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***Silver Bulletin*, Volume XI, Number 3**

Texas Silver-Haired Legislature

William J. Sagstetter

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Silver Bulletin

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TSHL Continues to Exert Positive Impact on Texas Legislation

The Texas 75th Legislative Session ended on June 2. The Legislation included some very positive impact bills that were advocated by the Texas Silver Haired Legislature, according to Bob Northington, Vice Chair of the TSHL Legislative Action Committee.

The most effective areas included improving the conditions of Texas Nursing Facilities, "independent living options" expansion, restoration of important rights lost in the previous session, statewide guardianship statute for residents, education in long term care, and restructuring of the Texas Board of Nursing Facilities.

Other TSHL resolutions merged into law included a "zero tolerance" statute regarding long-term care facilities, and continuation of home delivered meals to seniors. An important new law protecting seniors is the full disclosure of HMO treatment methods with the right to sue HMO carriers.

TSHL supported successful legislation that killed the use of voucher payments with tax dollars for use in private schools. Also, approval was won for use of Medicaid funds for Alzheimer patients in long-term care facilities, and improving teacher retirement levels to match CPI. An interesting TSHL Resolution that won was a new law concerning prisoner oversight and prisoner pay for care.

We also lost in our efforts to increase the personal care monthly payments for residents of nursing homes on Medicaid, and we lost the case for lowering costs of prescription drugs under Medicare Supplemental Insurance. Legislators believed laws concerning Medicare should be at the federal level.

Another loss by TSHL was the passage of the Home Equity Lending Law. This tosses out the 150 year old law that protects homesteads against foreclosure that is included within the Texas Homestead Act. TSHL has opposed this loss of protection against foreclosure by lenders in the past two Legislative Sessions.

However, the proposed new law (HJR 4) will provide a tax break for all homestead property on the school tax portion of taxes for 1997 and subsequent years. There will be an extra valuation exemption of \$10,000.00 (decreased) for calculating school taxes. Provided the proposed amendment gains taxpayer approval, the tax decrease will occur regardless of whether taxes had been frozen at age 65 or not. The special election will be held August 9, 1997.



On July 15, five members of TSHL were present at a special signing of SB 190, the law to protect nursing home residents from abuse and neglect. The bill included provisions in TSHL Resolution 15 (No. 2 priority). It was signed into law by Governor George Bush, having been sponsored by Senators Judith Zafferini and Mike Moncrief and Representatives Harvey Hilderbran and Elliot Naishtat. TSHL members shown here with Governor Bush at the signing included Speaker Pro-Tem Felix Nigh, Deputy Speaker Pro-Tem Tom Perkins, Legislative Action Committee Chair John Holtermann, Randie Cook and Charlotte Parks.

Notes from the TSHL Exec. Committee

The TSHL Executive Committee met in Austin on July 9 to approve the submission of suggested policies and procedures changes for voting by the General Assembly meeting in September.

An important suggested change proposed that bylaws may be amended by a two-thirds vote of those present at a called meeting. Present rules state that an approval by two-thirds of the total membership is required.

To replace deceased Howard Dunaway as Comptroller, Oris Greever of Abilene was ap-

proposed by the Executive Committee. Previously Greever had been Chair of the Finance Committee. His place as Chair has now been filled by Jetta Roberts of El Paso, former vice chair. New Comptroller Greever reported that a current balance of \$12,878.00 in the TSHL treasury.

Operations Committee Chair Gaston West reported that Registration Forms for the September General Session have been mailed to all members. He announced that Nikki Gatlin will be in charge of entertainment and Al Lambrecht will handle transportation.

Speaker Homer Lear said that the Orientation Session for 1998 date has changed to July 27-31.

Directory Committee Chair Charlotte Parks said that 50 *Silver Directories* have been mailed to all TSHL members, along with a bill for \$1.00 each. Members are receiving the Directories below the printing cost of \$1.87 apiece.

Computer Committee chairman Jim Cowgill announced that computers now have been allocated to Speaker Lear, Secretary Jean McCloud and *Silver Bulletin* Editor Bill Sagstetter. Earl Robinson is providing familiarization with the computers and made a special trip to Austin to do so.

