

South Dakota Retired School Personnel NEWSLETTER

Affiliated with National
Retired Teachers Association

"To Serve, Not To Be Served"

www.SDRSP.org

November 2023, Vol. 58, No. 2

Greetings from President Sly



Life is so short.

We spend so much time sweating the small stuff; worrying, complaining, gossiping, comparing, wishing, wanting and waiting for something bigger and better instead of focusing on all the simple blessings that surround us every day. Life is so fragile and all it takes is a single moment to change everything you take for granted. Focus on what's important and be grateful!

You are blessed! Believe it!

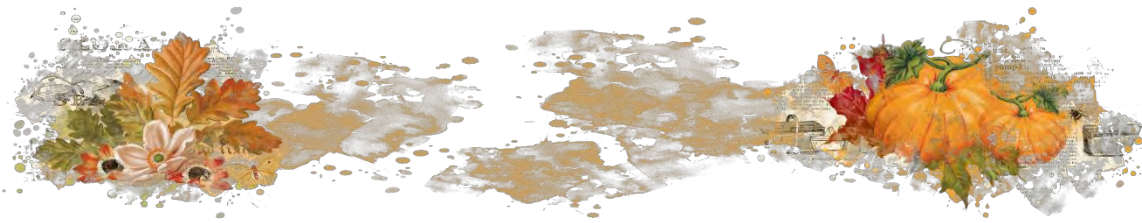
Live your life and leave no regrets. ~ Melanie M. Koulouris

As each of us move into the autumn and winter years of our lives, the above quote is fitting. Thanksgiving is near and the time we spend in gratitude is far more productive than time thinking about all our aches and pains, our losses, our should'ves, would'ves and could'ves.

This past month has been a wild one for me. First, I went to Washington D.C. with Gerri Larson for the NRTA conference...calm and informative. A few days later my husband and I drove to the Adirondacks of New York where his 95-year-old mother lives. During that time, we moved her into a nursing home, where she did not want to go. Earlier she had fallen and broken her arm, so needed more support than what could be provided in her home. I have to keep in mind that I am only 20 years away from kicking and screaming as my kids take me to a similar living arrangement...exhausting and hard. We were home about a week when my husband ended up in ICU for a week after a major heart event...scary, heart-wrenching, and thankful. All our children came home and helped with support and tasks that needed to be done such as hauling wood close to the house and building a needed railing...blessed and grateful.

We are home and now I am working to get back into a routine. Look for more detailed articles on the convention and the website in this newsletter.

~Jacque Sly



2024 SDRSP Convention

May 7-8, 2024 at the Ramkota Hotel and Event Center, Watertown SD

Theme: Stories to Tell

There is a block of rooms set aside under SD Retired School Personnel for \$104.99 each. Call 605-886-8011 to make a reservation.

Think of all the different ways to tell a story. SDRSP already has a treasure of Reminiscent Teacher Essays that share memories and experiences of our very own members and some who have gone before us. Terry Redlin's paintings tell stories of rural living and memories of those who grew up here. The Mellette House in Watertown shares the history of Governor Arthur Mellette. We will have the pre-tour at the Mellette House and spend some time at the Redlin Center. What other ways can stories be told? Poetry, quilts, oral storytelling, dance, and music are all possibilities.

Make plans to come to the convention and enjoy a couple of days celebrating time together, connecting, learning and serving.

Keep in mind that the SDRSP Board meets on the evening of May 6. The pre-convention tour will be the morning of May 7.

The next newsletter will include registration forms and a more detailed schedule of events.

~JS

Website

There have been updates and changes to the new website, but members are finding glitches that need to be addressed. One person was looking for the Grandparent's Essay forms. I knew I had seen them, but could not find them listed under any of the dropdowns. I put in the words "Grandparent's Essay" in the search box, and it came up under Resources along with the Scholarship nomination form. So, my suggestion is to use the search box if you can't find something. I will be in contact with the person who makes the changes and hopefully get the resources listed in the drop down so will be easier to find.

One day I was looking at the Benefits through AMBA. When I clicked on the box to find the dental providers it took me to the vision providers instead of dental. That is being corrected.

I am not a website guru at all, so unless someone tells me something is not working, there is no way to get it fixed.

