

MINNESOTA SILVER HAURED LEGISLATURE

P.O. Box 302
Pine River, MN 56474
(218) 587-4070

President

Howard Nelson
Lindstrom, MN

Vice President

M.J. (Mac) McCauley
Winona, MN

Secretary

Charlotte Miller
W. St. Paul, MN

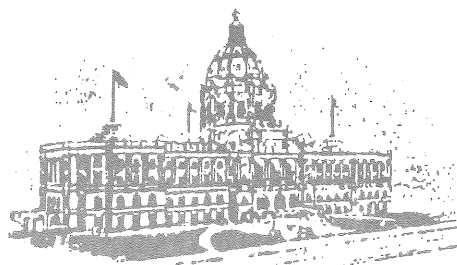
Treasurer

Robert Christensen
Pine River, MN

Executive Director

Fred Jervis
Pine River, MN

A GUIDE TO THE



MINNESOTA SILVER HAURED LEGISLATURE

PURPOSE

To Educate: Provide education to the public on the legislative process.

To Involve: Promote good government and active participation in public affairs.

To Inform: Actions of the MSHL inform the public and the Minnesota Legislature of the issues, concerns and possible solutions for problems faced by the elderly and all other citizens of the State.

To Advocate: To make recommendations to the Minnesota State Legislature consistent with the authorizing statute.

SILVER HAURED LEGISLATURE

The Silver Haired Legislature is a non-partisan body composed of delegates aged 60 years and older who meet to discuss and propose legislative policy not only for the elderly, but all age groups of our state. The Legislature provides an educational experience in the political process and an opportunity for seniors to present and discuss issues in a statewide forum.

A Silver Haired Legislature of 67 Senators and 134 Representatives will convene at the State Capitol prior to the Minnesota regular annual session beginning in January.

Elected senior Legislators will participate in local public meetings to discuss issues that need to be addressed by legislation. Resolutions from these meetings will become the basis for bills at the Silver Haired Legislature.

Legislation which is passed by the Silver Haired Legislature will be presented to the Governor and the Minnesota State Legislature as recommendations for state policy.

ELECTION PROCEDURES

Any Minnesotan aged 60 and older who is a registered voter may file for candidacy by securing 30 signatures on a petition or by paying a \$15 filing fee to the Silver Haired Legislature.

To obtain a petition a Candidate Registration Form must be completed. Persons signing petitions must be age 60 or older and be from the same county or district as the registered petition carrier. All petitions, or the filing fee, must be filed with a short biographical statement which will be used to inform voters. Petition forms may be secured from Minnesota Silver Haired Legislature, Box 302, Pine River, MN 56474.

An official list of candidates for each county and/or district will be announced after the petitions have been certified. At this time, candidates may begin campaigning.

Elections will be held as announced in the summer of election years, in each county and/or district at nutrition sites, senior centers and other places convenient for seniors to attend. Only Minnesotans age 60 or over may vote.

All candidates will be notified of election results.

ALTERNATES

Alternates will be those candidates who receive the second highest number of votes. In the event an elected delegate is unable to fulfill a term, the alternate will become the official delegate. Alternates are encouraged to attend the training and the sessions.

LEADERSHIP AND COMMITTEES

Elected leadership positions are Speaker, Speaker Pro Tem and Floor Leader. Delegates may request committee assignments. Committee chairpersons and members will be appointed by the leadership.

TRAINING

Candidates and alternates will receive training in legislative process.