Silver Threads

By BILL SAGSTETTER

Perhaps the greatest benefit of belonging to the Silver Haired Legislature is the association with the other TSHL members. I have never before had the privilege of associating with such an intelligent, cultivated, multifarious, alert, compassionate, motivated group of people. From all walks of life—from bus drivers and farmers and schoolteachers and military men and ranging up to former CEOs—these amazing men and women deserve accolades. In the sunset of their lives, they are now (without pay) contributing more to their communities than ever before.

* * *

Most of us receive one benefit from being hard of hearing. We don't understand the loud and filthy words of much of the rock music that pollutes the air ways these days. The English language should be used to beautify our expressions, not degrade them. Consider these lyrics from the far-off forties, from "All the things you are":

*You are the promised kiss of spring time
That lingers on the brink of a lovely dawn.
You are the angel glow that lights the stars.
The dearest things I know are what you are.
And some day my happy arms will hold you,
When all the things you are are mine!*

Oh for a return to the days when obscenities were rarely seen in any songs.

* * *

With all of us, I am sure nostalgia for the good things in our youth is a frequent thing. It amuses me for an announcer to show great concern for professional football players getting too tired on defense. Wonder how these physical giants would have stood up to the game in the 30's and 40's. We usually played 60 minutes (both ways), wore leather helmets, scant padding, and always tackled below the knees. Only injured players earned a rest.

* * *

Reaching farther back in time, remember when you could buy a great restaurant meal for about \$5.00, and the price included shrimp cocktail, salad, drink and dessert. Having to pay \$1.00 extra for iced tea or coffee, and even more for dessert, hardly adds to the enjoyment of a meal nowadays.

* * *

Getting back to things we don't like about meals: Why can't you order fries without getting a mountain of them, too much to eat? And what about a quart-sized glass of ice tea. Or a piece of chicken fried steak 10 inches across.

And double and triple deck hamburgers too thick to fit between your dentures. This relentless quest for too much volume defies all good taste.

* * *

Sorry that most of this column has been negative. Maybe the next one can be devoted to positive commentary. If the Lord is willing and the creek don't rise, we'll be back here in October.

Speaker's Corner

By HON. HOMER LEAR

We completed a very successful endeavor with the 75th Texas Legislature. Results will be found in other sections of this Bulletin.

Coming up will be the General Session at MO Ranch (9-12 September). This meeting is not as glamorous as the Legislative Session. However, it will establish the frame work for the 7th TSHL regarding the bylaws, election procedures and preparation of the budget.

A matter of high priority will be a vote regarding Article XI (amendments) of the bylaws. A mail-in ballot will be sent to each member requesting a yes or no vote to change Article XI to read:

"These bylaws may be amended by two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting at a called meeting."

In the past, it has been extremely difficult to conduct business with a requirement that two-thirds (2/3) of the total membership be present. In any case, a quorum has to be present to transact business.

Looking forward to camaraderie, fun and business at MO Ranch.

Silver Bulletin

Published quarterly by the Texas Silver Haired Legislature, an advocacy group for the elderly.

HOMER W. LEAR, San Antonio

Speaker

FELIX NIGH, Houston

Speaker Pro Tem

TOM PERKINS, Smiley

Deputy Speaker Pro Tem

JEAN McCLOUD, Dallas

Secretary

ORIS GREEVER, Abilene

Comptroller

WILLIAM J. (BILL) SAGSTETTER

Editor

Material submitted for publication in the *Silver Bulletin* is welcomed and should be sent to 118 Oaktree Drive, Rockport, TX 78382. FAX: (512)-729-6939. Publications devoted to the elderly are invited to reprint articles from the *Silver Bulletin*, with or without credit. Exchanges welcomed.

The Silver Haired Legislature Computer HOME PAGE is located at [http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/tshl.

SOUND OFF



Seven members of TSHL, working at the state capitol in Austin in December, were honored by a scheduled visit to Governor George Bush's office for a photo session and personal chat with the Governor.

Speaker Homer Lear presented Governor Bush copies of our official "Legislative Resolutions and Priorities", approved by the Sixth Texas Silver Haired Legislature—and brought greetings from our membership.

