



South Dakota Retired School Personnel

EWSLETTER

Affiliated with National Retired Teachers Association

www.SDRSP.org

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'To Serve, Not To Be Served'

Stories to Tell SDRSP Convention Recap Watertown May 7-8, 2024

By Carmal Tobin, Secretary SDRSP

<u>Tuesday, May 7,2024</u>

Registration opened at 8:00. The day began at 8:30 with pre-convention tours of Mellette House and Goss Opera House.

FIRST GENERAL SESSION:

The afternoon kicked off with **President Jacque Sly** calling the 2024 State Convention to order followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Sly introduced Mayor Ried Holien. He invited us to enjoy the city during our two-day stay in Watertown. He added that he wished to thank us as teachers are so instrumental in promoting the LOVE of reading books. Books have such a strong impact on our lives from youth to adulthood.

The next guest that President Jacque welcomed was Jeff Danielson, Superintendent of Watertown Schools. Mr. Danielson cracked numerous jokes and shared many humorous stories.

He concluded his talk by saying that he honestly felt all educators belonged in the South Dakota Hall of Fame for our dedication, time and service. The SDRSP Board Members were introduced next. All Past SDRSP Presidents were also asked to stand and be honored. Eleven units were in attendance with 70 members.

Aberdeen — 3	Philip — 2
Black Hills — 10	Sioux Falls — 10
Madison — 2	Watertown — 26
Milbank — 2	Sisseton — 8
Mitchell — 1	Yankton — 2
Northern Hills — 4	

Our afternoon guest speakers were Jane Rasmussen, John Rasmussen and Curtis Dahl with the topic: Stavig Letters, The Story of a Norwegian Immigrant

The Stavig Letters depicted the strong will to survive and overcome the hardships of living in a new country. It was a pioneer story spanning 99 years. This very educational presentation of Stories to Tell through Letters was made possible by the financial support of the South Dakota Humanities Council.

Bus Transportation and treat bags (snacks/candy and water) were provided for our tour of the **Redlin Art Center**.

Bill Zubke passed out his FAMOUS fudge prior to the bus trip.

Rhonda Preller shared Milbank Valley Queen cheese sticks for an additional afternoon snack before our tour.

Continued on next page »

S DRSP Convention Recap continued

REDLIN ART CENTER TOUR:

Stories to Tell through Art:

A welcome, presentation and biographical movie of Terry Redlin's life, struggles, talents and successes was shared at the Redlin Center Theatre. Following that, SDRSP members were able to walk through the art gallery at their leisure studying and admiring hundreds of paintings. Terry Redlin certainly had the amazing talent to tell stories through his art!

SECOND GENERAL SESSION:

The evening began at 5:30. Following pre-dinner music and Social Hour, President Jacque offered a prayer and dinner was served.

Stories to Tell from Communities:

Each Unit presented their table centerpiece or community display throughout the evening. Many interesting facts and folklore was shared about each town represented.

Stories to Tell through Students:

Educator's Rising SD shared that their organization leaves a lasting impact on aspiring educators. Students choosing to be educators are given resources, support and opportunities vital for their growth and career development.

Cathy Anderson presented \$1000 Scholarship Awards to Chelsey Brink and Kahlab Rose both are Watertown educators.

Stories to Tell through Essays:

Bill Zubke and LaRee Mayes shared their emotional and very aspiring Reminiscent Teacher Essays this evening.

<u>Awards:</u>

*Community Service Awards: During 2023-2024, ten (10) units participated and amassed 34,014 hours.

In dollars and cents, this would be worth \$680,280.00 in payment to the state of South Dakota. Watertown Unit tallied the most hours with their total being 6,213. Every Unit that participated in the Community Service Program this year earned a GOLD award.

*Outstanding Service Awards:

The recipients for 2023-2024 were



*LaRee Mayes - Rapid City

*Anita Manning- Sioux Falls

*Harriet Wendt- Sioux Falls

President's Awards:

*Gerri Larson - Executive

Director

*Mary Wilson - Membership *Diane Spilde - Newsletter

Florence Krieger Award:

The 2024 recipient of this award was Carm Tobin, Secretary.

Prior to concluding for the evening, Door Prizes were drawn and distributed to the lucky winners!

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

Leadership Meeting held with Unit Reps and the SDRSP Board from 7:30 to 8:15.

