



## 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)

August 2023, Vol. 57, No. 1

## Where Were You in 1966? SDRSP Convention Recap Deadwood May 2-3, 2023

By Carmal Tobin

### Tuesday, May 2, 2023

Registration began at 8:00.

The day kicked off with a 9:00 pre-convention tour of **Tatanka Story of the Bison**.

### FIRST GENERAL SESSION:

The afternoon began with **President Jacque Sly** calling the 2023 State Convention to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Sly introduced **Mayor David Ruth, Jr.** He encouraged us to enjoy his city during our two-day stay in Deadwood. It is a city rich in South Dakota history he promised.

The next guest that President Jacque welcomed was **Dr. Eric Person, Superintendent of Lead/Deadwood Schools**. Dr Person believed and strongly promoted education in the classroom, as well as, exploration of the outside world.

The SDRSP Board members were introduced next. All Past SDRSP Presidents were also asked to stand and be honored.

Roll Call topic was **Where were You in 1966?** Eleven units were in attendance with 61 members.

Aberdeen — 2	Philip — 2
Black Hills — 19	Sioux Falls — 16
Madison — 4	Watertown — 2
Milbank — 2	Winner — 2
Mitchell — 1	Yankton — 2
Northern Hills — 9	

The first guest speaker was **Betsey DeLoache** with the topic: **Country Schools: Past and Present**. DeLoache, an author and presenter, describes and defines country schools by the students and teachers she interviewed before writing her books. This very educational presentation was made possible by the financial support of the South Dakota Humanities Council.

**Jan Bartscher**, our second speaker, was representing the **South Dakota Alzheimer's Association**.

The Alzheimer's Association promotes:

- Walking beside those diagnosed
- Spreading awareness and education
- Continuing research for a cure

The **Well-Done Players** are a performance troupe made up of seasoned singers, actors, and dancers from Rapid City. They entertained the convention attendees with clever, well-written happenings from 1966!

*Continued on next page »*

# **S** DRSP Convention Recap *continued*

**Association Member Benefit Advisor, Garrett Mowery** was our final guest speaker of the afternoon. He shared that his main goal is to help grow our membership. He encouraged members to enroll in the discount program entitled Passport Program Ambassadors.

Door Prize Baskets were given away prior to the First Session adjournment at 4:45.

## SECOND GENERAL SESSION:

The evening began at 6:00 with Social Hour. Following the Social Hour and Dinner, President Jacque Sly spearheaded the presentation of awards. **Rhonda Preller** was the 2023 recipient of the **Florence Krieger Award**. The top Community Service Award was earned by the **Watertown Unit** with 6,000 volunteer hours.

Next, President Sly, shared an interesting and very well-developed PowerPoint presentation entitled **History of SDRSP**.

Our evening entertainment was the **Spearfish Senior Center Line Dancers**. Their dancing was energetic, fun and spirit-lifting!

Wednesday, May 3, 2023

## THIRD GENERAL SESSION:

### **Memorial Service:**

At 8:30, the 2023 Memorial Service was held. We honored 12 members lost from six units. **Kay Ainslie** and **Theresa Deuchar** displayed a flower in their memory as **Bill Zubke** read their names.

### **Business Meeting:**

At 8:45, the Business Meeting was called to order by President Sly.

## FOURTH GENERAL SESSION:

**Al Campos**, an **NRTA Director** from Washington, DC was the first guest speaker of the morning via Zoom.

Campos is responsible for the strategic direction, management, engagement, and coordination of AARP policies with the Retired Educator Association nationwide. He concluded his presentation by stating that South Dakota's Pension Plan is one of the **best** in the United States. It is well-defined and 100% funded.

Our second guest speaker was **SDRSP Board Member, Diane Spilde** via Zoom. Her presentation was entitled **"What a Dilemma!"** She shared advice and innovative methods for organizing and storing historical and personal information for generation after generation.

The third and final presentation of the session was entitled **"The Scarecrow's Lament"**. Convention presenter favorites, **Bill and Cathy Zubke**, outlined how to combat cognitive decline. They shared five steps to improve brain health. Bill concluded their presentation with this sage advice, "The **BEST** thing you can do for your brain is **LAUGH!**" The health of our brain was improved today as we sure did **laugh!**

Prior to the buffet lunch, **Jose Sanchez**, a fifth grader from Milbank, read his winning **2023 South Dakota Grandparent Essay** about his 'adopted' grandfather, Doug Buri. Doug, who resides in Milbank, was present at the noon luncheon. Also, in attendance to support Jose were his 'adopted' grandmother, Linda Buri and his parents, Jeorge and Esther Sanchez.

