



South Dakota Retired School Personnel

NEWSLETTER

Affiliated with National
Retired Teachers Association

"To Serve, Not To Be Served"

www.SDRSP.org

February 2024, Vol. 58, No. 1



Greetings from President Sly Stories to Tell! 2024 Convention

At the convention in Watertown on May 7 & 8, we are going to hear stories. Many of us love to hear stories and to tell stories.

It should be worthwhile visiting Watertown for the convention for the first time! There are many things to see and do. We will just get a brief peek into the treasures offered.

Here are some things for you to do:

- Room Reservation at the Ramkota, Watertown – Deadline is Friday, April 5 (the hotel will release rooms to the public 30 days before convention)
- Convention Registration – The deadline is Friday, April 26
- Units bring a door prize.
- Units bring something or some things that represent the area of their unit. The dinner tables on Tuesday night will

have these items as the centerpieces. Members will have the opportunity to share about their communities. Do not make it hard or expensive!

- The book exchange was popular last year. There will be another exchange this year, so figure out some favorite books you would like to exchange.
- Something new is a book fair with South Dakota and Native cultural books featured.

By the time you receive this, it will be the middle of February. Before long there will be a few signs of spring on our radar...maybe a lone robin, a daffodil or a tulip pushing through the ground, or maybe the ice has finally melted off the driveway! See you soon.

Convention Line-Up



Stories Through Letters: *The Stavig Letters: The Story of a Norwegian Immigrant* will be presented by Curtis Dahl and Jane & John Rasmussen from the Sisseton area. It is a theater program based on a collection of letters written over a fifty-year period between two brothers, one who emigrated from Norway to Dakota Territory and one who stayed in Norway. It is part of the Speaker's Bureau of the SD Humanities Council. They have performed more than 75 times in the United States and Scandinavia.

Stories Through Art: *The Redlin Center* is another story we will explore. Terry Redlin tells a story through art in each painting he has done. We will be visiting the Center and have a program that shares the story behind Redlin's work.

Stories Through Essays: *The Reminiscent Teacher Essays* was the actual beginning of the stories theme for this convention. After celebrating the history of SDRSP last year, the essays were not recognized. Teacher experiences

were captured by many of our current members through essays they wrote. Some will be shared. Books similar to last year will be made to preserve the essays.

Stories That Never End: *The Zubke's* have agreed to present again. They always have memorable stories to share, but they are still "making up the story." More to come.

SDRS/AARP/AMBA

Pre-convention tours will include the Mellette House, the Watertown home of SD's first governor, Arthur Mellette. The historic 1880's Goss Opera House is another part of the tour.

A post-convention tour will be the highly recognized Lake Area Technical College (LATC). There is not always a post-tour, but wanted to take advantage of what Watertown has to offer, since this is the first time the convention has been held there.

Convention Information

TWO DATES to remember and act on before the convention.

Friday, April 5 – Hotel reservation deadline **Friday, April 26 – Convention registration deadline.**

The easiest way...get it all done early, with April 5 as a goal. **Just. Do. It.**

Table Decorations for the Tuesday Night Banquet – Each unit is invited to bring some things or something that represents the area of the individual unit. Maybe it is something geographic, a tourist site, crops grown, history of town/community, author, artist or musician from the area. The possibilities are endless. Do not spend a lot of time or money, just a small display that can be placed in the center of a table. Or if you have two tables of attendees, spread it out. Do not make it hard, just a conversation starter.

Door Prizes – Each Unit is invited to bring a gift basket for a door prize.

Leaders –

Annual Board Meeting SDRSP State Officers

- Monday, May 6, at 7:30 p.m.

Unit Reps/Leadership Meeting with SDRSP Board

- Wednesday, May 8, at 7:30 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.

Pre-Convention Tour – Mellette House and Goss Opera House – At 8:30 a.m. on Tuesday, May 7, be at the Main Entrance of the Ramkota Hotel and Watertown Event Center.

Post-Convention Tour – Lake Area Technical College, Meet at the Main Entrance of the Ramkota 20 minutes after the end of the noon session on Wednesday.

Back by Popular Request -Book Exchange – Each convention attendee is invited to bring a used book or two or three to exchange. If you bring two, you can take two, etc.

New this Year! Mini Book Fair - Kathy and Guy Mackner will have SD History and Native Culture books for sale.