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THIRD GENERAL SESSION:

Memorial Service: At 8:30, the 2024 Memorial Service entitled Stories to Read was held. We honored 53 members lost from 14 units. Kay Ainslie and Theresa Deuchar displayed a flower in their memory as Bill Zubke solemnly read their names.

Business Meeting:

At 8:55, the Business Meeting was called to order by President Sly. Following the sharing of reports, questions asked and answered, a vote was taken and the Annual Meeting was adjourned at 9:28.

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FOURTH GENERAL SESSION: Erik Gaikowski from AARP

was our first guest speaker of the morning. He shared that our motto: To serve not to be served says a great deal about the integrity and professionalism of our organization. Erik reminded us that AARP is always in our corner as a wise friend and our fierce defender. AARP helps us turn our goals and dreams into "Real Possibilities" by changing the way America redefines and views aging. The AARP Executive Board consists of three SDRSP members: Cathy Anderson, Gerri Larson and Jacque Sly.

Garrett Mowrey from AMBA

was to speak to us next via Zoom but unfortunately he has to cancel.

Kandee Snoozy from Rapid City shared her Reminiscent Teacher Essay from 2012-2013.

Next Kay Ainslie from Philip read her Reminiscent Essay which she wrote in 2011.

Mike Jacobson from the SD Retirement System

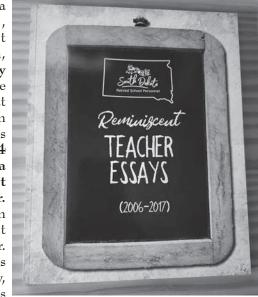
was next on the agenda. Jacobson stated that South Dakota has the most solid retiree system in the Nation. It is recognized nationally as a Model Plan for its funding and contribution status. South Dakota's Retirement System has 100,000 members and over one-third of these members are retired teachers.

Effective July 1, 2024 the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) will be 1.91%. According to Mr. Jacobson, South Dakota's COLA is stellar for their system retirees.

The third and final presentation of the session was entitled Stories to Tell through Presentations. AARP's Greatest Hits - Bill and Cathy Zubke, took turns reading love letters to each other. The first section was entitled "Young Love" and the second "They Write". While they read, the song "Letters in the Sand" was played. This was a very moving, engrossing, dramatic and well-done skit!

Prior to the buffet lunch, the Watertown Forensic Team entertained us with a very humorous skit. The students that shared their talents will be going to Washington, DC to compete in Nationals.

Next, Donna Fischer, Grandparent Essay Chairman, introduced Paisly Kading, the fifth grader that had been chosen from 737 entries 2024 the as Dakota South Grandparent Essay winner. Paisly had chosen about to write her grandmother. While she was reading her essay, a powerpoint was playing behind



her that depicted special times and memories with her grandmother. It was sweet, fun and spirit-lifting!

Kay Ainslie presented the Traveling Trophy to the Black Hills Unit. The Sioux Falls Unit did a Happy Birthday skit with singing and dancing to invite us to their city next May 6th and 7th for the 2025 SDRSP Convention.

To conclude the two-day event, President Jacque Sly thanked everyone for attending the "Stories to Tell" Watertown Convention. She wished everyone safe trips home and enjoyable, relaxing summers! At 1:30, a post- convention tour of Lake Area Technical College was planned. Those attending were asked to drive their own vehicles.

<u>SPECIAL THANKS</u> *AARP for their financial support of the Grandparent Essay Winners and for convention expenses.

*Kathy and Guy Mackner for sharing their books and mini-store during the Convention.

*Bob Rose for being the SDRSP Convention photographer. He was diligent about depicting the highlights throughout the two day event. Through his pictures, our "Stories to Tell' shall forever be a part of Convention history!

Convention Overview,

Carm Tobin Sec<u>retary</u>

reetings from President Anderson:

Convention

This newsletter is devoted to highlighting the SDRSP Convention held in Watertown in May of 2024. So, HATS OFF TO YOU President Sly and the Watertown unit for putting on a great convention with the help of the Sisseton Area unit. Lots of hands go into making a convention a success and you did just that. A big thank you to all who attended the convention as you make the convention worthwhile. It wouldn't be much fun if people didn't make an effort to attend.

