This is the time of year when executive committee members begin thinking about succession planning for continued leadership and growth of The Emerald Circle.

The nominating committee is about to gear up to begin its work, and now is a good time to reflect on our past successes and consider how to best meet our challenges.

At this time, TEC's most significant issues are membership growth, event attendance, and leadership development. Our roster needs to expand; we would like to have better attendance at events; and executive committee positions need to be filled.

To assist with planning and repositioning TEC for continued success in fulfilling our mission "to provide scholarships and support" for girls, I have established a task group to consider possible changes. Although the task group itself will be small to allow for extensive conversation, I want to invite all members to share thoughts, ideas, suggestions, concerns, and comments with me. I will definitely pass them along to the task group!

Contact me at EmeraldCircle@sjgs.org or by mail at the Council office address. If you would rather talk with me, email me and we can set up a convenient time to speak. Or, better yet, plan to come to the March 4th social and service project where you can talk with me and other executive committee members.

I look forward to hearing from YOU. I truly believe that together, we can find the best solutions to meet these challenges!

Joanne Williams
President, The Emerald Circle
With winter winding down (we hope!) and spring coming, The Emerald Circle is preparing for not one, but two special events.

First is the annual spring social and service project, dubbed Spring Fling this year, which will be held on **Wednesday, March 4**, at Program Place for Girls, located at 3000 Southwest Freeway. Members are asked to enter via the east entrance; parking is also available on that side of the building.

An evite to the event was sent to all members in late January by 2nd V.P.-Events Ida Pearl McDonald. RSVP’s are appreciated and can be made in response to the evite or to TEC’s email address, EmeraldCircle@sjgs.org.

The Spring Fling will be from 6-8 p.m. For the first hour or so, members will assemble care packages that will be sent to all 2014 Emerald Circle scholarship recipients as they get ready to take final exams in college for the first time.

In addition to snacks, Girl Scout cookies, and other good things, members will write personal notes of encouragement to include in the boxes. Working on the “assembly line” is fun, and the more members who attend, the faster the work gets done!

Outreach Chair Connie Stone will coordinate the service project and mail the packages. While there is no charge for the event, donations are accepted to defray the cost of the care packages. A $30 donation will cover the cost of one box. Donations can be made 1) via check to The Emerald Circle, Attn: Development Department, GSSJC, 3110 Southwest Freeway, Houston, Texas 77098, 2) at the door, or 3) online at https://donate.gssjc.org/ (put the amount you wish to donate in the Other box→click Gold Award Scholarships in the drop-down menu→click Add Donation→ in the next screen, put “care packages” in the Comments section under Additional Information).

After the work is done, there will be a social hour, when members will visit and enjoy a light supper. Anyone wishing to bring food is asked to contact event hostess Ida Pearl McDonald at EmeraldCircle@sjgs.org.

**Sunday, April 12**, will be a special day for The Emerald Circle. Members will honor the 2015 Gold Award Merit Scholarship recipients with a presentation and reception at the Girl Scout Center. Family and friends will join TEC members from 2-4 p.m. to congratulate this year’s scholarship recipients. Members will receive an official evite later and are welcome to bring guests. The Scholarship Selections Committee chaired by Linda Ross will handle the program. Ida Pearl McDonald will oversee the reception and says homemade cookies are always a welcome addition to the reception table; contact her at EmeraldCircle@sjgs.org if you would like to volunteer to bring cookies to share with those attending the event.
Members of The Emerald Circle are a bit like the sun. They are full of energy, warm, dependable, help things grow, and shine on forever!

A special thanks goes to all who have joined or renewed TEC membership for 2014-2015. Your membership fee, and any additional donations made to either the TEC scholarship fund or endowment, make it possible for us to continue to support higher education for some remarkable Girl Scouts.

While how you participate in The Emerald Circle is totally up to you, I encourage you to come see what TEC is all about by attending the Spring Fling on March 4 and the 2015 Gold Award Merit Scholarship presentation and reception on April 12. I believe you will find that your membership does what it is supposed to be doing—supporting our mission of “inspiring girls to aim for excellence, while becoming the leaders of tomorrow.”