Governor Bush gave us a personal tour of his office, commenting on several historical paintings. The theme of one particular painting captured our imagination and stirred our hearts. A man on horseback and one on foot were charging up a rugged hillside. Governor Bush explained that the meaning in this work of art came from words of an old Methodist hymnal: "There are causes in life that are greater than self."

This could have well become our "battle cry" as we worked the 75th Legislature. Governor Bush talked briefly about property tax relief and the educational priority of "Learning to Read."

Later in the day, as our group was distributing the resolution booklets, the Governor passed by and gave us a personal hand salute—showing his admiration and respect for TSHL members present and their efforts.

We can all make history by calling, writing, or going to Austin to work for "our causes." Each TSHL individual effort is a must if we continue to be successful. CLAY DAVIS, Moody, TX.

Send your comments by contacting **SOUND OFF, Silver Bulletin, 118 Oaktree Drive, Rockport, TX 78382. FAX: 1-512-729-6939.**

ALEXANDER HIEKEN

Alexander Hieken, Vice Chair of the Information Services Committee of TSHL died in June. He would have been 89 years old on July 20, 1997. Before his retirement to live in Seabrook, Al had served many years in his chosen fields as a newspaper editor and a union representative. A journalism graduate of the University of Missouri, he had been the President of the Texas State Industrial Union Council, member of the American Newspaper Guild, United Labor Legislative Committee, Concentrated Employment Program and U.S. Training Placement Program. He also had been a member of the Houston Press Club and had been a newspaper editor in El Paso.

Al Hieken was Chair of the Information Services Committee from 1991 to 1996 and editor of the *Silver Bulletin*. He was a TSHL representative from Houston/Harris County. At most of the TSHL meetings, he was accompanied by his wife, Elizabeth.

At the Executive committee meeting on July 9 in Austin, Elizabeth Hieken was appointed to fill out the elected term of Al Hieken.

Maryethyl Praetz Honored By Texas Legislature

Maryethyl Praetz of Sherman on May 22 was honored with a resolution for her contributions to the State of Texas as a member of the Texas Silver Haired Legislature. The resolution was presented to the House of Representatives by Rep. Ron Clark of District 62. Praetz served the TSHL from 1986 to 1994.

One of the TSHL resolutions sponsored by Maryethyl established the TAPS Public Transportation System in Grayson County. She also was a member of the first National Silver Haired Congress in Washington in February.

The resolution pointed out the distinguished service rendered by Praetz to both TSHL and NSHC and made the following statement:

"In addition to her work with the Silver Haired Legislature, this remarkable individual has served as a member of the National Association of Retired Federal Employees, the Iris Society, and the Texoma Retired Auxiliary Council—and she also sits on the advisory council for the Retired Senior Volunteer Program of the Texoma Council of Governments.

"Indicative of her selfless commitment to others is her adoption of three orphans from Ireland, whom she raised as a single parent.

"Maryethyl Praetz has exhibited an unyielding commitment to active participation in the governmental process, and her inspirational achievements are indeed worthy of special legislative recognition."

In addition to the Austin honor in the legislature, Praetz was given tributes at a meeting of the Lake Texoma Chapter of Retired Federal Employees. U.S. Rep. Ralph Hall presented her with an American flag that had flown over the national capitol. This meeting was attended by 85 guests, including state, national and local dignitaries.

Doris Langton Chosen As Washington Senior Intern

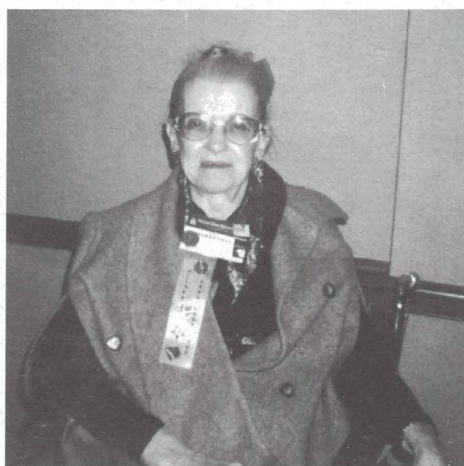
TSHL member Doris Langton was chosen to participate in the Congressional Senior Intern Program. She was appointed by Congressman Jim Turner to attend the May 17-24 event in Washington, DC.