Thanks for your patience with the transition. It seems to take a long time.

~JS



Community Health & Service

Diane Odland

November is here and I hope everyone is enjoying their families and friends. Now is the time of the year that our Local Units continue to be involved with Volunteering and Involved with numerous Service Projects!

Last Spring I was thrilled with how all of our Units outdid themselves with the Total Hours that were given in these areas throughout the State. Let's continue to work hard at volunteering and paying it forward for the 2023-24 year!

Here are some random thoughts as we look forward to this coming Holiday Season!

** You will be "Too Much" for some people.

Too Loud-Too Soft. Too This-Too That. But
You'll ALWAYS be PERFECT for the People
Who NEED You!

** People need to learn that their ACTIONS do

AFFECT other people. So Be Careful what
You Say and Do. It's not always just about
YOU.

** Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to
CHOOSE JOY and KEEP CHOOSING it
Every
Day.

** Dear Mind——Please stop thinking SO MUCH
at night. I need to SLEEP!

And lastly——

** Remember to ENJOY the LITTLE THINGS!!

Diane Odland
Sisseton

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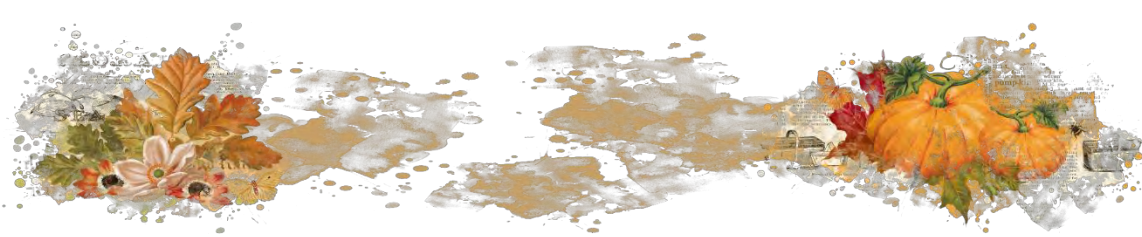
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Executive Director

Gerri Larson

President Jacque Sly and I recently attended the National Retired Teacher Association’s Advocacy Conference in Washington, DC. It was the first time in over four years the Conference was held in-person. The general sessions were remarkably interesting and informative. Topics that were presented included Federal Legislative Climate and Outlook, Federal and State Retirement Security, New Resources to Support Public Pension Advocacy, AARP Social Security Campaign and Caregiving: Overview and Policy Solutions at the Federal and State Level.

On the second day of the Conference, Jacque and I met with the Staff of each of South Dakota’s House and Senate members. Our main topic of discussion with the Staff was Family Caregiving. Caregiving affects American from all walks of life. One in five voters are a family caregiver and 78% have been, are, or will be a caregiver. We also encouraged Members to join the ACT Caucus (Assisting Caregivers Today) and show support for family caregivers. Currently, South Dakota is not a member. This Caucus is a bi-partisanship group that has started in the last couple of years. The Staff were interested in ACT and would bring it to the attention of Rep. Johnson and Senators Thune and Rounds.

We also brought up the Social Security issue. In ten years, SS income will be reduced to 80% and this will affect everyone. Senator Rounds stopped by to say Hi! and stated that Social Security can be fixed.

Hopefully, everyone was able to watch the Ken Burns documentary “The American Buffalo” on PBS. Also playing was “Tatanka” which was produced by SDPB. SDRSP and AARP were Co-sponsors. It was great to see our Logo and a short message about our group. SDRSP was fortunate to receive an extra \$2500 in Grant money from NRTA and AARP supplied the remaining \$3500. This was a wonderful way to get our name out there and seek new members. Materials for the classroom are also available.

Just a friendly reminder that there is still money available through the Mini-Grants for your Units. You can use it to plan for membership/recruitment activities. It would not have to be used until 2024 as long as the activity is planned and requested in 2023.