If you know anyone with a passion for Girl Scouting and higher education for young women, tell them about The Emerald Circle and our mission. If they are missing from the list below, invite them to join our ranks!

**TEC members shine!**

*By Nancy McGuire*

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Ranvae Baker*
Barbara Barnes
Sherry Barr
Anna Mae Beghini*
Terri Bean-Miner
Julie Bell
Cora Ann Blytas*
B.J. Bonner*
Charleene Burgess
Portia Cook
Kay K. Craig*
Tunis Deal
Ellen DeSanctis*
Dawn Donaldson
Marlene M. Edwards*
Jane Erskine
Alison Evers
Nancy Flatt*
Emily George* 

Suzanne M. Glasscock* 
Delores Russell Goble 
Dorothy Goodykoontz* 
Carol Greaney-Wurst 
Alice Harris 
Susan Hetherington 
Doris Hill 
Sandra A. Judson* 
Tabitha Kennedy 
Monica King 
JoAnne Knodel* 
Linda P. Lay* 
Margaret Lincoln 
Jane Mahavier 
Jacqueline S. Martin* 
Catherine W. Marx* 
Karen Matlock* 
Claudia McCabe 
Ida Pearl McDonald 
Nancy McGuire 
Dr. Mary McIntire* 
Helen Meistrich* 
Dr. Valerie Mogas* 
Linda Petersen 
Nancy Lee Peterson 
Theresa Price* 
Susan Raia 
Linda Reid* 
Jayne Roberts* 
Linda Ross 
Louise Rugaard* 
Mary Ryder 
Louise Shearer* 
Nancy Simpson* 
Carolyn Goble Smith* 
Pam Staples 
Connie Stone 
Barbara Story 

Mary C. Thompson*
Cheryl Thompson-Draper* 
Sharon Timmons 
Eleanor Vallhonrat 
Carolyn Vann 
Margaret Vaughn 
Mary Vitek* 
Evelyn Vittone* 
Nancy Walker* 
Sara L. Walker* 
Joanne Williams* 
Dr. Suzanne Williams 
Cathy Wining-Thomas* 
Iska Wire 

*Denotes lifetime member
Nominations for positions on The Emerald Circle executive committee are now open. Dawn Donaldson, current TEC secretary, is chair of this year’s nominating committee.

Terms for six officers will end in May, 2015: president, 2nd vice president-events, treasurer, communications officer, scholarship selections committee chair, and one at-large member. One position—funding chair—is currently vacant, and nominations for that position are also encouraged. Only Emerald Circle members may serve on the executive committee. (Note: The current membership roster is on pg. 3; however, individuals may still join for 2014-2015.)

To submit a nomination, send the nominee’s name to EmeraldCircle@sjgs.org with “Nominating Committee” in the subject line.

Members will be sent an email ballot with the slate of nominees in early April. Voting via email will follow, and results will be shared with all members via email. New officers will be invited to the May executive committee meeting and will begin their official duties in June.

Speaking of shining...😊

Other recipients were from Interfaith Ministries, SEARCH Homeless Services, Literacy Advance of Houston, The Montrose Center, Montgomery County Women’s Center, Target Hunger, Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Houston, The Lighthouse Houston, Mental Health America and Star of Hope. The NFL Community Quarterback Award recognizes outstanding volunteers in the 32 NFL markets and awards nearly $1 million to the charitable organizations they serve. The program honors individuals who exemplify leadership, dedication and a commitment to improving the communities in which they live through volunteerism. Congratulations, Sandy!
2013 scholarship recipient profile: Holly R.

Holly was in Girl Scouting for 12 years. She belonged to troop 4393 and was one of 20 Girl Scouts awarded a $1,000 Gold Award Merit Scholarship from The Emerald Circle in spring, 2013.

Graduated from: Bellaire High School

Now attending: Vanderbilt University

Major: Elementary education and cognitive studies

What classes have you found the most enjoyable in college? I have enjoyed all of my education classes, especially educational psychology, where we learn how students learn, and elementary science, where we learn the elementary science curriculum so we will have the content knowledge to teach it.

