



USM News

May 2010

VISIT OUR WEB PAGE — UNITEDSENIORS.NET

From the Pres

The 2010 Legislative Session is dead. Long live the 2011 Legislative Session.

The 2010 Session is behind us. The tendency is to heave a collective sigh of relief, count the successes, examine what didn't go as we would have liked, and stop thinking about it. But this year, we mustn't do that. This is not the time to sit back and relax.

Lots of hard budget choices were avoided because it's an election year. Next year, with no more money to move between accounts and no more Fed dollars, it is going to be harder to balance the State budget.

It ain't rocket science. Whatever you call it - taxes or fees - they're going up. It will cost more to live in Maryland next year.

Increasing costs to citizens only addresses in revenue side. Spending will still have to be cut. The prospects just aren't pretty - higher costs and cuts in services.

Who will pay those increases and whose services will be cut.?

We believe that seniors want to carry their fair share of the load. Yet, if we are to follow our mission to *preserve and enhance the mental, physical and financial well being of Maryland seniors* we must start now to make sure that seniors don't carry more than their fair share. USM needs to continue to grow in order to make it an even stronger voice for seniors. Time is of the essence, and the future is now.

I'll travel to anywhere in the State to solicit organizational and individual members. You need to let me know who wants to hear what USM is and what it does so we can sign them up.

Ted Meyerson

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ANNUAL MEETING 10 AM - MAY 17, 2010

The Chesapeake Room
2664 Riva Road, Heritage Office Park
Annapolis

Featuring

President's 2010 Report

Where we've been and where we're going

Election of Officers

(President, VP Legislation, Treasurer)

Verizon - Internet Safety

Internet users are exposed to the possibility of fraud and/or identity theft. Everyone should want to hear what Verizon has to say about Internet Safety.

Meetings are open. All members, guests, and media are welcome.

BYLAWS CHANGED

The following bylaws changes were passed at the April 19 board meeting.

Section 2. Dues

a. Dues for USM shall be determined annually at the April Board meeting by a majority vote of the authorized voting representatives attending the meeting and shall be payable by the first day of the anniversary month of the member becoming a member.

Organizational members more than three months delinquent in the payment of annual dues shall be denied voting privileges until their annual dues payment are received by the Treasurer, and their payments shall be recorded as though they had been paid on the date when the payments was due.

b. June will be the anniversary month for organizations that were members prior to June 2009.

CELL PHONE BILL PASSED

Last year, the General Assembly banned the use of texting while driving. This year, the General Assembly passed a law to ban the use of hand held cell phones while driving.

Effective October 1, 2010, Maryland will join six other States and the District of Columbia to prohibit hand held cell phone use while driving. Drivers will be able to use blue tooth technology and other technology that does not require the use of the driver's hands to speak. They will be able to use their hands to turn their phone on and off.

This will be a secondary offense. Drivers will be cited only if they commit another offense, such as failing to stop at a red light. They cannot be stopped solely for violating the provisions of the new law. The fine for the first violation will be \$40.

**OUR MISSION IS CLEAR
THE CHALLENGE IS GREAT**

HELP!

Can you help USM make use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, U Tube or other web based ways to reach out to more people?

**CONTACT TED MEYERSON AT
UNITEDSENIORS@VERIZON.NET**

READY AND WILLING TO MAKE PRESENTATIONS

USM membership is soaring. Nearly 80 organizations and over 200 individuals now belong to USM. USM's importance to the well being of Maryland seniors will continue to grow as those numbers continue to grow.

Ted is willing to go anywhere in the State to tell people about USM. Call him at 301-854-2971 or email him at unitedseniors@verizon.net.

The Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute has started **MARYLANDERS FOR A BALANCED APPROACH** to explore responsible alternatives that would balance spending cuts with increased revenue to meet the growing needs of Maryland and leave our state in a position to flourish when prosperity returns.

For more information, please visit their website www.BalancedApproachMD.org or contact

Lisa Kramer at (410) 727-6367 or email lkramer@mdnonprofit.org

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORTS AT APRIL 19 MEETING

USM bylaws require that a nominating committee report at the April 19 meeting and that elections be held at the May meeting. Committee members Sue Ward, Dave Dickens and Regina Rocco nominated Ted Meyerson for a second term as President, Dave Dickens as Treasurer, and Don Sillars as Legislative VP. The nominations were approved .