Convention Schedule



SDRSP Convention May 7-8, 2024 - Ramkota, Watertown SD

Stories to Tell

Monday 5/6	7:30 p.m.	Annual Board Meeting – SDRSP State Officers
Tuesday 5/7	8:00 a.m.	Registration opens
	8:45	Pre-convention tour – Mellette House and Goss Opera House
Tuesday 5/7	1:00 p.m.	First General Session
		Welcome
	1:30	Stavig Letters – Stories to Tell through Letters
	3:00	Drive to the Redlin Art Center
	3:30	Presentation at Redlin Center Theatre – Stories to Tell through Art
		Second General Session
	5:30	Social hour
	6:00	Dinner Special Presentation: Stories to Tell through Essays
Wed 5/8	6:00-9:00 a.m.	Complimentary Breakfast at Ramkota
	7:30- 8:15 a.m.	Unit Reps/Leadership Meeting with SDRSP Board
		Third General Session
	8:30	Memorial Service
	8:45	Business Meeting
		Fourth General Session
	9:30	SDRS/ AARP / AMBA Bill and Cathy Zubke
	12:00	Lunch - Grandparent’s Essay, Awards
	1:30 or so	After convention tour at Lake Area Tech

Community Health & Service

SPRING is hopefully just around the corner!!

Here are some FUN FACTS about SPRING--

--SPRING is the 1st season of the calendar year and arrives this year at 5:37 AM on Saturday, March 20th.

--It has been known as SPRING since the late 14th Century.

--Children grow more during SPRING.

--The 1st day of SPRING is called the Vernal Equinox meaning equal hours of day and night on this day.

--SPRING had been called Lent but changed the name in the 14th Century.

--SPRING Fever is REAL--caused by change in diet, increased temperature and light, and hormonal changes.

--Tulips are worth their weight in Gold since they are the earliest flowers to bloom in the SPRING.

--The 1st St. Patrick's Day Parade took place in New York City in 1762.

It's time to COUNTDOWN to the State Convention to be held May 7th and 8th in Watertown this year.

Here's a reminder to ALL Units that our Community Service Activities sheets are due to me by April 8th, 2024 to compile our hours before the Convention. The form to be used will be sent to Unit Directors. Let's BREAK our RECORD of 23,667 Hours that was set last year!!

Happy Spring and See You at Convention!!

Diane Odland

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SDRSP Membership



Hello, I hope this finds you doing well. Life in South Dakota is one of constant change. That is probably why I love living here so much. No two days are ever the same.

Remember the days at school? Every day the students brought something new either to learn about them or to be able to teach them something that they did not already know. One could never just sit back and 'coast', one had to be on your toes every second of every day. One was 'on' until the second you finished brushing your teeth and you swung your feet into bed and closed your eyes! This is probably why when you are in the field of education you need that time to recoup when you could get it. I loved a good old-fashioned 'snow day'.

I would like to thank each of the units who have been so diligent about getting the member death notices to me. We must honor the members who have passed away for their service to education.

I will be sending out to each unit before the Convention the list of names that I have compiled so far on deceased members. Please double-check that list so we can honor these members at the Convention in May. Thank you.

Mary Wilson
Mary.Wilson@mit.midco.net

Scholarship Application

In 2011 SDRSP began offering one \$1000 scholarship, available to any South Dakota K-12 teacher with at least 5 years of experience and working on an advanced degree or national board certification. The idea was so popular and economically supported by our members that we now offer two \$1000 scholarships a year.

The scholarship application form is on the SDRSP website (<https://www.sdrsp.org>). Send the application digitally to Cathy Anderson (cander451@msn.com) by April 10, 2024.

Cathy Anderson

Lobby Day in Pierre

Lobby Day in Pierre was January 30.

Adam Goldberg from NRTA (National Retired Teachers Association) was here from Washington D.C.



*Gerri Larson, Executive Director SDRSP
and Adam Goldberg NRTA*



SDRSP members at AARP Lobby Day

Legislative Summary 2024



Not too many changes coming for the retirement system or education—so far. We never know what will occur during the legislative session, so stay tuned.

Following is a briefing of the retirement system's two bills:

SB 68

An Act to amend certain provisions pertaining to the South Dakota Retirement System to comply with federal law. The Issue and Background:

The United States Congress passed the SECURE 2.0 Act in December 2022, which revised the age for required minimum distributions (RMD). RMDs are the minimum amounts members must withdraw from their retirement accounts upon reaching a certain age or retiring, whichever comes later. A required reference update is also included.

Legislative Summary:

- Update reference to the Internal Revenue Code. Section 1.
- Update age requirement for RMDs for members who attain age 72 after December 31, 2022, and age 73 before January 1, 2033, to age 73.

SB 69

An Act to amend certain provisions pertaining to the South Dakota Retirement System.

Legislative Summary:

- Clarify language for employer evaluation of disability. Section 1.
- Clarify language for health care provider evaluation of disability.
- Revise language to include waiver for spouse's signature in the case of an absent spouse for benefit start.

The Actuarial Statement: Senate Bills 68 & 69 will have no material impact on the liabilities or assets of SDRS. Now onto Medicaid.

AARP is concerned about the changes to Medicaid expansion. There is a movement to establish work requirements for certain individuals. SD voters settled this issue by overwhelmingly passing Amendment D, without the work requirements. This was in the November 2022 general election.