Gerri Larson SDRSP Executive Director





Membership

Mary Wilson

There are so many things I wish to tell you. Thank you, thank you to all of you who have helped me with the last SDRSP Newsletter that went out! With this last newsletter we asked that all those not deliverable be returned to me. Well, around 65 (I say around 65 because when the volume started increasing, I started to count them) were returned to me. I resent those for which we could find new addresses. We were able to ascertain that several members had passed. In the past their newsletters ended up undeliverable and I assume discarded by the Post Office. I have several newsletters that were returned for which we could not find any information, these I have removed from the mailing list until we can find their whereabouts. Unit leaders were extremely helpful and patient during this process of finding information. Jacque Sly gave up one whole morning helping find information. My request for all of you is this: Let me know if someone expecting a newsletter does not receive one. Please include their updated information. I will be happy to put their new address in and put their name back on the unit list to receive newsletters and the Units can also keep them updated on their unit information.

One of the many surprises for me was how much it costs our association to have these newsletters returned and then have to mail each one out again. Plus, mailing out newsletters to members who may never receive them and ending up in the dead letter office is expensive. It reinforces the knowledge of just how important it is for us to keep our unit memberships current.

Once again, you cannot know how much I appreciated all the help I received. You are a blessing.

I pray that you have a joyous Holiday season.

Throwback to 2013

Poem written by Bill Zubke promoting membership.

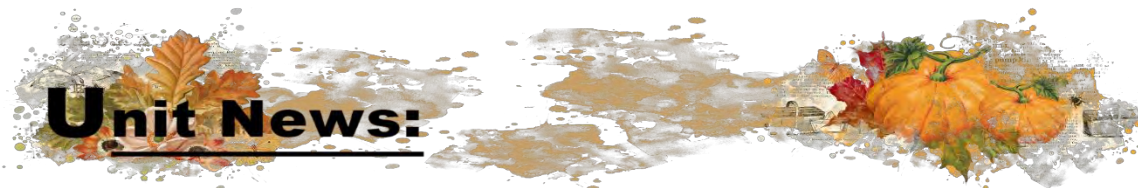
Membership and a little note of
reminder about paying dues!
A poem just for our members!

It's that time of year a reminder
seems right
For membership strength gives us
membership might!
Perhaps you have done it, perhaps
you forgot...
It's dues time for certain, we need
you a lot.

We're service by nature: we do
what we can
To make this world better for every
man
And woman we know and some
that we don't;
We never say can't and we never
say won't

It's scholarship giving, retirement
voice
Together in union we vocalize
choice.
We revel together at convention
cool
The newsletter offered is truly a
jewel!

So won't you consider and send us
a check
It's just fifteen bucks, help us give
'em heck!
We'll wait for your action, with hope
from above
We send you our thanks and we
send you our love!



Sioux Falls

Sioux Falls – by Sharon Dierks, co 1st Vice-President

The Sioux Falls Area Retired School Personnel began our 2023/2024 year on August 28th at the Pizza Ranch on 41st Street. We meet on the fourth Monday of the month (except for Nov. and Dec.) at 11:00 AM. We collect assorted items each month for many organizations – toiletries, calendars, cards for Meals on Wheels, and many more. In September, we made 17 trays of baked goods for our 9/11 Project. We delivered the trays to fire stations, police headquarters, the highway department, and the National Guard fire station. We do this project with the AARP, who supply fruit. Last spring, we formed an AARP Community Service Team to plan volunteer activities in Sioux Falls. So far, our unit has helped organize and distribute school supplies, packed sack lunches at Lunch is Served, served at the Banquet, provided a meal for the Ronald McDonald House and have several winter projects in the works.

Our first meeting in August was with Assistant Superintendent, Jamie Nold. He gave an update on the Sioux Falls School District. In September, we had a presentation from Nick Redmond, Lead Teacher from the South Dakota Penitentiary Education Programs. On Oct. 23rd, our program was on the Veteran's Tiny Homes Community Project. Then, on Oct. 25th, we had a remarkably interesting tour of the Veterans' Homes. Our November program will be Project Warm-Up with Tracy Vik. This project makes thousands of blankets sent all over the world. We hope to have a unit activity where we make some blankets. We end the year with The Moonlighters Barber Shop Quartet and a Christmas Sing-a-long.

We encourage our members to not only join the local unit, but also the state membership.