Elections will be held at the Annual Meeting on May 17. Floor nominations may be offered at that time.

WHERE IS USM INVOLVED

USM has a seat, or is represented through the President of USM having a seat, on the following very important committees:

- The State Oversight Committee for Nursing Homes and Assisted Living Facilities
- Long Term Care Payment Advisory Committee
- Continuing Care Advisory Committee.
- State Council on Quality Care at the End of Life
- Task Force on Information at End of Life
- Task Force on Communities for Life
- Continuing Care Committee

There is, currently, a vacancy on the Money Follows the Person Committee. If you would like to fill that position, please contact President Meyerson.

MEMBERSHIP

The benefits of membership:

- 1) **Have a voice** by supporting and being part of the premier coalition of individuals and organizations that advocate for Maryland seniors
- 2) **Be informed** about what happens in Annapolis and the State that affects seniors.
- 3) **Participate**, to whatever level you desire, in discussions, committees, task forces, and other activities.

The cost is modest; the consequences great — just \$10 for an individual, and \$50 for most organizations.

Charging dues on our web site gives us the information needed (name, email address, phone number, and address) . Organizations that sign up on the web need to send a list of who they want added to our email list.

**NEW MEMBERS CAN SIGN UP
ON OUR WEB PAGE**

**ALL MEMBERS CAN PAY DUES
ON LINE**

www.unitedseniors.net

NO FUSS NO STAMPS

**IT'S SO EASY YOU'LL WANT TO DO IT
JUST FOR FUN**



USM MEETINGS

Meetings are open to everyone and are usually held on the third Monday at 10 AM in the Chesapeake Room

2664 Riva Road, Heritage Office Park, Annapolis

The next regular meeting will be held on April 19

Check the web page for any changes.



**Where are
the new
individual
members?**

USM wants you and your organization to join in making it an even stronger advocate for seniors

Members	Goal
500	77
400	59
300	58
205	57
150	56
125	55
120	54
115	53
110	52
105	51
100	50

Joining
Members

VERIZON OFFERS PREVIEW AT MAY MEETING

Verizon has scheduled a Health and Safety Fair just three days after the USM May meeting. Briana Gowling, Verizon Maryland - External Affairs, will give attendees at the USM May meeting a preview of the kinds of information that will be presented at the Fair.



BALTIMORE SENIORS please join us for our

Smart Seniors - Health & Safety Fair

featuring guest presentations & information you need to know

•Consumer Protection	•Internet Safety
•Communications Services	•Telemedicine and your health

THURSDAY, MAY 20, 2010
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Light lunch fare served between 11:30-1:30
WAXTER SENIOR CENTER
1000 CATHEDRAL STREET
BALTIMORE, MD 21201



AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SHARING

USM is a hugely diverse group with a common mission. We have a lot to learn from each other. This newsletter is the perfect place to advertise events and share information. Currently, it is sent to over 800 email addresses of individual and organizational members, legislators, guests, and media.

If individuals share this newsletter, and organizational members forward this newsletter to their members, this publication has the potential of reaching thousands of people. FOR FREE!!

You can send articles or announcements of events to: unitedseniors@verizon.net.

APRIL BOARD MEETING WAS AN INFORMATION EVENT

At the April Board Meeting, Nancy Grimm, Director of the Office of Health Care Quality; Mike Lachance, Legislative Liaison for the Department of Aging; and Neil Bergsman, Director of the Maryland Budget and Tax Policy Institute, gave their views on the Legislative Session that just ended.

Ms. Grimm spoke of increased responsibility for her office and a hiring freeze that will leave OHCQ even more shorthanded. She seemed optimistic about the prospects of getting additional personnel in the next budget go-round in order to monitor forensic labs - a new assignment for OHCQ. She also spoke in glowing terms about her staff, and how they are dedicated professionals committed to maintaining the highest standards in their efforts to protect Marylanders. You can find out more about the Office of Health Care Quality by going to: <http://www.dhmh.state.md.us/ohcq>.