Which were the most challenging? The most challenging classes for me have been the intensive language and literacy courses that we take to teach children how to read.

What extracurricular activities have you gotten involved in at college? My sorority Alpha Chi Omega, SPEAR (Students Promoting Environmental Awareness and Responsibility), Vanderbilt baking club, and VSVS (Vanderbilt Students Volunteering for Science).

Just for fun, tell us your current favorite…
  - song? Break Your Heart Right Back by Ariana Grande
  - book? The Harry Potter series...always!
  - activity or hobbies? Playing intramural soccer and designing my sorority’s t-shirts
  - and your favorite Girl Scout cookie? Peanut butter patties!

What do you remember most from Girl Scouts? Going to GAM at Camp Casa Mare—playing all the games with my troop and making the team banners and t-shirts.

Tell us about your Gold Award project. What motivated you to choose it? I created a science materials corner for a 5th-grade classroom as well as helped the teacher move her classroom from her old school to a new one. I love working with children and watching them succeed. I knew that the science materials corner I created would help students prepare for the standardized test at the end of the year. My project was helpful and let me use my creative skills to make studying fun!

What does being a Gold Award Merit Scholarship recipient mean to you? It means that I can achieve my dreams at Vanderbilt University. Also, I will always know the impact that Girl Scouts had on me, even after I graduated from high school.

Where do you hope to be in five years? I hope to be living in Houston and teaching 2nd or 3rd grade in a Houston Independent School District elementary school.

Any other thoughts to share with members of The Emerald Circle? The care package you sent me last year was wonderful! Thank you again!
What was your first job, Connie? Babysitting. Next came a summer job in high school—I was hired, with others, to inventory all the textbooks in stock in my Florida school district’s un-air-conditioned warehouse. We hand counted stacks of books all day long and recorded the tallies on spreadsheets. That convinced me I needed a college education!

So, you did go to college? Yes, I graduated in 1969 as the first female in my family to earn a college degree. At that time, women either got married or became teachers, librarians, nurses, flight attendants, or secretaries. I was fortunate to land a professional position with the federal government. Then, women were considered a minority classification and the government was actively recruiting women for traditional “men’s” jobs.

Do you have a favorite Girl Scout memory? I have many! I was shy as a child, and Girl Scouting pushed me out of my comfort zone to try new things and be a stronger person. My love of scouting inspired me to be a leader for my two girls’ troops – the oldest being one of the first Daisies when the program was initiated.

What has been your most memorable experience as an adult member of Girl Scouting? As a leader, I loved camping trips when the girls had the opportunity to spread their wings and be in a totally different environment, setting up camp, cooking, enjoying nature and camp activities and generally roughing it. I also enjoyed watching them bond and grow into authentic women. I get especially nostalgic when I smell a wood fire.

As for my least favorite camping memory? Trying to boil a large pot of spaghetti over an open fire on a hot July day with twelve hungry 3rd graders peering over the fire. Lesson learned: Bring spaghetti already cooked!

Why did you join The Emerald Circle? My daughter received a Gold Award Merit Scholarship in 2000, and I joined The Emerald Circle after she graduated from college and we no longer had that expense. A good friend, Karen Saenz, was active in TEC and invited me to a luncheon. I wanted to give back and enable other girls to have the same joy my daughter Joanna experienced when she was chosen as a recipient.
Member spotlight on...Connie Stone

Do you have a personal motto or favorite saying? “For everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven” (from Ecclesiastes 3). I used to quote that to my children when they lamented their fate. I have read the entire passage twice at funerals for my brother and mother. The saying truly expresses my belief that life is a journey to be savored and that one must live each “season” in the moment and to the fullest, not regretting or longing for the past nor being anxious about the future.

What are your most favorite things to do? Visiting my three-year-old granddaughter in Washington, D.C., whenever possible; travel—although not as often as I would like!—and golf and relaxing on the beach. (Can you tell I am from Florida?!)

What are you reading now? This is Your Brain on Music by Daniel J. Levitin, selected by a book club I belong to.