To conclude the two-day event, President Jacque Sly, thanked everyone for attending the **"Where Were You in 1966?"** Convention. She also wished everyone safe trips home and enjoyable summers!



# Greetings from President Sly:



## Convention

This newsletter is devoted to highlighting the SDRSP Convention held in Deadwood in May of 2023. Those who attended had a grand time as you will be able to tell from the pictures throughout the newsletter. It seems like a long time since our convention, but this is the time to again say “thank you” to the many members who made it a success. First of all, thanks to those who were able to attend. Without you there would be no convention. Then a shout out to the members of the board who went out of their way to make sure the convention was successful. And another “thank you” to the members of BHRSP and NHRSP who kept their eyes open for things that needed to be done and just did it. My thanks to all.

## Board Meeting

The current elected and appointed board members met at the Pizza Ranch in Fort Pierre on July 6, 2023. It is always good to connect in-person. There were the usual reports, review of convention evaluations, AMBA updates, discussion of website and decision for location of 2024 convention.

## August Leadership Meetings

Leadership meetings are held each year to help our units thrive and grow. Leading is for those retirees who are strong in spirit and true to continuing with the mission of SDRSP, whether promoting the social, economic and professional welfare of retired educational staff, advocating for retirement benefits, or being involved with community activities. The Leadership meetings on August 15 and 16 in Rapid City and Brookings provided support, ideas and encouragement for units throughout SD.

## Connect. Learn. Serve.

About one year ago each of you were encouraged to Connect, Learn and Serve. How did it go? SDRSP is in the business of connecting with others, both long time members and new retirees. We continue to face the challenge of recruiting new members and retaining membership. Did your programs and activities promote learning new things? As one can find in another part of the newsletter, community service is a key piece for local units. Members continue to serve and serve and serve.

## Website

Many changes have occurred with the SDRSP website this past year. For years Bill Zubke maintained the information on the site. There has been a transition from the previous administrator. With that change some of the information was no longer available. (It is a long story, but Bill could fill you in if you have an extra hour or two!) In the meantime, steps continue to be taken to add in content, add on-line membership registration and add more info regarding local units. If you have ever worked with technology, one knows that things don't always go as planned. Please feel free to make suggestions if you notice something that is incorrect, needs more information, or is not there but should be. (The POC is me, [jacsly48@gmail.com](mailto:jacsly48@gmail.com)).

## 2024 Convention

If you didn't get to Deadwood this last May, plan to come to Watertown on May 7 & 8, 2024. A venue contract has not been signed yet, but know details will be coming soon. The 2024 theme is “Stories to Tell” with special recognition of those who wrote Reminiscent Teacher Essays from 1994-2017.

The convention is moved around the state, providing an opportunity to have it closer to your home at times and to plan a road trip another year. Remember that the miles are the same traveling from west to east or reversing it, east to west. The most recent conventions were in Oacoma and Deadwood.

## Bylaws

The updated, revised and amended bylaws were approved at the convention. They are posted on the website [www.sdrsp.org](http://www.sdrsp.org). Words cannot express the appreciation for these three women: Rhonda Preller, Carm Tobin and Pat Johnson. There are very few people in the universe who willingly take on reviewing bylaws. If you see them, let them know you are so thankful they took on the bylaws, instead of you!

Jacquie Sly  
SDRSP President

# Community Health & Service:

*2022-2023 Community Service Total Hours submitted was 23,667. The prior year total hours were 13,089. Based on \$20 hourly wage we earned \$473,340 for this year!! THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU!!*

Included here are various ideas for Community Service both with your Units, as well as individually to INCREASE these hours for the April 2023-March 2024 Service Year.