Mike Lachance spoke about legislation that passed. He, too, noted that few if any bills that cost the State money passed. Still, he commented that the Department of Aging received all of the funding that the Governor had put into his budget. Three bills of note are: 1) a Uniform Power of Attorney bill finally made it through both houses after major compromises, 2) a Uniform Guardianship bill passed, and 3) a False Claims bill passed that will enable the State to prosecute those who put in false claims to collect Medicaid payments. (A summary of the Legislative Session can be found at: http://mlis.state.md.us/2010rs/Wrap_up/current_issue.pdf).

Neil Bergsman addressed the State's fiscal situation. He explained how the mandate to balance the budget was attained this year, but warned that the future years would be challenging. He indicated that this year's budget calls for actually spending less money than was budgeted four years ago. He warned that increased revenue as well as continuing cuts will be necessary to balance future budgets.

With Lisa Kramer, Maryland Non-Profit Association has started Marylanders for a Balance Approach to find ways to address the problem (see page 2).

Neil's analysis can be found at www.marylandpolicy.org.

USM members do have a way of getting around. Partners in Care President and CEO Barbara Huston is noted in the ACTS OF KINDESS feature on the inside back cover of *The National Enquirer*. The feature article is devoted to 'a kind person making a difference,' Barbara is the star of the April 5, 2010 edition. Here is the article with photos of Barbara, Ken Dunshee and Vi Cosgrove.

Acts of kindness

PAYBACK TIME!

Charity REWARDS SENIORS who helped others when they were younger

All across the country, every day, good people perform acts of kindness for strangers. Only rarely do they receive recognition for their selfless work. In our ongoing series, The ENQUIRER will put the spotlight on those who care enough to make life better for those around them.

WHEN she was younger, Vi Cosgrove drove elderly ladies who couldn't get around on their own to doctor's appointments or the grocery store. Now at 83, Vi doesn't move around so well herself, and 73-year-old Ken Dunshee helps her out. Like Vi once was, Ken is a volunteer with Maryland charity Partners in Care – a pay-it-forward group that ensures frail but independent seniors can continue living in their own homes. "It means the world to me," Vi told The ENQUIRER. "Thanks to them, I'll be able to stay here until the good Lord has other ideas!" Ken added: "It's the American way really. We're just being good neighbors. I'm happy to help people like Vi. I get as much out of it as they do." The award-winning charity is the brain-child of former Pentagon staffer Barbara Huston and two pals, who recruited an army of 700 regular volunteers to help out in towns and villages outside Baltimore. Barbara runs the organization like a military operation, matching people with needs with volunteers with skills. Volunteers do everything from changing light bulbs to building handrails to installing new windows, doors and roofs. They also drive seniors where they need to go. "People who need help get it, people who can offer help give it, and by doing so they help build a stronger sense of community," Barbara, a 56-year-old mother of two, told The ENQUIRER. "We give volunteers credit for their contribution, so they'll get help in the future if they need it. But a lot of our volunteers don't expect anything back. Most of our drivers pay for gas out of their own pocket." **MOST OF THE JOBS ARE SMALL PROJECTS**, but many of the seniors can't afford to cover the cost, or they can't get a contractor to come out, Ken pointed out. He installed a new door for Vi, and a pet flap for her two little dogs. "I was so grateful," she said. "I have to use a wheelchair or a walker and I couldn't keep getting up to let the dogs out. "I've got total confidence in volunteers like Ken, because I've been a volunteer too. This group has helped me stay in the house where I've lived for 47 years, and they've helped a lot of other elderly folks do the same thing." To learn more about Partners in Care and how you can help, visit www.partnersincare.org.

Vi Cosgrove receives help from volunteer Ken Dunshee (at left)

Thanks to them, I'll be able to stay here until the good Lord has other ideas!

Partners in Care leader Barbara Huston

Tell us about a kind person

If you know of someone who deserves to be honored for acts of kindness, please let us know by e-mailing us at: letters@nationalenquirer.com. Or write to us at: Acts of Kindness, National Enquirer, 1000 American Media Way, Boca Raton, FL 33464-1000. We'll pay you \$250 if we use your submission.