Of course, as usual, there are many legislative actions and bills. Pay attention to the ones you are interested in by going to: sdlegislature.gov.

Consider attending lobby day in Pierre. Sign up with AARP for the last Tuesday in January each year. Besides seeing and giving input to your SD Legislature you will have the best BBQ ribs ever.

Your legislative reps., Bob and Sharon Rose

Unit News



Black Hills



The Keystone schoolhouse was built with Victorian architecture in 1900, cost \$10,000 for 300 students. It served as a schoolhouse until 1988 and was declared a historical

building.

Bonita Ley has been the driving force behind promoting the school as a destination field trip to help students learn history. Under Bonita's supervision, schools all over the Black Hills have received an invitation to bring classrooms of students to the Living History School. After the snow and before school ended, hundreds of children were able to see a school of the past with black blackboards, student desks tethered together and how to use slates to show their work.

Bonita Ley is retiring this year after 20 years of providing students with the opportunity of "old school" experiences. Students were provided with



some clothing like suspenders, long skirts and bonnets as they sat at the same desks used by past generations.

Bonita took on the job of the field trips for students because of her love of history, love of teaching and because she went to Keystone School.

She has done it all from recruiting and training volunteers from BHRSP and Keystone community members. Made sure the school was clean for students in the spring, sent invitations to the Black Hills' schools for the field trip, washed the clothes students used, helped with students trying on the clothes (suspenders were a puzzle for the boys), taught, and the next day worked with other busloads of students.

The Keystone Area Historical Society honored Bonita for her guidance and vision of this project. Bonita has received recognition at SDRSP for her extensive community service hours of work with the school and children. Black Hills Retired School Personnel members are amazed at Bonita's dedication in teaching visible/ hands on history to hundreds of students.



Bonita Ley, Norma Eckmann, and Marilyn Fitzgerald in their teaching dresses. All worked on the Keystone project and active in BHRSP.

Yankton

Submitted by David Fischer, Co-President of the Yankton Area RSP group

Our Yankton Unit is currently experiencing our winter hiatus. We will reactivate in March when we again meet for breakfast.

This is the nucleus of our group. We do occasionally help out with the "Sack-Pack" program which provides sacks of weekend food for hundreds of the elementary students. We mostly enjoy the "war stories" from our teaching days. Because one of our co-presidents, Donna Fischer, is the chairperson of the statewide Grandparent Essay contest, many of our members volunteer to help judge both the local and regional essays.



Unit News



Madison

The Madison Area Retired School Personnel met Monday, December 4 at Nicky's for their December noon luncheon. No business meeting was held so more time could be spent on the Christmas activity.

Vicky Geraerts of Dell Rapids described the steps in creating a balsa wood holiday wreath. Members painted

the background first. Geraerts demonstrated the use of vinyl lettering decals and bow-making. Then everyone selected greenery, pine cones, berries, and colorful ribbon for her creation.

The next meeting will be held February 26 at noon at Nicky's. The topic of the day will be "Bizzy Lizzy."



Vicky Geraerts demonstrated placement of wreath decorative items.



Barb Tornow works on her wreath.



Rita Brown added finishing touches as Barb Hyland shows her completed project.

Unit News

Sioux Falls

Submitted by Sharon Dierks, Co 1st Vice-President

The Sioux Falls Area Retired School Personnel had a great year in 2023! We continue to meet on the fourth Monday of each month at The Pizza Ranch on 41st Street, except for June and July.

We started January 2024, with a program by Amy Carter from the Shelter for Family Safety (formerly Children's Inn). In February, Jeff Eckhoff, who is the Director of Planning and Development Services, will give us an update on what is happening in Sioux Falls. The SD Retirement System will give us a brief update in March. Also, in March, Officer Brady Lieuwen will present from the Sioux Falls Police Department. Understanding Alzheimer & Dementia and/or Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body will be our program in April. Many of us hope to attend

the SD State Retired School Personnel Convention in Watertown, SD. The theme is "Stories to Tell". Many of our members have been sharing stories at our meetings. On May 20th, we will hear from the Faith Temple Church Food Giveaway. Also, we end with a Remembrance & Memorial Service with Installation of Officers.

We continue to do many service projects in the Sioux Falls area and collect items each month for various organizations. We recently gave donations to the Veteran's Community Project, Embee, Project Warm Up, and the Shelter for Family Safety. In February, we will deliver 50 roses to various Nursing Homes in Sioux Falls, which are provided by AARP for Valentine's Day.

Unit News



Watertown

The Watertown Area Retired School Personnel (WARSP) have been busy making Valentine cards through an AARP program called Cupids' Crew which honors residents at local assisted living facilities and nursing homes. In addition to cards, residents receive roses for Valentine's Day.