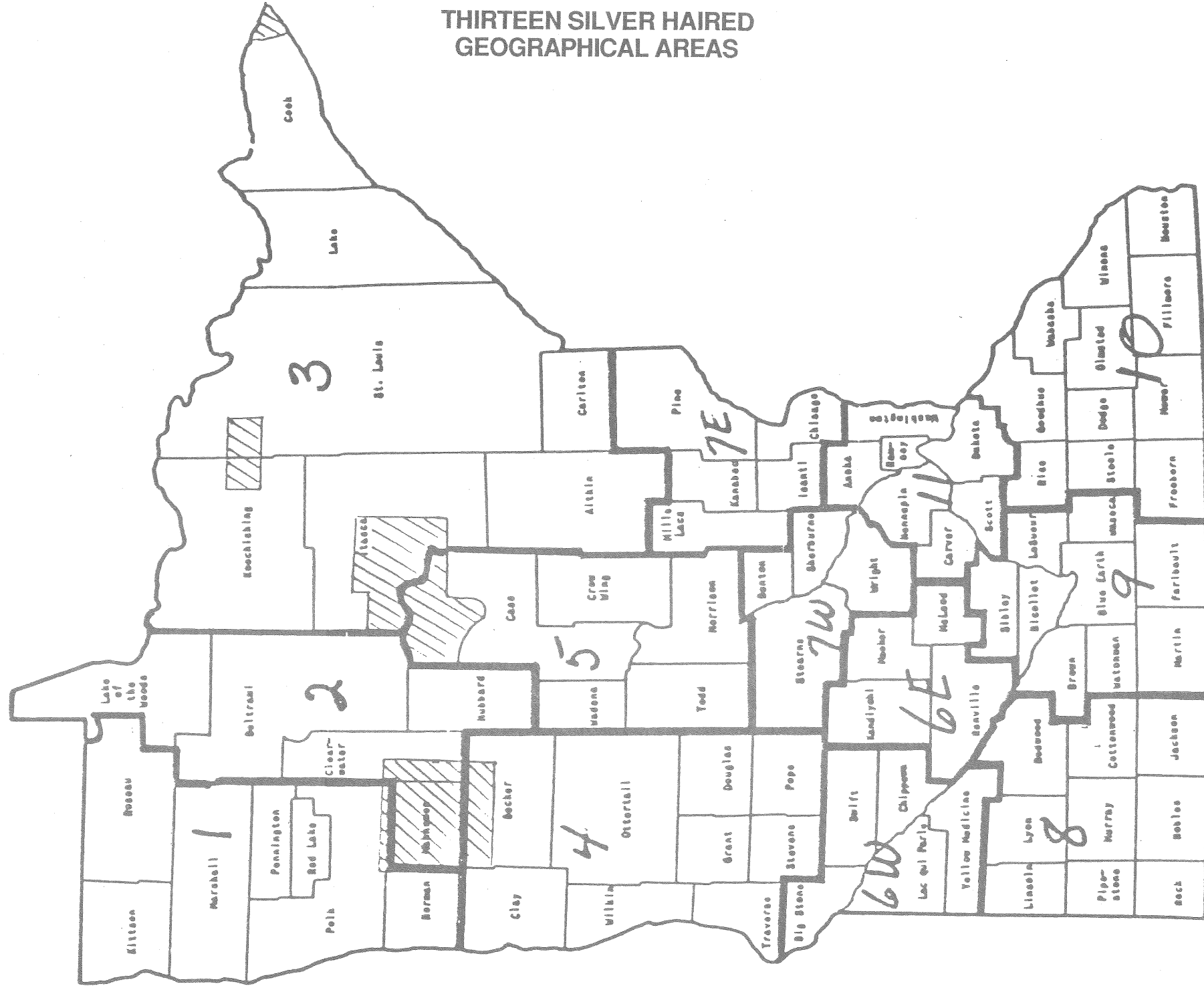
EXPENSES

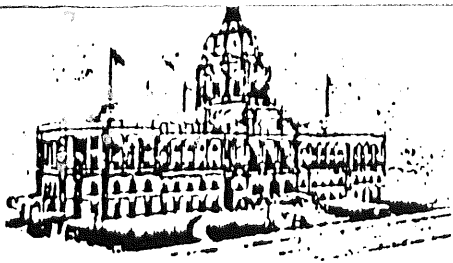
Funds are being sought to cover Delegate expenses to attend the session and training. Campaign expenses will not be paid.

FUNDING

Community support is needed. The elderly and concerned organizations are giving time, talent and donations. Support from business and corporations and foundations is also needed to meet annual expenses. Contributions are tax-deductible and may be made to Minnesota Silver Haired Legislature, Box 302, Pine River, MN 56474 (218) 587-4070.

The Minnesota Silver Haired Legislature election procedures, community meetings and volunteer activities will be coordinated in thirteen geographical areas throughout Minnesota. For more information or assistance contact the Pine River office of the MSHL.





MINNESOTA SILVER HAired LEGISLATURE

P.O. Box 302, Pine River, MN 56474
[218] 587 - 4945

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SILVER HAired LEGISLATURE

In the media recently there have been references to the Silver Haired Congress and Silver Haired Legislature. The time has now come to present the function and formation of the two organizations. The structure of the Legislature, hereafter called the Minnesota Silver Haired Legislature (MSHL), will closely follow the structure of the Minnesota regular Legislature. There will be 67 senior senators and 134 senior representatives. This body will convene twice a year in St. Paul to discuss pertinent bills concerning the senior population and also to prepare bills which are felt necessary to be submitted to the State Legislature for consideration. There will, of course, be interim sectional meetings to discuss regional problems.