## List of Ideas from our Units' and Individual Community Service Activities

Volunteer at Assisted Living, Nursing Homes, and Care Facilities

Provide Scholarship Money to college education students

Volunteer or provide funds for Backpack Program, Angel Tree, Food Pantry

Volunteer and provide snacks for local school staff during conferences or American Education Week

Organize and volunteer at a local Blood Drive

Promote your organization with a float in a parade

Help sponsored Dakota Player Community Theater for Elementary Students

Support Foster Care Program

Provide goodie bags for students' participants in a school activity

Volunteering for any project at school

Volunteering for fund raisers, church activities, community activities, or organizations including 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Make-A-Wish Foundation, AARP, PEO, extension, county fair, museum, library, VFW, Legion Auxiliary, caregiver, baby sitting, Blood Drive, Book Fair, sewing quilts for others

Doing yard work for others

Providing lunch/dinners to individuals or helping with community meals

Driving others to appointments

Spending time with elderly

Judging essays, poems, and art for various organizations

Available to help others with taxes and bookwork.

Volunteer for various organizations - Union gospel Mission, Children's Inn, St Francis House, Active Generations, Bishop Dudley House, Community Music and other organizations.

Diane Odland

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# From Executive Director:

Fall is around the corner and along with that, many of your Units will be starting to gather again for your meetings and social get togethers. At the State Conference in May, it was announced by Al Campos from NRTA that Mini-Grants would become available for Units. These grants again are to help Units with membership recruitment, education, and getting our name (SDRSP) out to the public. Find in the newsletter the Form for Funding Request for these Grants. South Dakota has been involved with the 5-State Pilot Project for the past five years and this involvement has been extended for one more year. This is a good thing. The purpose of the project was to maintain and recruit members along with continuing to have a positive working relationship with AARP. I hope you will find the mini-grant helpful for your Unit.

Gerri Larson  
SDRSP Executive Director



## Membership:

It is the middle of July as I write this. The 2023-2024 school year is thundering down the pike for educators, while others (us retired folks) are feeling the last slow days of summer. For me, as I hear teachers, administrators, students, secretaries, supports staff, (custodians are putting finishing touches on classrooms) talking about the **first day of school**. I begin to reminisce about my time in the school setting. So many memories, I am blessed. The stories we could share with each other. I would be thrilled to hear yours and share some of my favorite ones with you. I was just telling someone the other day that I never had a dull moment, day, month, year, years in education. I certainly had a humongous range of emotions and feelings during that time: joy, sorrow, anger, fear, laughter, thankfulness, pity, exhaustion, surprise, exasperation, etc. The list could go on and on depending on the memory. But most of all: it was love. The vocation of Education gave me so much. Thus, I am blessed.

As Membership chair for our SDRSP organization once again I thank you for your help in keeping our membership data current. If you know of any irregularities, please let me know so I can make those changes. If any members pass/have passed during this 2023-2024 fiscal year let me know. Be sure to include your name and Unit Name. 605-996-4053 or mary.wilson@mit.midco.net

### **Membership on-line**

For current members and new members there is now the option of signing up on the website. Currently it will be for state membership only. It is in the works to include local dues also, plus life membership (just be patient as there are several layers one has to work through.) If your local unit is more convenient, that is fine; sign up as usual. If you are someone who does not have a local active unit, on-line membership might be a good option for you. One can also sign up for an auto-renew, where your membership is renewed automatically each year.

There is a \$1.00 fee for credit card processing on-line. That is happening many places with the business/non-profit being charged a fee by the credit card company.

It will be a reverse process if one signs up on-line for reporting to the local unit. The information will come from the state treasurer (Pat) instead of the local unit reporting to the state treasurer. There may be some kinks, but they can be worked through with tech support available to SDRSP.

Mary Wilson  
Mary.Wilson@mit.midco.net

# SDRSP Convention Photos



## Tatanka tour

The pre-convention tour was Tatanka Story of the Bison



## 2023 Scholarship

Scholarship winner was Adam Rudebusch – Castlewood English Teacher

*Pictured L to R: Lois Hyde Watertown member, Denise Ottenbacher co-president Watertown Unit, Adam, and Pam Raeder co-president Watertown Unit*



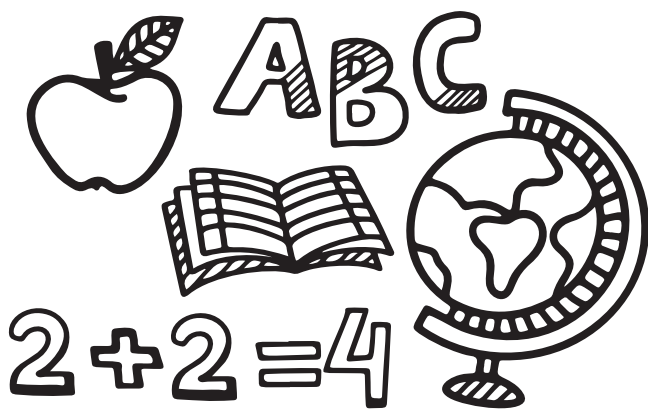
## Country School Connections

Many of the attendees had some connection to country schools, by attending as a student, teaching or being an administrator.



