



## South Dakota Retired School Personnel

# NEWSLETTER

*"To Serve, Not To Be Served"*

Affiliated with National Retired Teachers Association

[www.SDRSP.org](http://www.SDRSP.org)

October 2021, Vol. 54, No. 1

## RECAP of: 2021 SDRSP State Convention

The South Dakota Retired School Personnel Convention was held on September 28-29th in Sioux Falls. Sixty-five retirees from across the state enjoyed the "Welcome to the Jungle" theme. A pre-convention morning trip to the Great Plains Zoo and Delbridge Museum of Natural History started the event and the theme continued into the afternoon sessions. Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken, Superintendent Jane Stavem and Sioux Falls Unit President Cathy Anderson were introduced by Rhonda Preller, SDRSP President. All three gave welcome addresses to the group. Presentations from the ZooMobile, a Tour of Zambia, Africa given by Bill and Cathy Zubke and Celtic Step Dancers were enjoyed in the afternoon. Throughout the two-day event, fifty-dollar bills were given out as door prizes as well as baskets donated by individual units. The festivities continued into the evening with a catered meal, community service awards and the keynote speaker, Bob Prentice, "Mr. Attitude".

Breakfast was served on the second day of the convention and a memorial service was conducted honoring those members who had died in the past two years since the convention had been cancelled in 2020 due to Covid. The annual business meeting was held, and then speakers were South Dakota AARP Director Erik Gaikowski and Michelle Humann from the SD State Retirement office in Pierre. The 2021 Convention concluded with lunch provided by AARP. The 2020 Grandparent essay winner from Madison, Jade Wilkens, read his essay about his grandfather.

The next convention will be held during May 2022. Preller states that the theme will be "Let's Fiesta".



Betty Beyer, 2020 Florence Krieger Award winner. Cathy Anderson, 2021 Florence Krieger Award winner.



Community Service Award winners; Jan Davis, Harley Schmadake, Dennis and Julie Watkins and Gayle Botnem.



Bill and Cathy Zubke. Presenters of Tour of Zambia, Africa.

# Community Health & Service:

Submitted by: Carm Tobin



## Gratitude is the Best Attitude

In less than two weeks, we will be flipping the calendar to November. The official thankful month. What about the other eleven months of the year? Implementing a gratitude practice should not be confined to just the 'Thanksgiving month'.

By definition gratitude means: the quality of being thankful, readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

If you, like me, are new to traveling on a personal growth journey, you will quickly discover that experts all agree a daily gratitude practice is very beneficial.

Here is a list of seven scientifically proven benefits of gratitude that will motivate you to give thanks year-round.

- It boosts optimism and giving
- It reduces materialism
- It fosters happiness & resilience
- It enriches our relationships
- It fortifies physical & mental health
- It intensifies work performances
- It enhances total well being

My recent mantra is more joy, less stress. I fully believe that gratitude will assist in achieving my goal. However, it is not a once-in-a-while process but a DAILY focus.

It is recommended that writing down one or two things you are grateful for each morning or evening is much more effective than just ticking them off in your mind.

We all know that life is not always sunshine and rainbows. When life does not go as planned, it can be so easy to focus on the negative. I am challenging you to acknowledge the negative and then dig deeper to find the positive.

Remember: It is not joy that makes us grateful, it is gratitude that makes us joyful!

Go make a difference!  
Carm Tobin

# Thank you!! Thank you!!

for the following donations to the Scholarship Fund!

- A big thank you to AARP for their donation for the SDRSP Convention and other SDRSP activities.
- Madison ARSP
- In memory of Sharon Rishoi by Bill Zubke and Pat Johnson.
- In memory of Shirley Eisnach by Marilyn Cult, the VanCleave's and Mary Jenner.
- In memory of Dennis Eisnach by Mary Jenner
- In memory of Jeannette Beemer by Mary Jenner
- In memory of Marcia by Mike West

# A Message from the President:

Submitted by: Rhonda Preller



Who remembers this song, “The More We Get Together”? Don’t you just have to sing or hum it!

Over sixty of us from across the state were able to “get together” in September for our 2021 SDRSP Convention in Sioux Falls. It was a wonderful time to hear interesting presenters, eat good food and enjoy friendships. Thank you to the organized Sioux Falls Unit for hosting this event.

The second verse of this catchy tune is, “The more we work together, together, together, the more we work together, the happier we’ll be.” It takes work to keep our local units running smoothly and effectively. It’s hard work. In fact, it can be really difficult sometimes, but more hands working together makes a huge difference.

Covid has impacted our daily lives. Some people still prefer to stay home and that is understandable, but when you are ready—get back out there. Enjoy life. Do not let Covid win. Please do not let Covid impact our local units, and our state memberships. Some units are barely hanging in there with low attendance or no meetings. As your President, let me know if I can help out in anyway. Our SDRSP Board has experience and many great ideas. Reach out to any of us if you could use some assistance.