Northern Hills



Members of the Northern Hills Retired Personnel are enjoying getting together after our summer break. Twenty-two members gathered for our September 18th meeting. All enjoyed a “welcome back” potluck. Jackie Wyatt, our speaker, talked about the Vore Buffalo Jump located between Spearfish, SD and Sundance, WY. She shared interesting information on the history of the area that relates to the jump. Several members in our group accepted her offer of a tour of The Vore Buffalo Jump after the meeting and found it extremely interesting.

At the October 16th meeting the Black Hills Paranormal Investigators provided the program for the group. They shared their investigative methods and ghostly findings in various locations in the Black Hills area. Many questions were asked and answered, and the audience had an opportunity to share their own spirited experiences with the investigators. Sturgis and Lead/Deadwood were the host towns.

At our November 20th meeting Lexi Lux from Teen Court will be speaking about her involvement with that program.

On December 11th we will have a Christmas potluck and cookie exchange.

Our group meets on the third Monday September through May at the Spearfish Senior Center. We gather members from several communities in the Northern Black Hills and beyond.

Unit News:

Oahe

The Oahe Area Retired School Personnel consists of members from Mobridge, Pollock and Glenham. We meet six months out of the year. The April meeting is held in Pollock and the remainder of the meetings are at the Mobridge Senior Center for our noon meal, followed by our meeting.

We are an active group, giving financial support to several organizations in our community. They include The Foster Care Program, MP Parents for Positive Change. The Backpack Program, Child Protection Team, and the Black Hills Playhouse Theater Company.

Mobridge Pollock School projects we financially support are: MP Oral Interp, Declam and Robotics, National Honor Society, Student Council Angel Tree program and two student Art Awards given at our annual Mobridge art show. We also have an entry in the Homecoming Parade. This year we had an incredibly positive reaction to our group's taking part in the parade from parade attendees. Several even thanked us for our service to education. During American Education week we put ads in our local newspaper, and on our local tv station, plus a notice in our daily school announcements to thank our school personnel for a job well done.

We have groups of members assigned to each meeting to plan the program for that meeting. Throughout the years many speakers have enlightened us about school and community activities. We eagerly await each month's meetings.

Darlene K Binfet, Secretary



Oahe Area Retired School Personnel float for Mobridge Pollock Homecoming Parade. Pictured are Darlene Binfet, Delores Kluckman and Theresa Hazel.

Unit News:



Left: WARSP's fall picnic at the Lions Park shelter. New retirees are invited to find out about our organization.

Right: Eric Fjeldheim instructs our group about natural ways to manage pain.

WARSP news from Denise Ottenbacher



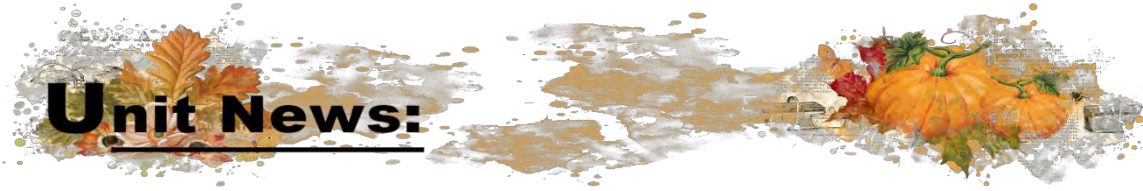
Watertown

Watertown Area Retired School Personnel (WARSP) kicked off the year of celebrations with a picnic at the new Lions Club picnic shelter. Eight new retirees joined our group.

In September, Watertown's city engineer gave an update of what is happening in our community. Eric Fjeldheim, physical therapist, and pain specialist from Prairie Lakes Hospital gave a presentation "Tapping into Nature's Pharmacy to Treat Pain" in October. November's program, "A Bird's Eye View" will teach us about drone photography by expert Scott Shepherd.

Future meetings include our annual Christmas party hosted by bz and cz, a tour of the new ice arena, musical entertainment, and a presentation on brain health.

Hope to see you in Watertown for the SDRSP convention in May!



Madison

Madison Area Retired School Personnel have enjoyed many interesting and informative meetings this past year. Most recently we were treated to a program put on by Natalie of the Great Plains ZooMobile. Area retirees were invited and Co-President Barb Hyland shared information with the guests and invited them to become members.

Barb Hyland also shared information on Saturday's Tour of Tables event put on by Domestic Violence. The speaker from Dakota State University for this luncheon event shared information on Internet Safety and how to avoid scammers.