As to the history of the Silver Haired Legislature, the first legislature was organized in 1973 in the State of Missouri. The next two states to formalize a senior legislature were Iowa and Florida. These were quickly followed by the States of Indiana, Georgia, Nebraska, North Dakota and Massachusetts making a total, with others, of 23 states with their own silver haired legislatures. The latest state to join is Texas.

The wheels have already been set into motion to create a silver haired legislature in the State of Minnesota. This is a

project which is going to take a great deal of work and cooperation on the part of seniors throughout the state. A resolution for acceptance of the MSHL, not only by the State Legislature itself, but by the Governor as well, has already been set in motion. This has been the procedure of the states already functioning as silver haired legislatures.

Funding in the various states has come from many sources; i.e., direct state financial backing, boards on aging, American Association of Retired Persons and many other sources, such as private donations. The first step is to create a steering committee, by solicitation, which is already in progress. As soon as the steering committee has been formulated, meetings will be held for the election of board members and other matters of business. We will, of course, have the help and guidance from the other states which have already gone through the formative steps. Two former members of the State Legislature have joined us in the building of the MSHL; Peter X. Fugina, who served in the House for over 20 years and who is a past president of the Minnesota Senior Federation, and Robert F. Christensen, who served in the House for eight years. Other past officers of the Minnesota Senior Federation have also joined in the building of this organization. Active memberships in the association have been established at \$10.00 per person and a qualified active member must also be 60 years of age and a voting citizen of the State of Minnesota. Associate members shall include individuals, organizations, corporations, businesses and others who have demonstrated their consideration for senior citizens by making a financial and/or service contribution to the MSHL, without voting privileges. Associate members may participate as members of advisory committees and in other ways related to their experience and interest. All related organizations dealing with the senior population in

Minnesota will be called on for their cooperation in the development of the MSHL. Progress reports will be issued through the media on a regular basis.

NATIONAL SILVER HAIRED CONGRESS

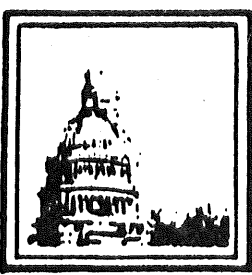
This is a body already in motion, designed to function on a parallel with the United States Congress. It is made up of 435 senior House of Representative members and 100 senior Senators. The National Silver Haired Congress is having its first session in Washington in December of this year. The steering committee of the congress has already been formed and each state, including Alaska and Hawaii, are represented. Your correspondent is the Minnesota steering committee member. A full report will be made through the media of this National Silver Haired Congress session.

Fred Jervis, President
Northern Lakes Senior Federation

October, 1986

Update: June, 1987

50 retired and incumbent Legislators have now become members of MSHL, as well as several senior citizen clubs who have made sustaining donations. Several senior citizens have also joined. Officers have been duly elected and sworn in and the constitution has been ratified.



MINNESOTA SILVER HAired LEGISLATURE

P.O. Box 302, Pine River, MN 56474
[218] 587-4945

THE MINNESOTA SILVER HAired LEGISLATURE WAS FOUNDED AS AN INDEPENDENT CHAPTER OF A NATIONAL GROUP TO AID THE ELDERLY BY ADVOCATING, SUPPORTING AND SUGGESTING LAWS THAT WILL HELP THE ELDERLY. THIS IS NOT A NEW CONCEPT BUT A TRIED AND TRUE MEASURE THAT HAS BEEN USED WITH GREAT SUCCESS IN OTHER STATES.

WE BELIEVE THAT WE ARE CAPABLE OF THE LEG WORK TO HELP ENACT SUCH LAWS IN MINNESOTA.

SELLING INSURANCE AND FORMING GROUPS AND HIRING STAFF ARE GOOD BUT IN THE END YOU ARE BENEFITING INSURANCE COMPANIES AND STAFF EMPLOYEES, MOST, NOT THE ELDERLY.

WE WANT TO HELP THE ELDERLY AND THUSLY ALL WILL BE HELPED, IF ONLY BY THE TRICKLE-DOWN EFFECT; BY ADVOCATING JUST LEGISLATION TO MAKE THE LIVES OF OUR ELDERLY SAFER, MORE COMFORTABLE AND HAPPIER.

