a proposal to change the name of the Association was made. Because of current terminology in the broader community and in government labor department definitions, Girl Scout professional workers were officially classified as "executives" rather than "professionals." "Professional" was reserved for those whose major work fitted a specific profession such as actor, attorney, medical doctor, and teacher. Thus, at the convention in our nation's capitol, the membership voted for a change of name to Association of Girl Scout Executive Staff (AGSES).

While history repeats itself in our Association as it does in every organization, AGSES can claim a first after several decades. Changing our name wasn't new nor was revising our bylaws or statements of purpose. But losing our Association President to the wiles of cupid certainly was. After serving half of her term our President married and relocated, necessitating resignation from her Girl Scout position. Since she was no longer a Girl Scout staff member she had to resign as Association President. As an indication of the continuity of our Association and vitality of its members, a new President stepped in on short notice and the efforts at both section and national levels progressed in three key areas.

Relationship with GSUSA

The highest priority of the Association at this time was the forging of a positive and productive relationship – one that would be mutually beneficial. Regular bi-annual conferences and other communications evidenced mutual appreciation, and the validity of cooperation between the two organizations. Specific interaction with GSUSA included the presentation of the AGSES "Position Statement on Employment Conditions and Grievance Procedures." This communicated the concerns of Association members in this sensitive area.

The single most significant contribution of the Association to long-range planning of GSUSA was the presentation of the findings of our "Needs Assessment Survey." The results of this survey not only validated a number of assumptions on which both AGSES and GSUSA had been operating, but also demanded action to deal with those needs identified.

Welfare of Girl Scout Employees

Professional growth of its members continued to be central to the purpose of the Association. Programming at section meetings offered over 30 seminars conducted by national and regional consultants. Content, reflecting concerns of the membership, included marketing and membership, coping with community change, assertiveness training, fund development, grantsmanship, and adventures in attitudes.

INTER/COM, the Association's newsletter, provided in-depth articles on management styles, fair labor standards acts, tax shelter annuities, rights and responsibilities of employees, and estate planning.

Disability insurance was of interest to the members. However, after a review it did not seem feasible to offer it as a membership option at this time.

Membership

Perhaps the greatest evidence of vitality of the Association during the late seventies was its membership increase. After the drop of 1970 and the fluctuations during the first half of the decade, membership, at last, took an upward turn.

More important than numbers was the growing diversity of the members. The Association had successfully recruited new executive staff (almost 1/3 in the 21-30 age range) while retaining experienced members. The distribution of membership in almost every category (executive director, national staff, troops on foreign soil staff, functional directors, and field staff) further contributed to AGSES diversity. Increasing the minority presence in the Association continued to be a priority of both AGSES and GSUSA.

More needed to be done, of course. But with the Association's theme, "on the Way Up!" for its convention in Denver, it would seem that AGSES was headed in the right direction as it neared the end of the Seventies.

Greetings from both the GSUSA President and National Executive Director at the Association's convention, a program of managing oneself and others, a slate of new officers and board members that read like "Who's Who" and the general high spirits of the delegates signaled a feeling of optimism. A new Association designer tote bag shouted to the world, "AGSES is alive and well and growing."

The growth began immediately in 1979, the first time in 15 years that membership improved in a post-convention year. Growth also manifested itself in greater over-all attendance and participation in section meetings and in the highly professional quality of section programming.

As Section Chairmen met together they had a lively exchange providing many excellent ideas for strengthening already healthy sections. They felt that the members benefited most from programs including stress management, marketing, networking, career development, maturation, crisis communication, hazards of being executive staff, and personal financing.

The subject of disability insurance for council staff was again studied and the Board developed a plan. One problem was that AGSES isn't the employer and that such a plan placed responsibility on the councils. Disability insurance, however, is an important economic benefit needed by staff in the eighties and AGSES continued to work on it.

A highlight of this period is the major, comprehensive survey conducted by the Association on all personnel benefits provided by councils. Data gleaned from this study, probably the first available on this scale, is to be presented at the Association's convention in Houston, fall 1981. Survey data will also be shared with GSUSA via the National Executive Director, and with all councils.

AGSES faced the Eighties with a great deal of pride in the accomplishments. It has as its objective to continue membership growth and to continue to serve as a resource to GSUSA through partnership with GSUSA.

Partnership with GSUSA isn't new. It existed, in one form or another, expressed or implied, from the days of the Study Clubs or even earlier. Executive staff are on the cutting edge of the knife and singly, but more effectively in a close knit Association, they contribute significantly to the work of the Girl Scout movement. We have a long history spanning five decades: 42 years as an organized Association and the remainder as scattered Study Clubs. Our accomplishments, built one upon the other over the years, are considerable; From the early pioneers who helped develop standards for staff selection to the Terminology Committee that pushed for change from military adult titles, to visionaries who sowed the seed for study grants, to activists who rode the rails and flew the skyways for a Girl Scout pension plan, to thinkers who worked for the much needed grievance procedures, and many, many more.

We can look back to light moments and funny moments, to happy moments and tense moments: back to the Forties when the board met in Chicago at the LaSalle Hotel 24 hours before it burned up; to the Fifties at our San Francisco Convention when the press rushed in giving us full-page picture spreads thinking we were the GSUSA convention; to the Sixties when the Board was stranded all over the South because of a blizzard at the Dallas meeting site; to the Seventies when delegates at the Washington Convention sailed down the Potomac. And we can look back to our predecessors who worked with courage and imagination to bring us where we are today.

This history of the Association of Girl Scout Executive Staff should serve the purpose of helping us look forward. THE TIME IS NOW! AGSES IS NOW! AGSES is the future, looking ahead to its third 21 years of serving the Girl Scout movement.

