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“Life Lines” By Patricia Pitkus Bainbridge, Director, Respect Life Office

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Birds of a feather . . .

I used to look forward to the annual Girl Scout cookie sale. There’s nothing tastier than thin mints—straight from the freezer—with a tall glass of milk. Plus, I knew (well, I thought I knew) my purchase was helping to support a worthy organization. I had been a Brownie and a Girl Scout and I wanted to support them.

Little did I know how much the organization had changed until I discovered in 2004 that a council in Texas had bestowed the “Woman of Distinction” award on Pam Smallwood, executive director of Planned Parenthood of Waco/Central Texas. Girls Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) had actually honored one of the leaders of the largest single committer of abortions in this country.

In an interview on the March 5, 2004 “The Today Show,” GSUSA’s CEO, Kathy Cloninger, admitted Girl Scouts “partner with many organizations.” She added, “we have relationships with our church communities, with YWCAs, and with Planned Parenthood organizations across the country, to bring information-based sex education programs to girls.”

That did it. No more Girl Scout cookies for me once I discovered that radical feminist, Betty Friedan, served on the board of directors of GSUSA from 1976-82. Friedan was one of the founders of the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the National Association for the Repeal of Abortion Laws. According to NOW, under Friedan’s leadership “NOW became the first national organization to endorse the legalization of abortion.”

Shortly after Friedan’s death in 2006, NOW member, Gloria Randle Scott, who served as National President of GSUSA from 1976-78, wrote a tribute to Friedan in which she described Friedan as “a role model for girls and women.”

GSUSA has formed “Troop Capitol Hill” whose co-leaders include: Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL) and Kay Granger (R-TX) in the U.S. House of Representatives and Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) and Susan Collins (R-ME] in the U.S. Senate.” Schultz, Mikulski, and Collins have a 100% pro-abortion voting record while Granger’s is mixed.

GSUSA claims, “These women are strong leaders in Congress with a steadfast commitment to our purpose. All members of Troop Capitol Hill are inspiring role models for Girl Scouting’s nearly 3 million girl members . . .” So, according to GSUSA, women advocating for abortion are role models for Girl Scouts.

Both Kathy Cloninger and current board treasurer, Joan Wagnon, have served as executive directors of YWCAs.

The YWCA called for the liberalization of abortion laws in 1967 and in 1970 “voted to give special emphasis to the repeal of all laws restricting or prohibiting abortions.” It continues with its aggressive pro-abortion advocacy and is a member of the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

The YWCA also partners with Planned Parenthood in a variety of ways including joint projects where they opened “community-based health clinics” for women.

GSUSA is “one of 145 member organizations of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).” Just last week, the WAGGGS website declared “all young people must have access to comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services, including contraception and emergency contraception” and “accessible, affordable and safe abortions . . .”

When thinking about the “relationships” GSUSA has with pro-abortion legislators, the pro-abortion YWCA, and abortion provider Planned Parenthood as well as its membership in pro-abortion WAGGGS, the old idiom, “birds of a feather flock together,” comes to mind.

I am certain there are local troops that are still true to traditional values, but sadly, it is not possible to separate the local troops from the national GSUSA and WAGGGS. Agendas are set at the top and eventually they *will* trickle down. Cloninger has said she wants GSUSA to become “a movement” and she won’t be happy until it is.

The good news is that there is an alternative to Girl Scouts that actually focuses on God, family, and country. Founded in 1995 by a former Girl Scout troop leader concerned about the direction GSUSA was taking, American Heritage Girls supports traditional values and faith.

Here’s hoping our Catholic troops will at least consider switching their charter from GSUSA to American Heritage Girls.