

Legislative Advocacy for Seniors
April 2009 Newsletter

from the Chair . . . by *Hannah Timmons*

We organized our Annual Session again, and we are getting good at doing our own meetings. Attendance at our 12th Annual Session was not what we had hoped for; but the efforts of those who did attend produced very strong resolutions as our Top Five, three proclamations, and a number of good “also passed.” Thanks to everybody who attended and contributed!

I am looking forward to seeing many familiar faces at our Midyear Meeting in August. I hope that we will see all of the “regulars” that we know from past years and many new ones at our Annual Session in 2010. If we are going to survive, we have to increase our membership and our attendance at our Annual Sessions. We need everybody to recruit new members and to persuade former ones to join us again.

Now is the time to begin working on resolutions for next year. All of us should have recovered sufficiently from the February 2009 Annual Session that we are ready to begin doing our homework for the 2010. Our best resolutions are always the ones that are carefully considered, well researched, and accurate in every detail.

One of the best sources of information is the US Senate Special Committee on Aging, chaired by Senator Herb Kohl from Wisconsin. Press Secretary Ashley Glacel sends regular updates to those who ask to be on her list. E-mail her at Ashley_Glacel@aging.senate.gov to be included. Also, check the Committee Website at www.aging.senate.gov.

Organizations that send e-mails about aging issues include AARP, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a), National Council on Aging, National

Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, and many others. Some require membership, but some do not. If you happen across a good source of material for our advocacy efforts, let me know for the newsletter and let Pat Porter know for the Website.

MIDYEAR MEETING

AUGUST 4-5, 2009

The Midyear Meeting will be held at the Ramada Plaza, 400 2nd Avenue, Charleston, WV, Tuesday – Wednesday, August 4 – 5, 2009. The meeting will begin Tuesday at 4:00 PM. Dinner will be served to all members and guests who have registered. The meeting will continue Wednesday morning at 9:00 AM and adjourn when business is completed, probably around noon.

Rooms at the Ramada are \$70 plus 9% tax for a total of \$76.30 per night. This rate is available at least two days before and two days after the meeting. Individuals should make their own hotel reservations by calling **304-744-4641** and identifying themselves as NSHC participants.

The Ramada offers complimentary breakfast, indoor pool, onsite restaurant, **high-energy dance lounge**, multi-line phones with complimentary local calls, and complimentary wireless Internet access. It is one mile from downtown Charleston.

Free shuttle service from Yeager Airport is available to hotel guests who ask for service by calling the phone number above. (*The number is posted at the courtesy phone at the airport.*) Service to the airport may be arranged at the hotel desk.

The registration fee includes dinner Tuesday night and is \$35 for everybody.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF SILVER-HAIRED LEGISLATORS SCHEDULES ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AUGUST 5-7

A reception Wednesday afternoon, August 5 will honor members of both National Silver Haired Congress and National Council of Silver-Haired Legislators, according to Lue Chandler, Silver Senator from West Virginia, who is chairing the *ad hoc* Midyear Liaison Committee.

The Annual Business Meeting of NCSHL will begin with the reception and continue Thursday and Friday, August 6–7, ending Friday evening with the traditional banquet, according to Lloyd Steen, president of NCSHL.

National Silver Haired Congress
Registration Form for 2009 Midyear Meeting

Name (or names)

Address

Telephone

E-mail

Write your check for \$35 per person to National Silver Haired Congress; mail it with this form to **Pat Porter, 1651 CR 255, Big Spring, TX 79720-0704.**

Board Votes to Change Fiscal Year

The NSHC Board of Directors voted at the Midyear Meeting in Kansas City to change the fiscal year to conform with the calendar year. Everybody receiving this mailing has already paid 2009 dues and will not owe again until January 1, 2010.

*Check the National Silver Haired Congress Website regularly at www.natlshc.org. In order to access the Members section, you must use the password, **silvermember**.*

Proposed Amendment to Bylaws Fails

The proposed amendment to lower the age for Silver Senators, Silver Representatives, and Silver Alternates from sixty to fifty-five years old failed to get the two-thirds majority vote necessary to amend the Bylaws. The NSHC Board of Directors presented the amendment to the membership in February.

Included in this mailing. . .

- ◆ the booklet with the three proclamations, the Top Five resolutions, the “also passed” resolutions, and the membership lists
- ◆ copies of the Top Five resolutions and all the
- ◆ the newsletter

Status of the Silver Alert . . .