In September we toured the local Madison Airport where Brandize Nelson shared the Check-Ride board and interviewed various pilots and students who were here from all parts of the world.

In December we will be participating in a Christmas Crafting event where we make a door hanging ornament just in time for the next holiday season!

Pictures below show Natalie sharing her turtle from the ZooMobile. MARSP table as set up for the Tour of Tables. Brandize Nelson at the airport Check-Ride board.



Milbank

In July, MARTA met for breakfast and collected school supplies for the local Food Pantry. During August's meeting, a guest speaker spoke about home schooling children. For the September meeting, our group had an interesting tour and lunch at the Abbey of the Hills, currently a retreat center, but formerly a sanctuary for Brothers/Monks. In October, besides a business meeting, members enjoyed participating in a sharing activity called Rose-Thorn-Bud. Each person told about a positive aspect of their life, then a challenge and lastly, something fun or exciting that is coming up soon.

Rhonda Preller MARTA President



Unit News:

Aberdeen

The Aberdeen Area Retired School Personnel group meets once a month for a lunch meeting. This year meetings begin with a mixer so we can get to know each other. The October meeting had us “take as much as you need” from a roll of toilet paper. Directions were then given to tell one thing about yourself for every square. One comment heard was, “I think I took too much!”

Also, we have a speaker, or a field trip planned for each month. Members receive cards with the yearly plan to keep. October was highly informative as one of the Aberdeen public schools’ Resource Officers came and shared how he loves his job. It is all about relationships and developing trust. The November meeting will bring a Fraud officer from Dakota Bank.

Each meeting we draw for a door prize and Shirley Pelkofer won the 3M donation box in September, so she brought a wonderful basket of home baked cookies for the October winner.

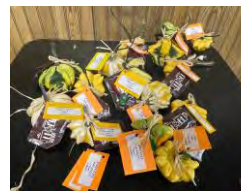
Our membership is growing, and we hope for a great school year!

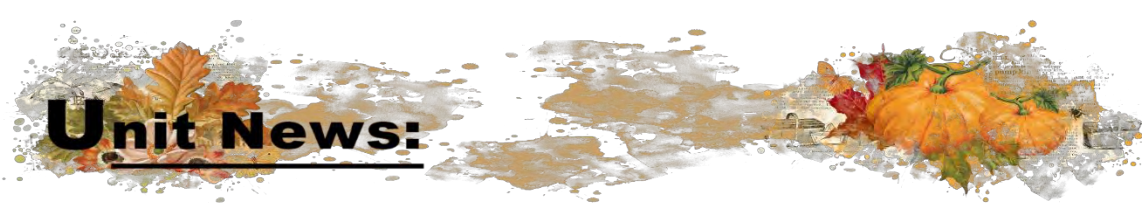
Submitted by President Gayle Bortnem



Sisseton

Sisseton Area Retired School Personnel - SARSPA- has been busy this past summer and fall! The members enjoyed a summer outing to Brewhalla, Fargo North Dakota and toured Sheyenne Nursery in Harwood, North Dakota. SARSPA members prepared back to school treats for all staff along with conference treats at both schools, Sisseton and Tiospa Zina. Fall pumpkin gifts were given to our local nursing home, assisted living and home health care clients. We will be participating in a new service project by donating money from our meetings to the Angel Fund—an account set up by Sisseton School District to cover costs of meals for students whose lunch accounts are insufficient and do not qualify for free or reduced meals. Lastly, members drove in the Sisseton homecoming parade and threw out over 300 t-shirts to parade onlookers.





Black Hills Retired School Personnel

Be Alert was the topic of Black Hills Retired School Personnel at the October 10 meeting. When planning our 2023-24 meetings, we realize some of our members have struggled with fraud. Jody Gillaspie from the Attorney General's office was asked to speak. Within the AG office, she heads the Consumer Protection office. This position requires knowledge of the different types of fraud and how people are scammed through technology and the phone. Scammers are continually changing their methods of getting money from unsuspecting consumers. This office is continually researching, watching for diverse types of fraud and learning how to prevent different types of scamming.