Sponsored by the Close-Up Foundation, the program gives senior citizens an opportunity to see the federal government from the inside, tour important historical sites and work in a congressional office.

Held annually since 1978, the program offers internees opportunity to see processes and issues in the making of public policy. During one week at the nation's capitol, senior interns attend an intensive series of briefings, seminars and study visits.

"I was pleased to have someone with Mrs. Langton's experience and knowledge working in my office. I think she had a lot to teach us," said Congressman Turner.

Doris Langton is from Silsbee and a TSHL member representing Hardin County in the Southeast Texas TSHL Area. She is a veteran TSHL member and is chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, and a member of the Legislative Committee.



Maryethyl Praetz

TSHL Foundation Votes Funding for 1998 Elections

At a meeting of the Texas Silver Haired Legislature Foundation on May 8, it was recommended that \$500.00 be given to each Area Agency on Aging to help fund the TSHL elections next year. Places to hold the elections also were discussed.

Members present at the Foundation Austin meeting included Dan Roberts, Judge Scott Bailey, Alicianne Wallace, Claude Andrews, Allen Grobe, Virginia Black-Fikes, Marie Wallace, Rev. Joe Weldon Bailey, Veronica Ault and Dr. Jack Burton. Naomi Norton and James Davis were absent.

A letter of resignation as a member of the Foundation was accepted from Paula Johnson. Judge Bailey moved that a request be made to James Grabb for Paula to be assigned to assist the TSHL Foundation in maintaining the file cabinet. Alicianne Wallace moved that two separate accounts be set up: one for cash, which now totals \$34,365.00, to be a Money Market Fund checking account. Motion was passed.

Next meeting of the TSHL Foundation will be held in August, time and date to be scheduled later.



Doris Langton

General Session To Be Held On September 9-11

The biennial Texas Silver Haired Legislature General Session will be held at MO Ranch, Hunt, Texas, from September 9-12. Attendance of the entire membership is requested, and all have been sent registration forms.

Rates quoted in the *Silver Bulletin* for this meeting in the April issue were incorrect. Correct rates are: for a single, \$280.00 per person; for a double the cost is \$170.00 per person. Attendees should arrive on Tuesday the 9th after lunch and leave Friday the 12th before lunch.

If you have a skill or talent to share with us, please call Gaston West, Operations Committee Chair, at (512) 992-5815. For evening entertainment, we need musicians or other talented TSHL members, plus cards, dominoes, other games. Swimming, horseback riding, hiking, birding and other outdoor activities also are available at MO Ranch—known statewide as host to many religious and other groups.

A deadline of June 25 had been set for registrations. Those wanting to know if any more places are available should phone Mona Green at (915) 646-4879.

At the September General meeting, proposed changes in the bylaws and policies and procedure of TSHL will be discussed and voted upon. Among the changes submitted for consideration: Changes in the election procedures and a change in name from Information Services to Communications Committee.

"Communications" Proposed For IS&PR Name Change

A name change for the Information Services & Public Relations Committee of TSHL has been proposed by committee chair Bill Sagstetter.

The proposal would change the name to Communications Committee. It was approved for submission to a vote by the General Session at the September 9 meeting. At that time, all recommendations for changes in rules and procedures passed by the Executive Committee on July 9 will be discussed and voted on.

Primary responsibility of the Communications Committee involves the prompt publishing of a regularly scheduled official publication. Matters concerning the public image of TSHL also are under the jurisdiction of the Committee.

Present members of IS&PR Committee include Tom Adams, Walter Carroll, Le Roy Clark, Viola V. de La Rosa, Charlynn Elliott, De Lois Garrett, Sallie C. Johnson, Antojnette Lucania, Dorothy McDermott, Ralph Neubert, Lydia Piper, Earl Robinson, Jo Ruthart, Ingram Smith, Calvin Stewart, Howard Stone, William Zermeno, Harrison Holloway, Earl Landis, Charlotte Parks, George Turner and Elizabeth Hieken.