Scott Shepherd shows the different types of drones to area teachers.

Past meetings include learning about drone photography from retired teacher, Scott Shepherd. Seeing a 'birds eye view' of our local commercial and residential development was unique and interesting. Bill and Cathy Zubke were hostesses at our Christmas gathering and white elephant gift exchange. Bill taught us how to make card stock

boxes. Then we filled them with his homemade fudge.

Future meetings include 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!



Bill Zubke teaches a group how to make a box out of a sheet of card stock.



Retired teachers are making boxes for their homemade fudge.

Sisseton

The Sisseton Retired Teachers group has had a busy winter. They have brought treats for the teacher conferences and plan to bring Valentine's treats for the teachers this winter. Another giving activity is a Valentine's treat for the local nursing home, assisted living center, and home health patients.

We have received a thank you from many recipients of our giving activities. In January, the SARSPA members and their spouses/guests went to the Valley

View Golf Course clubhouse for a night of socializing and a great meal. The turnout was fantastic, and we all enjoyed a night out. Instead of doing a gift exchange, two bags were presented for donations to the local food bank for pet food and the Angel Fund in the school. Members donated over \$500.

SARSPA members are hosting the local blood bank donation drive in February. This has been our second year of volunteering for the February blood drive.



Unit News



Aberdeen

Submitted by Gayle Bortnem, President

The Aberdeen Area Retired School Personnel meets once per month. Each meeting starts with a “get to know each other” activity. One month a toilet paper roll was passed around and they were instructed to “take as much as you need”. Then they had to say one thing about themselves for each sheet they took! We had an informational speaker for each meeting; a school resource officer shared his job of building relationships and trust with the students and an officer from Dakota Bank spoke on fraud and scams.

We have been asked to volunteer to judge students’ projects from an organization, “Educators Rising” at

our high school. It was a great opportunity to connect with students who want to be teachers. We have also been raising funds for our NSU scholarships and we also have plans to develop a fund for scholarships at the high school level.



Aberdeen Area Retired School Personnel	
(All those interested in education of our children)	
All meetings will be at The Flame at 11:30 on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.	
2023-24 Schedule	
September 19	“Welcome back” Activity to get to know you.
October 17	Speaker -Resource Officer from the schools.
November 21	Speaker -Dakota Bank on scams and fraud
December 19	Party time
2024-25 Schedule	
February 20	Speaker-Head Start program.
March 19	Meet & eat. Go to School for the Blind field trip
April 18	Speaker-Salvation Army on kids programs.
May 7 & 8	annual convention
May 21 last meeting	Hear about “Grandparent Essay” winners, convention, and plan “back to school” FUND RAISER.



Milbank

Submitted by Rhonda Preller MARTA President

The Milbank Area Retired Teachers/Personnel Association (MARTA) enjoyed a Christmas Party in December. Members shared favorite family holiday traditions with the group. Gifts were awarded during fun games and many names were drawn for door prizes. MARTA sponsored Christmas gifts for our local Angel Tree as we do each December.

Since January is usually a cold month, MARTA took a break from meeting and will get together in February to celebrate Valentine’s Day and have a mini

fundraiser. Several events are planned for the spring months including field trips and community service.



SDRSP State 2024 Convention Registration Form

May 7-8, 2024 The Ramkota and Convention Center
1901 9th Ave SW Watertown SD 57201

“Stories to Tell”

Deadline for Rooms: Friday, April 5, 2024 (will then be released to the public)
Call 605-886-8011. Ask for SDRSP block of rooms - \$104.99 plus tax

Deadline for Convention Registration: Friday, April 26, 2024

Mail the completed form and check payable to SDRSP to:

Merry Bleeker, 1435 City Springs Road, Rapid City SD 57702

Name: _____ Unit: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Name of spouse if attending convention: _____

Complete Convention Registration: \$60 Number ____ x \$60 = \$ _____

(Includes all sessions, speakers, snacks, dinner, and lunch)

Pre-Convention tour: Mellette House (free will donation) and Goss Opera House (\$10)

8:30 a.m. Leave from the Ramkota on Tuesday, May 7

Cost \$10 per person Number ____ x \$10 = \$ _____

(Registration and Pre-convention Tour) **TOTAL** = \$ _____

Post-Convention Tour: Lake Area Technical College (LATC)

No cost - I am planning to go on post- convention tour (Yes or No) _____

**** Dinner choice for Tuesday dinner, please select one of the following options:**

Chicken Breast ____ Montreal Pork Chop ____

Another Option: Sign up on-line at SDRSP.org. Mail check to Merry Bleeker. 1435 City Springs Road, Rapid City SD 57702

Questions? Email: jacsly48@gmail.com or
call 605-343-4956, text 605-381-9116



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

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

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

Mary Wilson
400 N Kimball St
Mitchell, SD 57301

Address Service Requested



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