

Lois Gesner *Leadership Award*

Where Lois Gesner leads, Girl Scouts follow — into adventure, accomplishment and adulthood.

For more than 40 years, Lois has been an inspirational and influential Girl Scout volunteer. Lois began as so many Girl Scout volunteers do — as a Girl Scout leader. She progressed through the volunteer ranks by taking on, at various times, the roles of camping consultant; Sloatsburg service area manager; instructor of first aid, CPR, canoeing and river paddling; Camp Addisone Boyce site director and adult outdoor education “master trainer.”



In addition to her hands-on program efforts, Lois participated in council governance by serving as the Sloatsburg service area’s delegate and as 2nd Vice President of the Girl Scout Council of Rockland County’s Board of Directors. Lois also served on the GSUSA-mandated Council Performance Assessment Committee. She currently serves on the council’s Camp Administration and Property Operating committees.

Lois’ volunteer efforts have earned her the two highest GSUSA recognitions awarded to adult volunteers: the Thanks Badge and the Thanks Badge II bestowed on those adult volunteers whose efforts “go above and beyond” expectations.

Of all of her volunteer positions, however, the role for which Lois is most acknowledged and applauded is that of awesome coach of the award-winning Kamikaze Kanoers — the Girl Scouts of Rockland County’s accomplished and admired canoeing team. In her nearly 30 years as coach, Lois has taught hundreds of Girl Scouts to proudly paddle under the Kamikaze Kanoers banner. Yet Lois’ educational efforts go beyond canoeing techniques. Writes a Kamikaze Kanoers mother: “Lois taught my daughter not only about canoeing but about so much more. She taught the girls about work ethics, dedication, fun, friendship, nature, life.”

Lois teaches what she knows — ethics, dedication, fun and friendship. Lois also is an advocate for what she believes in, such as celebrating and conserving natural resources. Lois was instrumental in having the upper Delaware River designated as “Scenic and Recreational” and rallied with those who worked to have a similar designation assigned to the Ramapo River. Lois is a member of the American Canoe Association, the Appalachian Mountain Club, the New York/New Jersey Trail Conference, the New York State Horse Council, the Rockland County Environmental Management Council, the Sterling Forest Coalition and the Sierra Club.

Just as rivers wander, so does Lois. After 37 years as a nurse, Lois retired and began to travel. She has walked on glaciers and over hot lava. She has ridden horses in the Himalayas. Lois goes both near and far — to her Cape Cod home, to the beaches of Hawaii, to the Alaskan tundra. She has visited Malta, England, Scotland, Wales, Egypt, Fiji and New Zealand. Only Lois knows what’s next!

Local history is also important to Lois, as well it should be, as her husband Paul’s family has been in Rockland since Revolutionary times. Lois served on the Village of Sloatsburg Bicentennial Committee and involved Girl Scouts in village beautification projects. Her husband Paul, an Executive Lieutenant for the Town of Ramapo Police, died after a sudden illness in 1994. Gesner Avenue in Nyack is named after Paul’s family. Lois has three children, Paul Frank, Patrice Lynn and Denean Marie, and three grandchildren, Kaitlynn, Ryan and Taylor.