Elizabeth Sheehy
1981

"They who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it." - Santayana

A VIEW OF THE EIGHTIES

When Betty Beene brought down the gavel and signaled the close of the 1978 convention in Denver, Colorado, executive staff members returned to home councils across the nation to sort out their thoughts and notes. The theme chosen for that meeting proved to be relevant. AGSES was "On the Way Up", and membership figures compiled in the fall of 1979 showed an unprecedented increase for the year after the convention.

Mariam Healey was elected to a 3-year term as National President at the 1978 convention, assuming office in January 1979. This was revitalized offering an opportunity to show support of the quality of the organization, its goals and programs. Nineteen members accepted the invitation in 1979. By May 1986, there were 215 members in the Sustaining category!

A nationwide Benefits Survey was inaugurated in 1980, and some of the results were reported at the 1981 convention in Houston. The saga of bylaws amendments continued while board and committee members consoled themselves that a growing organization had to be open to change and clarification.

The theme of the 1981 convention to be held in Houston was chosen. "The Time is Now" made it clear that executive staff members were assuming greater responsibilities and meeting challenges never dreamed of by those who attended the first study club meetings. In keeping with this realization, Marlene Wilson presented a seminar on "Survival Skills for Managers".

In January 1981 there were 830 members on the rolls of AGSES. By convention time in October, that number had grown to 931. The glow that surrounds the preparations for a large national convention was dimmed considerably by the realization that National President Miriam Healey would not be able to win a valiant battle with cancer, which had plagued her through a major portion of her term in office. Miriam died on October 21, 1981, the day preceding the opening of the convention, but she had accomplished much, and many tributes were made to her. Merle Neal, Vice President of the national board, assumed the duties of the President and presided at the Houston meeting. Her skills as coordinator of the 1978 convention were again brought to the fore, and she handled the 1981 convention and its follow-up with an enviable ease.

The Hall of Fame was opened in Houston and outstanding members of the Association of Girl Scout Executive Staff were honored by their peers. First honorees to be named were Miriam Healey, Barbara O'Bryne, Sue Peters, Betty Lawler, Gertrude Fick, Elaine Howe and Eleanor Russell. The tributes to these women were reproduced in later editions of INTER/COM so that members who were unable to meet in Houston could become aware of their contributions.

Job Postings, introduced in the early 70's, continued to be a visible service to members and non-members. They represented an aspect of the networking objectives of the Association and many users reported excellent results. Professional development tracking cards were made available. These helped members record their participation in development/skill workshops sponsored by Sections and at national meetings.

An "Organizational Interface Task Group" was initiated in 1983. To the uninitiated, this rather formidable title became the springboard for a simple questionnaire asking members to list other organizations to which they belonged. This project tied into another investigation seeking to enhance the services to members – the need (or not) of publishing a professional journal and 'interfacing' with similar professional associations. The task force quietly concluded that a professionally designed and edited newsletter published three times a year could accomplish the same objectives.

A final version of the Procedures Manual was adopted in 1983, with major revisions completed, and at long last, Sections were furnished with guidelines as to tasks and completion dates. The work 'final' used here is not to be construed as 'terminal', because as they distributed the copies, the task force members recommended triennial review of the contents.

The Benefit Survey begun in 1980 and mentioned above was completed in the 1982 – 1984 triennium and provided a data base on which to measure current personnel practices within the organization. Some 177 councils had responded to questionnaires, and copies of a 25-page report were distributed to members.

"Beyond 1984 – Taking Charge of Our Future", the theme for the 1984 convention in Detroit, again expressed the many faceted approach intended to impact on the lives of AGSES members. More than 400 registrants attended seminars on Leadership Skills, Risk Taking, Giving and Receiving Feedback, and Learning from Conflict.

Frances Hesselbein, National Executive Director of Girl Scouts of the USA, in the Winter – 1984 edition of INTER/COM, published an article entitled "Meaning of the Movement", in which she elaborated on her use of the phrase "One great executive staff corps". She explained that, to her, the meaning of the phrase is intertwined with the meaning of the

Movement itself, citing that “both transcend job descriptions, position statements, structure, and boundaries of time and space”. She further explained that the staff who serve this Movement “are diverse and wonderfully so; but we are bound together by life-shaping concepts embodied not only in the Promise and Law, but also in 72 years of striving for ‘the best that we can be’.” She referred to the long line of staff members who have served with excellence in every generation since 1912. Singled out for special recognition in that long line were the 1984 Hall of Fame Honorees: Dorothy E. McCarthy , Kathleen M. Genaitis, Argie S. Blackmore, Vivian Carter Johnson (the first President of the Association, 1940-41), Merle Neal, Betty Stanley Beene and Emmie Majus.

Throughout this triennium, the finances of the organization retained their healthy glow. An additional distribution of funds was made to Sections with the allocation of \$12.50 of each Sustaining Membership back to the Section of the originating member. This was in addition to a base allocation, plus a dollar amount per member, all for the purpose of making available a larger financial base for Sections to use in attracting quality consultants for their programs. In October 1984, 1200 members were being served, and over 60% or 230 councils had at last one executive staff as a member of the association.

As the 1985-87 triennium began, Sandra (Sandy) Kautz accepted the presidential gavel. Her active participation in AGSES dates back to 1055, and this triennium marked advances in both the professional and human relations fields.

The vital signs of the Association of Girl Scout Executive Staff are stable, the potential is there to be culturally rich, and the goals have been set. In the not too distant future, in the middle of the next triennium, AGSES can celebrate the 50th anniversary of its founding in Philadelphia in October, 1939.

It already has that special glitter.

Agnes Quinn
1986