The third verse, “The more we play together, together, together, the more we play together, the happier we’ll be”. It doesn’t matter if we are five years old or 85 years old, we need to get out and play! We should enjoy life, be entertained, learn something new and appreciate friendships. Keep the friends at your local unit of South Dakota Retired School Personnel close to you—“The more you get together the happier you’ll be”! Stay safe and have a fantastic holiday season. (Yes, it IS getting very close to Thanksgiving and Christmas!)

Here’s a little “teaser” for our 2022 Convention, “Let’s Fiesta!”

Rhonda Preller

SDRSP President



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# From Gerri Larson Executive Director:

**Submitted by: Gerri Larson**

A big “Thank-You” to the Sioux Falls unit for planning a Great Convention. President Rhonda’s theme of “Welcome to the Jungle” was carried through out including a pre-convention tour of the Zoo. A beautiful Fall day for everyone to be outside for a walk and viewing the animals.

South Dakota Retired School Personnel continues to be involved with the “5 State Pilot Project” and the “We Care” Grant from National Retired Teachers Ass. (NRTA) We hope some of the funds you received for membership have been helpful in maintaining your Units. One of the goals of these Grants is to also help and encourage Units to reach out to new Retirees and new Members.



This past week I attended the NRTA Advocacy/Lobby meetings on Zoom. Pension and Retirement Benefits continue to be a concern of all States. A reminder, Fact Sheets for State-by-State reviews can be downloaded on the NRTA website. We are also hoping to meet with Senator Thune’s office to discuss Prescription Drug prices and the Credit for Caring Act.

A new SDRSP Logo was adopted at the meeting. Watch for the Logo on future Letter heads and other items.

NRTA is sponsoring Ads for Broadband funds available to help citizens/students get help with Internet access. Federal dollars have already been allocated for this and are waiting to be dispersed. SDRSP has added their name to the Ads to inform citizens that this help is available to them.

Stay Healthy and Happy,

Gerri Larson

SDRSP Executive Director

## Membership:

**Submitted by: Jacque Sly**

There is one thing I have learned throughout life whether considering family, profession or volunteering. That one thing is that one size does not fit all. As we have adapted, adjusted, and evolved the past couple of years, each SD Retired School Personnel Unit has done what best fits its needs.



Units are facing some decisions after not meeting for months: not having anyone step forward to lead, being uncomfortable getting back into the world of meeting regularly, and/or feeling unsure of what is ahead.

Maybe consider an option to think beyond what was “normal” and usual in the past. Maybe your Unit chooses not to meet as often as before. Maybe there will not be any programs, just visiting over a cup of coffee. Maybe one person can be in charge of getting a program for one month and another person will take care of the next month. Maybe instead of programs there will be a community volunteer activity. Maybe instead of officers there can be a point of contact for the state without the typical formality.

Whatever your Unit decides to do, know that there is no one “right way” of organizing. Some things that have resonated in the past are Connecting, Learning and Serving. Can your Unit continue to do one, two or three of those things?

The Membership point of contact for the rest of this term is Jacque Sly, jacsly48@gmail.com, 605-343-4956 (home) or 605-381-9116 (cell and texting). Please send updated contact information for officers for 2021-2022 or a point of contact. Also, once new and renewal memberships have been sent to the treasurer, Pat Johnson, send any additional address changes, deaths of members, etc. to Jacque.

Connect. Learn. Serve.

Jacque Sly

SDRSP Interim Membership  
President Elect

# Unit News:

## **Madison**

Submitted by Eleanor Enga, Secretary

Eighteen members and guests of the Madison Area Retired School Personnel met September 27 at the home of Jan Davis. They carpoled to the Lakes Golf Course to visit the Lakes Living Memorial Garden. Davis explained how the idea of the garden originated and how the idea blossomed into reality. Bricks and markers were sold with names engraved to memorialize family and friends. Visitors recognized many of the names inscribed.

After the garden tour, the group returned to the Davis home for lunch and visiting. While introducing themselves, guests related summaries of their connections to education. Each person ended their summary with a one word self-description.

The business meeting followed, and Co-chairman Rita Brown thanked members for helping clean the Prairie Village Library and for serving as hostesses during the Prairie Village Jamboree. She led a discussion of the management of an inactive member list.

Joyce Welbon, chairman of the Prairie Village Library blind replacement committee, reported that the group did not receive the grant, but money had been donated for the project. The new blinds were scheduled to be installed September 28 at a cost of \$2,655.35.

The Grandparent Essay committee reported that schools had been contacted in regard to this year's contest. Diane Spilde, Carla Downs, Elaine Brown, and Joyce Welbon serve on this committee. Teachers are encouraged to contact any committee member if they have questions about the contest.

Barb Hyland reported briefly on the Tour of Tables event, which will be held on October 16. Doors will open at 11:00 with lunch served at 12:00. Members were able to purchase tickets from her after the meeting.

