

Remarks from Jeanne Ambrosio, National Delegate about the National Convention

“The girls know how to teach us.” This was how Marie C. Wilson, founder of The White House Project and co-creator of Take Your Daughters to Work Day started her talk at the 51st National Girl Scout Convention recently held in Indianapolis, IN. Connecticut was well represented with a delegation of 50 volunteers, staff, and girls. As a matter of fact, CT had the largest girl delegation present. We were inspired by speakers such as Marie Wilson and Geena Davis and music from Chrisette Michetti and Teresa. We were entertained during the opening and closing ceremonies by girls - yes young girls. A 12 year old from Massachusetts was on stage as the MC in front of 2,000 people. I certainly could not have done what she did. She said she was going to be the first female president of the United States. I believe her. She was dynamic and engaging. We spent a lot of time debating the changes to our constitution. We saw the democratic process in action. There were several microphones with lights where people could address the convention. The green lights meant the person was speaking in favor of the change. The red lights were against the change. And then there was the dreaded yellow light at microphone 8. You could hear the groans across the room when this light went on. This was the point of order light and the discussion leader had to answer that light immediately. It was at this light that girl delegates went to twice and proposed amendments to what we were voting on. These were major points that had been missed in the initial/amended proposals by the CEO, President of GSUSA and their legal consultants. One was on the size of the national council - the girl that spoke brought up the point that if the proposed constitutional change was passed most of us would have to leave the room unless an amendment was added that it take effect at the 2011 convention. The girls were not only teaching us, but leading us as they had showed evidence of their open minds and clear thinking.

It was an opportunity to network with people worldwide. I collect patches and have a patch bag where each patch represents the area where people were from that I spoke to. It was a time to exchange ideas and learn new programming methods from other leaders and volunteers. The exhibit hall was loaded with program ideas, give-aways, and just plain fun!! Not only did I learn from others around the country, but from people I had never met from my own council here in CT. I learned about our wonderful camps from Anne Hayes while we were sitting in the airport. I learned from Deirdre DiCara about her alumnae program, and yes

she talked me into helping her with this project! I swapped leader stories with Debbie Fox and Rita Lomasney. And more than once Louise Theriault had me laughing. I met people that can be wonderful resources to me and all leaders. I sat next to Jennifer during one of the sessions and thought - good - this is my chance as I too have been unhappy with some of the changes since the realignment. What I did learn is that we have a wonderful leader who listened to an issue I have been dealing with, and was getting calls about while in Indianapolis. She is truly working the new model. She discovered my problem, connected with me, and took action. She called back to the council office, spoke to someone there and let me know of the plan to resolve the issue. I knew I was listened to and heard!

But I think the greatest thing that stood out to me at the National Convention was that we are all sisters and have the same common interests and goals. Like all sisters and siblings everywhere, we squabble and fight, but do what is in the best interest of the family. In Girl Scouting we make the decisions that will benefit the girls, and try to put our own agenda aside. The girls were able to lead us by their clear thinking and open minds. What an example for all of us!

I came back energized, and with hope and excitement about the future of Girl Scouting. I encourage everyone to attend a National Convention. It is an experience that I will never forget. My daughter is already talking about her hope to go in 3 years. I am looking forward to GSOFCT becoming one of the premier councils that is leading the way by example and determination.