Do you have pets? Not currently. Over the years, our family has had fish, dogs, hamsters, hermit crabs, and a chinchilla named Amie.

Do you have a favorite color? Red...and a favorite Girl Scout cookie? Thin Mints.

What is your proudest accomplishment? My two daughters and achieving the 40-year marriage milestone this year (with the same husband.😊)

Have you moved?

If you moved at the end of the year and have a new address—if you got a new computer as a holiday gift (and possibly a new email address!)—if you changed from the old-fashioned, but reliable landline to a cellular telephone number only, please let The Emerald Circle know! It is the only way to keep you up to date on TEC news and events.

To update your contact information, send an email to Jennifer Donovan, jdonovan@sjgs.org at GSSJC or send a note with your new information to: The Emerald Circle, Attn: Jennifer Donovan, Development Dept., GSSJC, 3110 Southwest Freeway, Houston, Texas 77098

To contact TEC’s executive committee, send an email to EmeraldCircle@sjgs.org, or go to The Emerald Circle homepage. Click on the “Contact Us” link at the bottom of the page; that will automatically bring up an email form addressed to The Emerald Circle.

To reach a specific member of the executive committee, please include their name in the subject line. A list of current officers can be found in the panel at the right side of the front page of this issue of the newsletter.
Two major Emerald Circle activities and some important GSSJC events are coming in the next few months. Come be a part of the fun and celebration!

March 4, 2015 ➤TEC Spring Fling
6-8 p.m., Program Place for Girls, 3000 Southwest Frwy. (East Entrance)
Time for work and play! Help with the service project, then stay for the Saint Patrick’s Day themed social hour. Finals “care packages” for scholarship recipients will be filled, and members can visit while enjoying refreshments after the work is done. There is no charge, but a donation of $30 will cover the cost of one care package. Send checks to: The Emerald Circle, Attn: Development Dept., GSSJC, 3110 Southwest Frwy, Houston, Texas 77098, OR bring your donation to the event OR donate online at https://donate.gssjc.org/ (see instructions on how to donate on pg. 2 of the newsletter).

April 12, 2015 ➤TEC Gold Award Merit Scholarship presentation and reception
2-4 p.m., Girl Scout Center, 3110 Southwest Frwy. (Rooms 107-109)
Meet the newest group of TEC’s fabulous scholarship recipients! Homemade cookies for the refreshments table are welcome. 😊 If you can help, contact 2nd V.P.-Events Ida Pearl McDonald via email, EmeraldCircle@sjgs.org.

April 18, 2015 ➤GSSJC Adult Recognition Event 2015
9 a.m.-12 p.m., Camp Agnes Arnold in Conroe
Tickets are $15 each; registration closes April 5. Honor those who go above and beyond for local Girl Scouts. For more information, call the Volunteer Experience Department at 713-292-0300.

April 23, 2015 ➤GSSJC Success to Significance Luncheon
11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., Hyatt Regency Downtown
Individual tickets are $150. Honoree is Y. Ping Sun, graduate of Princeton and Columbia University School of Law. Attorney and community leader, she is the wife of Rice University President David W. Leebron. Keynote speakers are Jessica Buchanan and husband Erik Landermaalm; they will share their experience in learning that the human spirit can conquer anything. Jessica, captured by Somali land pirates in 2011, was rescued 93 days later by Navy Seal Team Six. She credits her days as a Girl Scout with helping her stay strong in captivity. For information, contact eadkison@sjgs.org.

Annual membership in The Emerald Circle runs from September through August of the following year. Membership categories are: Bronze—$150; Silver—$250; Gold—$500; Platinum—$1,000, and Emerald Lifetime Endowment—$3,000.

The Emerald Circle’s mission is to provide scholarships and support, inspiring girls to aim for excellence while becoming the leaders of tomorrow.

The Emerald Circle, Girl Scouts of San Jacinto Council
3110 Southwest Freeway, Houston, Texas 77098
Email: EmeraldCircle@sjgs.org
Website: http://resources.gssjc.org/Resources/EmeraldCircle/default.aspx