## Betsey DeLoache

Betsey DeLoache presented on Country Schools: Past and Present



# SDRSP Convention Photos



## Community Service

SDRSP Units continue to record many community service hours. The top Community Service Award was earned by the Watertown Unit with over 6,000 volunteer hours.



## Florence Krieger Award

Ron Riherd presented the Florence Krieger Award to Rhonda Preller. Rhonda served as President of SDRSP during 2020-2022.



## President's Award

NRTA and SD AARP received the President's Award for their continued financial support of SDRSP activities and projects. Also, Paula Brakke received the award in recognition of her years of working with the newsletter. In the picture Gerri Larson and Jacque Sly join Lindsey Holmquest from AARP and Al Campos from NRTA.



## Outstanding Service Award

Each President from the local Units was given the Outstanding Service Award. Leaders are vital and appreciated.

# SDRSP Convention Photos



**Bill and Cathy Zubke**

Bill and Cathy Zubke presented "The Scarecrow's Lament" outlining how to combat cognitive decline.



**Jacque and History of SDRSP**

President Jacque Sly gave a presentation on the history of SDRSP from the beginnings in the 1960's to present.



**Well Done Players**

The Well Done Players from Rapid City entertained attendees with clever, well-written happenings in the 1960's.



**Grandparent Essay Winner**

Jose Sanchez, a fifth grader from Milbank, read his winning 2023 SD Grandparent Essay about his "adopted" grandfather, Doug Buri. Pictured are Jose, his parents, adopted grandparents, Donna Fischer and Rhonda Preller.



**Line Dancers**

The Spearfish Senior Center Line Dancers were lively evening entertainment.



# 2023 Convention Survey Results

1. For about 10 years the convention has moved around the state, usually rotating from the east side, middle and west side. Before that it was always held in Pierre. How were the location and facilities this year?

*All comments were positive with great facilities; beautiful location and excellent rooms; one person indicated that they liked the facilities, but did like having convention in Pierre because of central location.*

2. For years the convention registration has stayed around \$50. Is that reasonable? As cost of meals and convention facilities increase, we are thankful for additional monetary support from AARP. If we should have to consider increasing registration fees, what would be fair?

*Suggestions ranged from \$60-100 with \$75 being fairly common. Another thought was to go up gradually by \$5 increments. Several trusted the decision being left up to the board because they are aware of many underlying costs. Some examples: \$60 for a microphone in each room it is used, \$25 for a gallon of coffee, \$24 for a dozen cookies, etc.*

3. Which speakers or presentations did you find the most informative and/or enjoyable?

*Keep in mind that every single presentation had more than one person express that it was "the best." Some of the most frequently mentioned were: Tatanka tour, Betsey DeLoache on Country Schools, and The Zubke's.*

4. Were snacks and meals satisfactory? Any suggestions?

*Many conflicting suggestions – too many sweets; not enough sweets; need more fresh fruit and veggies; not enough snacks; don't need snacks between meals; not enough coffee; great dinner and desserts; too large of portions for entrée; eliminate morning breakfast; need eggs and yogurt for breakfast; ☺*

5. Are there any suggestions for another convention (i.e. book exchange, in-gathering for a special project, potential speaker/topic, entertainment)

*Panel with 1st year teachers; book exchange x many times; agencies that work with children; ideas for local grants and what programs in locals; new member appreciation; retirement t-shirts/sweatshirts for sale; more door prizes; invite retired school personnel from other nearby states; fun informative tables; SD Retirement System; Humanities presentation on Wounded Knee Massacre; product for local food pantry;*