Our executive board thought it would be nice to meet a local person from the police force whose expertise is working against fraud. Ms Gillaspie and Nick Strampe worked beautifully as tandem speakers explaining how to be aware of fraud and gave examples of what has happening locally and in the state. Ms Gillaspie asked for an hour for the presentation and time to answer questions.

Another change from our normal meeting, we invited the public. A description of the meeting was sent to the two senior citizen newsletters and in the local paper. BHRSP members were given business size cards and encouraged to invite people. We had about 8 people who were not members.

Ms Gillaspie came prepared with handouts for everyone. She is anxious to have people throughout the state know about the Consumer Protection Office and is willing to talk to groups.



Lobby Day - January 30, 2024

Please watch for more information about Lobby Day on January 30.

GRANDPARENT ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES

Subject: “Why my grandparent should be the AARP SD Grandparent of the Year”

A grandparent is defined as any older adult who fulfills a grand parenting or “senior citizen mentor” role for a child. A familial relationship is not necessary in order to meet this requirement.

Eligibility: Contest is for 5th graders in public and private schools.

Technical Requirements: Essay must be an original work of the author, up to 500 words in length, be written in English, and include the components of a formal essay, e.g., introduction, supporting points and conclusion. Essay must be submitted on white, 8” x 11” paper (standard size paper), and be legibly hand-written or typed by the author on one side only of the page. Only the WINNING essay from each school building is to be submitted to the local Retired School Personnel (formerly Retired Teachers) Association, SDRSP, contact, along with Form A. The author’s name and school must also be written at the end of the essay.

Judging Criteria & Awards: Qualifying characteristics: 60% Creativity and Expression 20% Grammar and Form 20% Neatness Winning essays may be viewed by individual years on the website, www.sdrsp.org. Use the Grandparent Essay link.

Deadlines: School winner’s deadline: February 1. The school winner is chosen by 5th grade teachers (or other appropriate judges) from the participating school based on the judging criteria provided. The winning essay from each school must be received by the local SDRSP unit contact by the deadline provided. Form A MUST be attached to the school winner’s essay.

Unit winner’s deadline: February 15 Judging for the unit winner will be among all the school winners in that unit’s area. The unit winner is chosen by representatives of the local SDRSP unit. Local units are encouraged to keep a copy of their unit's winning essay so that their winner can be invited to read it at one of their meetings. The winning essay from each unit, along with Form B, must be completed and sent to the RSP Essay Committee Chairperson: Donna Fischer 2209 Burleigh, Apt 109 Yankton, SD 57078 605-661-2616 (ddfisch@vyn.midco.net)

The top three essays in the local unit judging will receive first, second, and third place medals. If a unit has fewer than three schools from which to judge, medals will be provided according to the number of essays submitted for local unit judging. If units choose to provide participation certificates, it will be a decision made and followed through by the local SDRSP unit. The local unit should also indicate on Form B the number of medals they need (up to three). The medals will then be given to the unit representatives at the SDRSP convention in May.

Regional judging: March 1 The Yankton RSP will do the regional judging for the essay contest. AARP Regions are Southeast, Northeast, and West. The three regional winning essays, chosen by the Yankton RSP Essay Committee, will be submitted to the AARP South Dakota State Office by March 1. Forms A and C must be attached. The Yankton RSP Essay Committee will inform the regional winners that they have reached the finals of the essay contest.

State finals judging: April 1 The AARP South Dakota office will establish a judging panel consisting of members of the AARP South Dakota Executive Council and the AARP South Dakota State Director. The Yankton RSP Essay Committee will notify the first, second, and third place winners of their placing on or before April 15. The committee will also notify all participating units of who the state winners are. The person submitting Form B will be the one notified by email or if necessary, by mail. The committee will invite the first place winner to read his/her essay at a noon luncheon on the second day of the SDRSP Convention in May. The winner is not required to attend the convention. Four meals at the luncheon and mileage for one vehicle will be provided to the winner’s family if they choose to attend. The local units of the second and third place winners will receive their checks at the annual meeting so that they may be presented locally at the appropriate time. The Yankton RSP Essay Committee will provide an electronic copy of the winning essay to the SDRSP website (www.sdrsp.org) following the May convention.

Awards: Cash prizes – First place—\$250; Second place—\$150; Third place—\$10



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: 605:966 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