Another recommendation by Committee Chair Sagstetter was to increase involvement in the Directory Committee and the Computer Committee, so that all communications functions can continue to be coordinated.

Nikki Gatlin Recognized for Contributions

Nikki Gatlin, TSHL member from Amarillo in the Panhandle Area, recently received recognition in the Amarillo newspapers for her work as a Good Neighbor and as a member of the Texas Silver Haired Legislature and the National Silver Haired Congress.

Gatlin has been named president of the Golden K Kiwanis Club of Amarillo. Members participate in local charity projects, such as a chili cook off to benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation and fund raising for the Children's Miracle Network. Largest contribution the club makes is service to the Iodine Deficiency Disorder program that seeks to eradicate the primary cause of mental retardation in children.

Gatlin has been active in the Retired Teacher's Association, Martha's Home, NAACP, United Citizen's Forum, League of Women Voters, American Association of University Women, United Methodist Church and many other organizations. During the National Silver Haired Congress in February, she served on the Intergenerational Committee and was responsible for the passage of two resolutions addressing issues concerning senior citizens. In the Texas Silver Haired Legislature, Nikki is a member of the Operations and Criminal



Nikki Gatlin

Justice Committees.

In the newspaper article, photographs were run of Gatlin and also of Millie Reynolds of Tulia, who represented the 24th Congressional District. She is also a member of the TSHL Election and Credentials committee and is secretary of the Retirement and Aging Committee. Millie also represents the Panhandle Area for TSHL.

On August 22-25, the National Council of Silver Haired Legislators/Congress will hold conferences in Albuquerque, N. M. at the same time as the first Annual conference of the US Coalition on Aging, sponsored by the National Committee to Preserve Social Security.

The meetings will be held at the Crowne Plaza Pyramid Hotel (505) 821-3333, extension 1137. National, state and local senior advocates will discuss, plan and direct the future of Social Security, the Older Americans Act and other senior issues. Workshops also will be held.

Your Albuquerque contact should be New Mexico Silver Senator Robert S. Barela at (505) 898-2887, or Enzo Pastore at (800) 966-1935 of the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare.

NSHC Silver Senators are John Hawkins and Homer Lear. Earl Landis is a Vice Director of Region 6, which includes Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Texas.

Texas state officers of NSHC are: Felix Nigh, Chair; Hazel Wright, Vice Chair; Randie Cook, Secretary; and Elmer Ingle, Treasurer.

Speaker Virginia Zachert has mailed applications to NSHL members for committee Assignment Requests, Committee Officers and Resolutions to be submitted. Assignments will be made during the Board of Directors meeting in Albuquerque in August. Forms should be returned to Regional Director John Hawkins by August 1st. House members should send copies of the forms to Speaker Virginia Zachert, and Senate members should return copies of their forms to President Chris Franklin. Data sent will be used to make assignments of Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs and must be received by August 1.

Aging Conference In Austin Dec. 1-3

For the first time in Texas there will be a conference on aging under the full auspices of the Texas Governor's Office. It will bring together all disciplines for networking, information sharing and development of professional skills.

The Governor's Conference on Aging will be held in Austin December 1-3 in the Austin Convention Center. Its goal will be to develop new partnerships between the public and private sectors that regard society's aging as a positive experience.

The Conference will feature educational sessions in health & health care, legal issues/benefits, community service, workforce issues, education & training, and multidisciplinary issues.

For more information on participating in the Governor's Conference on Aging, contact Conference Coordinator Paula Johnson at Texas Department on Aging, P. O. Box 12786, Austin, TX 78711, phone (512) 424-6840.

During the Executive Committee meeting of TSHL in July, Speaker Homer Lear announced that tentative plans call for the December meeting of the Executive Committee to be held in Austin at the same time as the Governor's Conference on Aging. Thus members of the Committee would find it convenient to attend both meetings.

Homer Lear Elected To NSHC Office

Homer Lear from Texas has been elected President Pro-Tem of the Senate of the National Silver Haired Congress.

Other officers include Chris Franklin of Florida as President of the NSHC Senate; Virginia Zachert of Georgia as Speaker; and Martin Darity of Alabama as Speaker Pro Tem. All officers will serve for the next two years.

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