6. Additional comments:

*Longer break in morning to check out; loved thematic decorations; such a positive experience, eager to come next year; great convention, thank you for all the hard work and making this fun and informational; convention sessions have been on time; so appreciative of leadership of SDRSP, especially Jacque, I'm in awe of the amount of time and work that was put into organizing documents from previous years, Kudos! question presentation such as Forever, felt like a commercial; missed having a convention agenda with the registration process; Bob did a great job working with the retirement system and reporting at meeting; thanks for keeping time schedule; stick to time line – not good to keep people waiting (essay winner and line dancers); great, kept to schedule, well on time; maybe could start social hour earlier – 5ish? first time enjoyed the conference; excellent use of technology; baskets could be an open silent auction – to benefit scholarship fund; open bids on sheet of paper; excellent convention; I would like to see next year's convention in Pierre; a very full agenda for old folks; fine convention, planned well, Jacque very organized and enthusiastic, also timely – on schedule; Great job!*

# 2023 SDRSP Awards

## Florence Krieger

- Rhonda Preller

## President's Award

- Paula Brakke
- AARP Staff
- NRTA

## Outstanding Service (Current Presidents)

- Gayle Bortnem – Aberdeen
- Vicki Sterling – Black Hills
- Barb Hyland – Madison
- Rita Brown – Madison
- Rhonda Preller – Milbank
- Janelle Jones – Northern Hills
- Delores Kluckman – Oahe (Mobridge)
- Mike West – Philip
- Kay Ainslie – Philip
- Arlie Rodman – Redfield
- Carol Miller – Redfield
- Cathy Anderson – Sioux Falls
- Diane Odland – Sisseton
- Linda Loberg – Sisseton

- Denise Ottenbacher – Watertown
- Pam Raeder – Watertown
- Shelly Sharp – Winner
- Donna Brozik – Winner
- David & Donna Fischer – Yankton
- Judy Kroll – Brookings (inactive)
- Karen Mueller – Huron (disbanded)
- Mary Wilson – Mitchell (inactive)
- Lu Heibel – Pierre (inactive)
- Mary Jo Johnson – Pierre (inactive)
- Sharon Donahoe – Vermillion (disbanded)

## Community Service

- Watertown – Gold
- Aberdeen – Gold
- Milbank – Gold
- Sioux Falls – Gold
- Sisseton – Gold
- Black Hills – Gold
- Oahe (Mobridge) – Gold
- Redfield – Silver
- Madison – Bronze





## 2023 Event Funding Request



AARP South Dakota has ready-to-use informational presentations and materials available on topics like fighting fraud, focusing on brain health, and improving community livability – and we need help sharing them in communities across the state! The presentations could be used for content at SDRSP Unit gatherings OR at public-facing events for new member recruitment.

AARP South Dakota will supply small grants to support events that are public-facing and/or focus on Unit membership recruitment. Funding may be used for event expenses such as venue costs or refreshments.

The process:

- Complete this request form.
- Discuss idea and needs with Gerri Larson and Lindsey Holmquest.
- Unit plans event logistics (venue, audio/visual needs, refreshments, etc); AARP South Dakota provides presentation content and materials/handouts (can also help find a presenter, if needed).
- Unit holds the event, then provides information on how it went and what was learned.

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**SDRSP Unit(s) hosting the event:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**This presentation will be hosted (choose one):**

\_\_\_\_\_ at an SDRSP Unit(s) meeting (*not public-facing: only Unit members will attend*)

\_\_\_\_\_ at a community education event or membership recruitment event (*public-facing: the Unit will invite non-members to attend*)

**Desired presentation topic (choose one):**

\_\_\_\_\_ Fighting Fraud                      \_\_\_\_\_ Brain Health                      \_\_\_\_\_ Livability (walk audit)

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (explain) \_\_\_\_\_

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\*Final plans are not required to complete this form – but thinking about where the event/presentation will likely be held:

**Estimated venue expense:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **AND/OR** **Estimated refreshments expense:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**EMAIL COMPLETED FORM TO: [lholmquest@aarp.org](mailto:lholmquest@aarp.org)**



South Dakota  
Retired School  
Personnel

Mary Wilson  
400 N Kimball St  
Mitchell, SD 57301

## 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

*Mary Wilson, 400 N. Kimball St., Mitchell, SD 57301*

*Home: 605-996-4053 • Cell: 605-999-0669*



**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

1226 E Kemp

Watertown, SD 57201