The US House of Representatives passed the National Silver Alert Act 2009 (HR 632), a bill sponsored by Congressman Lloyd Doggett (D-TX) and cosponsored by Representatives Shelley Berkley (D-NV), Gus Bilirakis (R-FL), Yvette Clarke (D-NY), Diana DeGette (D-CO), Bob Filner (D-CA), Raymond Green (D-TX), Paul Hodes (D-NH), Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), Henry Johnson (D-GA), James Langevin (D-RI), Barbara Lee (D-CA), John Lewis (D-GA), Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), Candice Miller (R-MI), Sue Myrick (R-NC), Jerrold Nadler (D-NY), Solomon Ortiz (D-TX), David Price (D-NC), Albio Sires (D-NJ), Victor Snyder (D-AR), Christopher Van Hollen (D-MD), and Maxine Waters (D-CA).

Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI), Chairman of the Senate Special Committee on Aging, and Senator Mel Martinez (R-FL), Ranking Member, again introduced a bill (S 557), which has been referred to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary.

“Setting up a Silver Alert system for seniors who go missing due to Alzheimer’s disease or other dementia will promote the safety of our nation’s seniors, while bringing peace of mind to concerned families. With half a million new cases of Alzheimer’s every year, the need for a system of this kind will only grow,” said Senator Kohl.

The bill encourages states to develop Silver Alert plans and provides funding to enhance and integrate Silver Alert plans currently in place.

Highlights of the Minutes of the 2009 Annual Session

- Name badges with pictures and logo – cost will be included in registration fee in 2010
- Charles Watson – should be notified of illness or death of members or immediate families
- Region Vice Chairs – names submitted to Secretary Catherine Stone and Treasurer Pat Porter
- State Chairs and Vice Chairs – names submitted to Region Chairs
- Procedure for selecting Senators and Representatives – submitted to Secretary by each state
- Attendance at Session – 60 members and 5 guests
- Roberta Roller Award for meritorious service to NSHC – presented to Bea Bacon
- 50/50 Drawing – total amount raised was \$1055
- Reports on legislative issues – Roland Boucher, tax and financial issues; Carlos Higgins, *Silver Alert*; Diane Saunders, Elder Justice Act; Betty Wiser, Older Americans Act; Charles Richards, Elder Abuse Act; and Hannah Timmons, geriatric study loan forgiveness

NSHC 2009 - 2010 Committee Chairs

STANDING COMMITTEES

Advocacy — Herb Perry, NV
Archives — Warner Knudson, ND
Bylaws — Gloria Bonali, SC
Chaplaincy — Charles Watson, OK
Elections — Dolores Olson, CA
Finance — Pat Porter, TX
Fundraising — Roland Boucher, CA
Membership — Dallas Knudson, ND
Newsletter — Hannah Timmons, SC
Orientation — Gladys Jones, SC
Program — Ginnie Boyle, MO
Public Relations — Rosemary Bailes, SC
Technology — Pat Porter, TX

Ad Hoc COMMITTEES

Midyear Liaison — Lue Chandler, WV
Research Committee — Lucy Peres, NV

ANNUAL SESSION COMMITTEES

50/50 Fundraiser — Lucy Peres, NV
Awards — Dallas Knudson, ND
Exhibits — Craig Orange, CA
Hotel Liaison — Betty Wiser, VA
Photography — Warner Knudson, ND
Printing & Supplies — Ann Collins, VA
Preregistration — Pat Porter, TX
Resolutions — Bob Erickson, NV
Site Registration — Charlynnne Elliott, TX
State Night — Lue Chandler, WV

Osteoporosis and Fall Prevention Key Concerns of Seniors

Dallas Knudson and Betty Wiser wrote a grant proposal to Eli Lilly on osteoporosis training for the NSHC delegates at the 2008 Annual Meeting. According to Dallas, we need to determine how much training took place during the past year. Usually a final report is required by foundations or grantors on how money was spent.

One thing not considered was that many of the organizations or senior clubs had already scheduled their programs through May. Dallas has groups scheduled now through April 2009 for presenting this topic and is keeping track of dates, names of organizations, and number of people attending the meetings.

Below is an excerpt from the material that Dallas is using in the training sessions.

During the 2008 annual meeting, a training session was provided to NSHC delegates on the concerns of osteoporosis and fall prevention. Delegates were given training kits to assist in providing training to seniors in their own states. The purpose of this training was to bring an awareness and concern to seniors on the importance of screening, diet, exercise, and ways of preventing falls.

Minnesota has the third highest rate of elderly people dying from falls. People 65 and older are just as likely to fall in July as December. It is not just that ice and snow are the reason. Nursing homes are redesigning and adding technology to reduce fall risks. The state has launched a fall prevention campaign to educate the public and award grants to communities with innovative ideas. Minnesotans tend to live longer, reaching ages when fall risks are the greatest.

For many seniors, falls hasten their placement in nursing homes. Fitness programs and exercise are important. Share the effects of osteoporosis and falls. Bring in resource people from the Health Department or Extension Services to do a training session for local senior organizations. Add assisted devices at home to help prevent falls. Show seniors where to get resources to become better informed. Help make the quality of life better for seniors by not limiting mobility. Put this training topic as a priority for 2009 in your Senior Center.