OUR NEED FOR FUNDS ARE THE USUAL - POSTAGE, TELEPHONE, RENT, MILEAGE AND OFFICE SUPPLIES. WE ARE NOW SUPPORTED BY MEMBERSHIPS, DONATIONS AND A GREAT GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS.

RETIRED PERSONS ARE NOT RETIRED ABILITIES AND SPIRIT. PLEASE HELP US TO HELP OUR FELLOW ELDERS AND THEIR FAMILIES TO LIVE HAPPIER, HEALTHIER AND SAFER LIVES.

Minnesota Silver Haired Legislature Report

Submitted by Fred Jervis

A very important meeting was held in St. Cloud on May 1st for the purpose of ratification of the Constitution and election of officers for Minnesota Silver Haired Legislature. Members from throughout the State were present. The Constitution was ratified and the following officers were elected for a two-year term: President, Howard Nelson, Lindstrom, former Senator; Vice President, M. J. (Mac) McCauley, Winona, former Representative; Secretary, Charlotte Miller, West St. Paul, former Secretary of Minnesota Senior Federation; Treasurer, Robert Christensen, Pine River, former Representative; Executive Director, Fred Jervis, Pine River.

To date the membership is made up of 45 former Legislators, several incumbent Legislators, former officers of the Minnesota Senior Federation, many senior clubs, and individuals from throughout the State.

Presently there are 23 states which have embraced the concept of the Silver Haired Legislature and Minnesota now brings the total to 24 and there are several other states now in the process of developing their own Silver Haired Legislatures. All of these organizations now in existence, and developing, are and probably will be the most influential groups in each of the states where they exist.

The Silver Haired Legislature movement is strictly a nonpartisan concept and is NOT a lobby but rather an advocacy movement.

If you as an individual would like to become a member of the Minnesota Silver Haired Legislature you may either write for information to Post Office Box 302, Pine River, MN 56474 or telephone 218-587-4070.

From Rocking Chair to Legislative Battle

Nearly half the states have "silver-haired legislatures," whose members meet to identify issues and propose legislative solutions. Many of their proposals eventually become law.

By Susan Kelleher

When it comes to doing legislative battle, silver-haired citizens are becoming seasoned veterans. Just ask Saul "Sy" Simons, a 78-year-old Floridian whose voice reflects the confidence of a man accustomed to winning.

"You can't sit back in your rocking chair thinking about how things could be improved," he said. "You have to stop rocking and get out and do something."

Simons is among a growing number of senior citizens who have become advocates for change by joining senior legislatures in their states. There are currently 23 "silver-haired legislatures," where elected representatives from the states' 60-and-older population meet to identify issues, formulate bills and develop strategies for moving their proposals through the state's legislative machinery.

The groups have no lawmaking power and meet only a few days a year. But in some states, they have proven themselves effective in advancing the cause of older adults in areas such as health care, housing and transportation. In California, for example, the seniors have in the past six years managed to get 75 percent of their proposals passed into law. Last year, 60 of the 116 "memorials" were picked

up by sponsors and moved through the Legislature, according to Albert Perrault of Joshua Tree, Calif.

"Our main function," says Perrault, a four-year veteran of the group, "is to identify issues from the grassroots area. The regular Legislature doesn't always have the time to get out around the people like we do. We're out among the people every day and we know their problems."

The members are elected generally to two-year terms and serve on a variety of committees targeted to specific concerns such as health care, income and security, and government operations. The elections are held primarily at senior centers and other areas accessible to older adults.

The amount and source of funding for the groups vary widely from state to state: In Florida, each member pays his or her own way; in California and Louisiana, a voluntary income tax check-off supplies all the funds; in Iowa and Missouri, the state picks up the tab. Other states, like Minnesota and Montana, use a combination of state and private donations to fund their groups while still others (Texas and Virginia) rely entirely on donations. Funding ranges from \$8,000 a year in Wyoming to \$320,000 a year in California, according to the California Commission on Aging. The money is used to pay for housing and transportation for the annual meeting and for materials the groups use through-

out the year.

Because none of the senior legislators receive a salary, the members consider themselves advocates and not lobbyists.

"We're here to develop long-term solutions for tomorrow's problems," said Simons, who believes state agencies are too often wrapped up in today's crises to look further down the road. "We're advocates, but we have to become activists also. We have become activists for what we're advocating... Just because you're vociferous in voicing your opinion doesn't mean you're a lobbyist. It's a fine line."