Board Meeting

HATS OFF TO YOU, the current and appointed board members who met at the Pizza Ranch in Fort Pierre on July 17. There were the usual reports, review of convention evaluations, AMBA updates, discussion of the website and decisions for location of the 2025 convention.

August Leadership Meetings

HATS OFF TO YOU leaders who have stepped up again to be leaders of your units. Leadership meetings are held each year to help our units thrive and grow. We get together to share ideas, make suggestions for improvement and support each other. The units promote social, economic and professional welfare of retired educational staff, advocating for retirement benefits, or being involved in community activities. The Leadership meetings will be held on August 12 in Rapid City at the AARP Center and on August 14 in Brookings at First Lutheran Church. All are welcome to attend.

Connect, Learn, Serve

HATS OFF TO YOU as you continue to Connect, Learn and Serve. SDRSP is in the business of connecting with others, both long time members and new retirees. We continue to face the challenges of recruiting new members and retaining membership. Community service is a key piece for local units. Members continue to serve, and serve, and serve.

Website

HATS OFF TO YOU, Jacque, who continues to work with our website techs to get it to the place that we want. I understand that it has been a bit of a problem over the last year. If you have any suggestions, please contact her at jacsly48@gmail. com. Thank you to Gayle Bortnem from the Aberdeen unit who has agreed to monitor our Facebook account and update it as events need to be posted. You can contact her with ideas or pictures to post at bortnemg@gmail.com.



2025 Convention

HATS OFF TO SIOUX FALLS as we celebrate our 60th birthday/anniversary as a unit. Please join us on May 6-7 at the Downtown Holiday Inn close to the Falls, the Sculpture Walk and much more in the heart of Sioux Falls. More details to follow later. We are planning on taking our HATS OFF TO YOU as units and individuals. That is our theme as you should have guessed by now. Please put those dates on your calendar and join us.

HATS OFF TO YOU, Past President, Jacque Sly, for your great two years of service to SDRSP. You jumped in with the introduction of AMBA to SD and worked through all the nitty details of that. You took on the task of organizing the history of SDRSP and the Reminiscent Stories. What great projects to have done. Who else would have spent that much time on those two projects. Again, HATS OFF TO YOU and we sincerely thank you for your great leadership these past two years. You are a hard act to follow.



reetings from Past President Sly:

Much of this newsletter is dedicated to the 2024 Convention in Watertown. There are pictures that capture some of the highlights. Carm's recap covers the highlights of each part of the days we were together. This was the first time a convention had been held in Watertown, so exploring the area was new for many members. Thanks to each of you who took the time to attend, some of you coming for the first time. We hope



each of you will come to other parts of SD in future years.

There are many behind-the-scenes people who make the President look organized and prepared. Merry Bleeker has taken care of registration for the past couple of conventions. She takes your registration and money and keeps track of what you want to eat, tours, etc. Bob Rose captures the moments by taking pictures. Watertown leaders helped line up tours, entertainment and hosting. Sisseton leaders made table decorations, arranged for book exhibitor, and provided music for the Memorial Service. Of course, the Officers of SDRSP all have responsibilities that make a convention happen.

There also has been a "changing of the guard" with several leadership changes. Note those changes in another part of the newsletter. Long time treasurer, Pat Johnson, had the misfortune of breaking her arm during the time of the convention. It was going to be her last "hurrah," but instead she was in the hospital. We are thankful that she is continuing to recover at her home. Pat will be missed, having been in SDRSP Leadership for 20 some years.

Kay Ainslie, another long-time volunteer leader, stepped down from the vice president position. She has been in leadership for many years also. We wish her well as she spends more time taking care of her family's needs.

I have much respect for Pat and Kay as they were always there for me, offering suggestions and wisdom of what has happened in the past as SDRSP evolves throughout the years. Thank you, Pat and Kay.

Jacque Sly

SDRSP Past President

COMMUNITY SERVICE UPDATE by Diane Odland

Happy Sunny Days to EVERYONE! Hard to believe Fall is right around the corner and hope local units are busy with their Volunteering with Community Service Hours! Remember these hours run from APRIL 2024-MARCH 2025.

I have created a NEW Simpler Community Service form for members to use in your Units if you so choose. This form is found on our State Website under Community Service along with the final compilation form that has been used in the past. Changes include NO dividing hours between Child and Adult Activities and to REMEMBER our Community Service Activities is defined as VOLUNTEERING time in your Church-Schooland Other Community Activities, It is easier to track in hours or ½ hour segments when we finalize the hours for Convention.