Eleanor Enga, Secretary



*Members and guests attending were Nyla Sonen, Deb Gerdes, Diane Olson, Sue Larsen, Elaine Hofteizer, Mona Reisig, Joyce Welbon, Nancy McAreavey, Rita Brown, Elaine Brown, Barb Hyland, Eleanor Enga, Marilou Schaefer, Lois McAreavey, Dianne Williams, Jan Davis, Shirley Haar, Diane Spilde*

# Unit News:

## Northern Hills

Submitted by Dianne Hemminger, Chairman

COVID strikes again! We were unable to have a meeting in September because of the Covid Virus.

We had a meeting on October 18. We hope we can continue to meet throughout the rest of the year.

Julie Walkins and her husband, Dennis presented a program with materials from the AARP Fraud Watch Network. Fraud is a multi-billion industry with scammers constantly looking for new and ever-more sophisticated ways to steal our personal information and our hard-earned money. The presenters shared with us how we must be aware of what tricks con artists use to steal our money and how we can outsmart scammers before they strike.

Julie Walkins attended the convention entitled "Welcome to the Jungle" held in Sioux Falls September 28 and 29.

Our membership includes Lead/Deadwood, Sturgis, Belle Fourche, and Spearfish.

We are hoping our school classes will be able to participate in the Grandparent Essay Contest again.

Dianne Hemminger, Chairman

## Milbank

Submitted by Rhonda Preller

In August, MARTA members were able to take a "field trip" to the new elementary school in Milbank. Although the school has been open to students since August 2020, the general public was unable to tour the building due to Covid. Principal Dave Graf gave a personal tour to MARTA.

At our September meeting, favorite recipes were shared, and a mini cookbook will be constructed and given out. In discussion, everyone agreed that recipes aren't just putting ingredients or a meal together--it means family, friends, and memories.

October's inspirational speaker was Beth Koch St. Martin representing The Addict's Hope. She shared how she deals with and works to overcome grief after the death of her son.

In October, MARTA President, Rhonda Preller, found out that a Healthy Hometown Award and grant that Preller applied for as a representative of Milbank Area Teachers/Personnel Association was awarded to Milbank. The grant will be used to continue promoting healthy initiatives in the community.

Looking ahead: In November, MARTA will have a musical guest entertain everyone and have plans for a Christmas Party in December.



# Unit News:

## Sisseton

Submitted by Joel Odland

Sisseton Area Retired School Personnel has had a busy fall. We are now meeting for lunch on the 3rd Wednesday of each month with more members feeling comfortable meeting in person.

We welcomed staff from both the Sisseton Public Schools and Tiopsa Zina back to school with over 300 rolls delivered for a morning Pick Me Up!! We also participated in the Homecoming Parade by displaying our New Magnetic Signs on our pickup and throwing out over 400 Teeshirts donated by Thrivent. We also donated 50 Thrivent shirts to Middle School to use as Rewards for Positive Student Behavior selection this year. We are now putting together mini-highlighter gifts to education staff at all the schools both in Sisseton and Tiopsa Zina.

We completed a Community Service by giving our time in packing over 400 bags of soup mixes to feed over 1600 people at The Orphan Train in Milbank the end of September.

## Watertown

The Watertown Area Retired School Personnel (WARSP) kicked off the 2021 year with a picnic and membership drive at the Lions Park Shelter. Fifty members (new and renewal) enjoyed food and fellowship. Many thanks for the "We Care" grant that helped pay for the picnic.

September and October breakfast meetings at the Elks were well-attended. Mike Lawrence gave an update on the new Stony Point development at Lake Kampeska in September. Mayor Reid Holien spoke in October and shared his vision and priorities for Watertown. Besides updates on many of the new developments, he allowed time for questions.

Upcoming meetings include a program by Vietnam veterans in November and a Christmas celebration in December.



*WARSP members fellowship over breakfast at the Elks.*



*Watertown's Mayor Reid Holien goes through a list of city government priorities and shares his vision for the future.*

## Redfield

Submitted by Marlene Eimers, CO-Pres.

Meeting Thursday, October 21 at 2:00 pm in the Chicago Northwestern Railroad Depot. Mary Lou Schwartz and Arlene Schmitt will present the program: Story of SD National Guards 1916 activation to protect the U.S. southern boarder.

After the program they will provide a lunch. The group had served a Box Lunch Social and we will be getting to taste the fruits of their labors. Come and bring a friend and join us for a fun afternoon.

Discussions will include:

- \*Membership and how we can maintain and /or increase
- \*Helping with Nutrition Mission again at the school
- \*Donation for this program

**Story of SD National Guards 1916 activation to protect the U.S. southern boarder.**





South Dakota  
Retired School  
Personnel

Paula Brakke  
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Milbank, SD 57252

## Check Membership Addresses!

It is important for all unit officers to check with each member for their correct address.

Send all address changes, as well as names and dates of deaths, to

*Jacque Sly, 22560 Potter Rd., Rapid City, SD 57702*

*Phone: 605-343-4956 • Email address: jacsly48@gmail.com*



***I want to join South Dakota Retired School Personnel.***

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Send the above information and \$15 (annual state dues) to:

SDRSP Treasurer, Pat Johnson

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