A few years ago, some California residents felt the Senior Legislature had crossed the line, said Perrault.

"We had a backlash here three or four years ago, which I considered very serious," he said. "Some people were saying that we seniors were for seniors only, that we had an undue influence and that we were selfish. Many of the seniors were upset about it, but I personally think it was a good thing because it made us step back and take a look at what we were doing."

Perrault notes that the five top priorities for this year—priorities that include a state health insurance plan and in-home supportive care—are proposals the group believes will benefit all the residents of California.

Frank Avery, chairman of Missouri's Silver-Haired Legislature Supervisory Board, said the problems affecting senior citizens in the state also affect low-income and handicapped people, so measures the group sponsors frequently will benefit those people as well as seniors.

As examples, he cited a measure to give a tax break to low-income homeowners and renters, another to eliminate the sales tax on prescription drugs, and a change in the state's lien laws that prevents subcontractors from collecting delinquent funds from homeowners unless the contractor has first obtained the homeowner's permission to do so.

The Missouri group also scored a victory that Avery believes will give seniors a bigger say in selecting the next president. "On Super Tuesday," he said, "Missouri will have a presidential primary. The primary won't select the delegates, but it will establish the percentages. The delegates will still be selected by caucus. The seniors were

Susan Kelleher is a Denver-based free-lance writer and a staff researcher for The Washington Post.



Photo: Amir Rahimi

California Senior Senators Ed Kramer and Peggy Rowe address the press.

interested in a primary because the caucus system requires that they go out at night. A lot of them don't have transportation and it's difficult to get around, especially at night."

That the seniors have been able to have an impact on the system speaks of the broad nature of their proposals and the importance of the senior voting block, said Avery.

"In our state," he said, "we have a good percentage of seniors who do

vote and who are interested in the issues for several reasons: They have more time to think about them and they're affected by more things as they get older. Seniors vote in bigger percentages than other ages."

The Silver-Haired Legislature, said Avery, provides seniors with a voice they otherwise wouldn't have.

"In the past, a lot of these people were represented by trade groups or unions or merchants organizations," said Avery. "As they retire, they have no one to speak for them or consolidate their ideas. We try to do that. These people need representation. Once you retire, you face different kinds of problems and no one's there to represent you."


Millie Gillitzer, a member of Wyoming's Silver-Haired Legislature and the state's Advisory Board to the Commission on Aging, said giving seniors what she called "a coherent voice" in legislation has resulted in greater attention being paid to seniors' concerns at the state level.

"We learn what is important to the seniors in our community and bring those issues to our legislators," she

said. "It helps because we know our legislators in each county and we can bring our concerns to them.

"Seniors' problems," she said, "were not addressed as thoroughly as they are now because there was no organized voice to get the message through. With the senior legislature, we were better able to explain our concerns and tell them what we needed."

Although the elderly citizens spend a great deal of time as representatives of their peers, there are many rewards, said Simons of Florida, who spends between \$800 and \$1,000 of his income attending legislative functions.

"I get satisfaction in knowing that I'm trying to do something for my fellow person," said Simons. "I got involved in this because I was appointed to serve on the city of Hallendale's Human Resources Department and dealt with indigents and people who couldn't care for themselves. I was also visiting my friends in rest homes and found (the homes) in deplorable conditions. I knew just going to the local office would get nothing done. The only way to see anything accomplished is to get involved in legislation." 

Silver-Haired Legislatures Meet in 23 States

State	Year Started	Members			Session	Percent of Pop. over 60 Years	Funding Source
		Uni-cameral	Lower House	Upper House			
Arkansas	1977	99			1 day biennial	18.5	Title IV grant money
California	1981		40	80	4½ days annual	14.3	Income tax check-off
Florida	1978		40	120	3½ days annual	23.1	Supported by members
Georgia	1978		27	75	4 days biennial	13.4	Office of Aging
Hawaii	1983	Hawaii County Continuing Education Project				11.8	AAA* contracts the University of Hawaii/Hilo
Indiana	1977	100			3 days biennial	14.9	Office of Aging and local agencies
Iowa	1978	100			3 days annual	17.9	State funds through AAA*
Kansas	1982	125			3 days annual	17.4	Coalition on Aging
Louisiana	1986		15	35	2 days annual	13.4	State income tax check-off
Massachusetts	1980		40	160	1 day annual	17.5	State Department of Education
Minnesota	1988		67	134	3 days annual	15.9	State money matched by donations
Missouri	1973		30	120	3 days annual	17.7	State funds through AAA*
Montana	1980	65			3 days annual	15.2	State money matched by donations
Nebraska	1981	49			3 days annual	17.4	Senior Council and Race Track
North Dakota	1980	167			biennial	16.5	Local funding and federal grant money
Ohio		Development in progress				15.3	
Oklahoma	1981		22	44	3 days biennial	16.7	Member contributions and donations
Rhode Island	1981	80			varies biannual	18.6	State Department of Elderly and House of Representatives
Texas	1987	132			3 days annual	13.3	Donations
Utah	1982		29	75	3 days annual	10.6	Donations
Virginia	1983		40	100	3 days annual	16.9	State appropriations
West Virginia	1981		34	100	3 days annual	16.9	State appropriations
Wyoming	1982	48			3 days annual	11.8	Education funds and donations