I am also looking at the cuts to determine the levels of the Gold-Silver and Bronze Awards yearly based on the hours from each of the units submitted. It is SO Great to see how these hours and INCREASING each year when the awards are presented!! Last year for 2023-2024, Community Service Hours submitted was 34,014 hours where in 2022-2023 the hours submitted were 23,667 an increase of 10,347 hours!!

eports

Facebook by Gayle Bortnem

Calling all Facebook members (and hopefully newbies trying it out)! Come join us on the **South Dakota Retired School Personnel** site. Just go to your facebook page, search for our site (use the magnifying glass icon) click on follow and send a friend request. Sound easy? YES!!

Hope to hear from you and maybe see some thoughts or pictures from your group. Cross your fingers that we can get connected!

<u>Treasurer Report by Myron Fuerst</u>

While wading through the "mountain" of information I received from Pat Johnson, I noticed that not everyone was using the State Membership Form. It is a well-designed form and would be helpful if everyone would use that to report membership. Reports from units across the state eventually need to be combined into one report. It would be helpful to have information in the same format.

The state budget is more complex than a local budget, so I am still "getting my feet on the ground."

Membership Report by Anita Manning

I am looking forward to working with membership and getting to know our members. Please notify me of changes in address and emails. Also, I will be compiling a list of the members who have died. Therefore, notify me when a member dies, so they can be remembered at our state memorial service. I thank you all in advance for your efforts in passing along membership updates.

<u>Executive Director – Gerri Larson</u>

1. Mini Grants are still trying to be disbursed. Watertown and Black Hills Units have applied.

2. NRTA/AARP still working out how to do an email/postcard, etc., on Voter Engagement and Caregiving. Trying to find a way to identify AARP members who are also Educators. When they are able to do this their goal is to use the word "Educators" instead of NRTA or AARP.

3. National office is still looking into if there would be money available from NRTA for a postcard mailing. They feel that South Dakota would be a low cost for a mailing.

4. There may be an opportunity to reach out to AARP members to find out who are Educators and to hopefully get more members. Would you be interested in this???

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NEWSLETTER - OPEN

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR Gerri Larson H: (605) 721-4550 - C: (605) 431-2743 rlarmart@hotmail.com Rapid City, SD 57702

Mini Bios of New Officers and Committees

Myron Fuerst - Treasurer

I have lived in Sioux Falls since 1965. Sioux Falls is no longer the town I moved into. They say we have students with more than 70 different languages in our schools. It was not like that during the years I did most of my teaching. I spent twelve years in junior high, thirteen years in senior high, and eleven years at Southeast Technical Institute before it was named Southeast Technical College. After I retired from the public school system, I spent nine years doing GED preparation for Volunteers of America.

During all those years, I taught a variety of things but primarily math. Therefore, my attention to detail. During my years at Southeast Tech, I was coordinator of the Adult Basic Education program along with teaching math. I needed to document things for federal reports, state reports, and local budgets. Therefore, my insistence on documentation and receipts. I spent seven years as treasurer of the Sioux Falls Retired School Personnel. They can vouch for my insistence on receipts.

Anita Manning - Membership

My name is Anita Manning. I have a Spanish first name, Jewish last name and I am German. I have been married for 26 years and we have a son who is 25 years old. My husband and I are fanatical travelers and have been fortunate to travel to many countries around the world. I have spent time in 52 different countries. This year we went on an African safari and explored South Africa and Zimbabwe. I love to read! Currently, I am involved in two book clubs and have a list of "must read" books.

I spent three decades in the K-12 system as a teacher, interventionist, or reading specialist. After earning my doctorate, I was a professor at Augustana University in the Education Department teaching education majors and observing student teachers. Currently, I am an adjunct professor teaching in the master's program at Augustana University. A few fun facts about me. Pizza and chocolate are my favorite foods. I love coffee. I was born on Halloween.

<u>Vicki Sterling – President Elect</u>

Hello, my name is Vicki Sterling, and I accepted the position of President Elect for SDRSP State Office. This coming year will be my fourth year as president of Black Hills Retired School Personnel. BHRSP is a unit willing to try new ideas to recruit and maintain members.

I retired from teaching at Dakota State University as a professor in the College of Education. At this point in retirement, I am still working on an educational project for the college. While teaching at the university, I was an active member of the Reading Counsel at the local, state and international level. This membership was a good fit because I enjoyed teaching reading. My hobbies are reading, quilting and travel.

In July, I was able to make a trip to Norway. I now have bragging rights to having crossed into the Artic Circle, have been about 50 yards from the Russian border, avoided a reindeer stampede, and slept in an ice hotel.

Gayle Bortnem - Facebook

I'm Gayle Bortnem, some of you know me as Betty Beyer's daughter. I retired from teaching as an Associate Professor of Education at NSU in 2017. I am currently president of our Aberdeen Area RSP group, president of the NESD Head Start Executive board, and on the Aberdeen Public School Board. I am presently working on helping our community to acquire an "Early learner community" status.

I have 3 grown children & 2 grandchildren, a dog and 2 cats. I can only hope that I am the ringleader of my own circus. My goal for working on Facebook is to lead the charge in connecting our members on a statewide level. I am learning along with everyone that FB is a great way to share what we are doing in our communities and to support our organization, too!





SDRSP Convention Photos



Outstanding Service Award LaRee Mayes, RC; Anita Manning, SF; and Harriet Wendt, SF (not pictured)



Florence Krieger Award Carmal Tobin, Milbank



President's Award

Gerri Larson, RC; Mary Wilson, Mitchell; and Diane Spilde, Madison (not pictured)



2024 Scholarship Winners of \$1000 each are: Kahlab Rose and Chelsea Brink of Watertown.

RSP Convention Photos



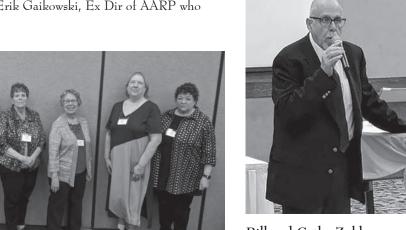
Grandparent Essay Winner

Paisly Kading, a fifth grader from Rapid City, read her essay about her grandmother. She was among 737 entries throughout SD. She is pictured with her parents, grandfather, Donna Fischer, chair of the essay contest, and Erik Gaikowski, Ex Dir of AARP who sponsors the contest.



Community Service

SDRSP units continue to record many volunteer hours, making each community a better place.





Bill and Cathy Zubke

are favorite presenters. This year they portrayed a couple in love sharing a series of letters sent throughout the years. It was touching and heart-wrenching for the audience.



SDRSP Officers for 2024-2026

L to R: Vicki Sterling, RC – President-elect; Myron Fuerst, SF – Treasurer; Cathy Anderson, SF – President; Jacque Sly, RC – Past President; Rhonda Preller, Milbank – Vice-president; Carm Tobin, Milbank - Secretary

Short condensed summary of comments from attendees.

1. For about 10 years the convention has moved around the state, usually rotating from east side, middle and west side. Before that it was always held in Pierre. How were the location and facilities this year? Very good/excellent/fantastic It was nice coming to Watertown. Good to move East, West, Central. Moving around is good because pre-conference trips attracting attendees and "teaching" us about SD

2. This year the convention registration increased to \$60. Was that increase reasonable? Yes, you need to cover expenses. If AARP covers expenses, what does the increase cover? (Response – AARP gives us financial support each year but it does not anywhere near cover all expenses. Thanks AARP for helping)

3. Which speakers or presentations did you find the most informative and/or enjoyable? Stavig letters, Bill & Cathy Zubke (are always a hit and they did not disappoint this year, awesome!). the 3 tours were great, loved all the teachers talking about their experiences, loved the Educator's Rising speakers, SDRS, Appreciated having a bus for the tours. AARP., Unit table presentations telling about our hometowns., local mayor/superintendent. Enjoyed student performances. All seemed to fit the "Stories to Tell" theme.

4. Keep in mind that each venue is different. For example, this year there were only two options available for plated dinner meal instead of usual 3 selections. Were snacks and meals satisfactory? Any suggestions? Meals were very good/fine. Yes, but it would have been nice to have the option of water each day; social hour-would have been nice to have alcohol access in room. Needed beverages, more snacks, treats. Snacks great, no need for over the top. Loved the candy bags! Bags and cheese were great. Needed more cookies. Everything is always so good!!