Sources: California Coalition on Aging and 1980 Census

*Area Agency on Aging

CARE cares for seniors

By DWIGHT BOYUM
Staff Writer

The phone rings.

Sherrie Christensen answers and listens to a request from a senior citizen who needs a ride to an appointment.

But Christensen, who owns Good Neighbor Home Care, can't help seniors who can't afford Good Neighbor's transportation rates.

Transportation is a persistent problem for seniors, Christensen said, and one that has no solution yet.

"They call the county or the senior citizens' center and say, 'I need a ride to the doctor. Who can I call?'" Christensen said.

Christensen and Virginia Johnson, a social worker at St. Joseph's Medical Center, co-chair the senior committee of Coordinating Area Resources Effectively. The group meets monthly to discuss problems experienced by senior citizens.

Brainerd's Dial-A-Ride program, used by many senior citizens, doesn't operate on weekends and evenings, Christensen said. The CARE seniors committee has approached city officials about expanding the hours for Dial-A-Ride but was told that there wasn't enough money in the budget to support more hours, she said.

Some volunteers normally would be happy to drive seniors to and from appointments, she said, but the issue of insurance liability has made many reluctant to offer rides.

A new business in the area may ease the problem, Christensen said. The business, called Care Cab, offers non-emergency transportation. It takes calls at 829-1099.

"We're still working on a solution," Christensen said. "As to what it is, we're not sure."

The CARE seniors group deals with several health and lifestyle



SHERRIE CHRISTENSEN
No solutions yet

issues. Christensen considers her committee a resource and support group for other area agencies that serve seniors.

'Legislature' for seniors takes root

One of the newest organizations for Minnesota senior citizens is the Minnesota Silver Haired Legislature.

Leaders met May 1 in St. Cloud to ratify a constitution and elect officers.

Members from throughout the state were present. The constitution was ratified and the following officers were elected for a two-year term:

President, Howard Nelson, Lindstrom, former senator; vice president, M. J. "Mac" McCauley, Winona, former representative; secretary, Charlotte Miller, West St. Paul, former secretary of Minnesota Senior Federation; treasurer, Robert Christensen, Pine River, former representative; and executive director, Fred Jervis, Pine River.

To date the membership is made up of 45 former legislators, several incumbent legislators, former of-

ficers of the Minnesota Senior Federation, many senior clubs and individuals from throughout the state.

Presently there are 23 states which have embraced the concept of the Silver Haired Legislature and Minnesota now brings the total to 24 and there are several other states now in the process of developing their own Silver Haired Legislatures.

The first Silver Haired Legislature was organized in 1973 in Missouri. The next two states to formalize a senior legislature were Iowa and Florida. These were quickly followed by the States of Indiana, Georgia, Nebraska, North Dakota and Massachusetts making a total, with others, of 23 states with their own silver haired legislatures. The latest state to join is Texas.

Funding in the various states has come from many sources; direct state financial backing, boards on

aging, American Association of Retired Persons and many other sources, such as private donations.

Two former members of the state Legislature have joined in the building of the MSHL: Peter X. Fugina, who served in the House for over 20 years and who is a past president of the Minnesota Senior Federation, and Robert F. Christensen, who served in the House for eight years.

Other past officers of the Minnesota Senior Federation have also joined in the building of this organization. Immediate funding will be realized from an annual single associate membership of \$10 and/or an annual sustaining membership of \$25. All senior citizen clubs will be asked to contribute a sustaining fee of \$25 or more. All related organizations dealing with the senior population in Minnesota will be called on for their cooperation in the development of the MSHL.

25% to 50% off