5. Are there any suggestions for another convention? (i.e., book exchange, in-gathering for a special project, potential speaker/topic, entertainment) Keep up the good work. Keep the book exchange. Entertainment was good. Not having units bring gift bags, no book exchange. Have ingathering for special project, we don't need anything. Focus on Educators Rising – raise funds for scholarships for future teachers. A few more displays/sales, local/state authors (Sean Covel- Porter the Hoarder books), local businesses. Try a jigsaw puzzle exchange. Looking forward to more conventions – fun to have themes to be able to dress up. Sell tickets for door prizes. Reenactors of people, past scholarship or award winners. More breaks would be appreciated. Liked the music. Could we make the door prize so we could buy more tickets to drop in the bags, use the money for one of our programs – scholarships. It was all great!

6. Additional comments –Instead of individualizing door prizes put all slips in one barrel so you have a chance to win any of the prizes. Use centerpieces @ the motel (response-extra charge just like mics, projectors, etc.). Don't need units talking about their town or bringing items for table. Remind members to silence phones. State legislature's updates are good. State wide group trip – Hawaii, New Zealand, Branson, Norway. Impressive great convention in 2024. You kept us very busy which was good. Maybe close earlier on the first night as many travel home. Nice addition with vendor. Meeting with other unit leaders was helpful. Sell tickets for baskets and give \$ to Educator's Rising. Please, use last names for speakers, we all don't know everyone. Great job, only one thing... make the mics louder. Thank you so much. We appreciate all the hard work to pull this conference together.



Florence Krieger Award

• Carmal Tobin - Milbank

President's Award

- Gerri Larson Black Hills
- Diane Spilde Madison
- Mary Wilson Mitchell

Outstanding Service Award

- LaRee Mayes Black Hills
- Anita Manning Sioux Falls
- Harriet Wendt Sioux Falls

Community Service Award

- Aberdeen Unit Gold/1758 hours
- Black Hills Unit Gold/4722 hours

Legislative Report:

- Madison Unit Gold/2650 hours
- Milbank Unit Gold/4570 hours
- Northern Hills Unit Gold/2758 hours
- Oahe-Mobridge Unit Gold/1949 hours
- Redfield Unit Gold/3429 hours
- Sioux Falls Unit Gold/3530 hours
- Sisseton Unit Gold/2435 hours
- Watertown Unit Gold/6213 hours

Grandparent's Essay

• Paisly Kading – Rapid City

Scholarships

- Kahlab Rose Watertown
- Chelsey Brink Watertown

by Bob and Sharon Rose

A Note from your legislative representatives. Bob and Sharon Rose don't have a lot of news. However, here are a few facts on COLA and the SD Retirement System, base teacher salary and average SD teacher salary. They shared this information at the July board meeting.

COLA is going down. Here are the numbers 2022-3.5%, 2023- 2.1%, 2024-1.91%. Here is more on the Retirement System. The board of trustees makes legislative proposals. There are 14 elected members on the board. The governor appoints 2 members and there is one ex officio nonvoting member. This group is also the SD Investment Council. All proposals from the trustees must be approved by the state legislature.

The state legislature passed into law a required base teacher salary at \$45,000.00. The \$45,000.00 minimum threshold for teachers will be adjusted annually. The average annual teacher pay is \$53,528.00. SD ranked 47th in teacher pay in 2024. The best news is our retirement system is one of the best or maybe even the best in the nation.

Scholarship Donations 2023-2024

M Bleeker memorial for Bob Travis	\$10.00
M Bleeker memorial for Hank Kosters	\$10.00
M Bleeker in Honor of Jacque Sly	\$10.00
Madison ART	\$150.00
BHRSP - in memory of passed members	\$125.00
Bill Zubke memorial for Roger Gross	



South Dakota Retired School Personnel

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 Anita Manning, 719 N Shepherd Ave, Sioux Falls SD 57103 Phone: 605-351-3112 • Email: manning310@sio.midco.net

Jacqueline Sly 22560 Potter Road Rapid City, SD 57702

Address Service Requested



I want to join South Dakota Retired School Personnel.

56	Name	
Join	Address	
Today	City	_StateZip
	Phone	Email
	Send the above information and \$1 SDRSP Treasurer, Myron Fuerst 504 E Alder Lane Sioux Falls, SD 57105	5 (annual state dues) to:

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