



South Dakota Retired School Personnel

NEWSLETTER

"To Serve, Not To Be Served"

Affiliated with National Retired Teachers Association

www.SDRSP.org

August 2022, Vol. 55, No. 1

Recap of May 2022 Convention

By Rhonda Preller

Let's Fiesta: Celebrating South Dakota's Diversity was the theme for the 2022 SDRSP convention held in May at Cedar Shore in Oacoma. Convention attendees enjoyed interesting speakers, good food, laughter, and a fun time during the 2-day event.

Pre-convention tours of Atka Lakota Museum, South Dakota Hall of Fame and Dignity sculpture took place on Tuesday morning, May 10th.

The first general session was on Tuesday afternoon where Mayor Chad Mutziger, Superintendent Justin Zajic and Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Taryn Reidt welcomed the retired school personnel.

Rhonda Preller, Milbank, presented on Diversity: Teaching on the Border. She gave information on teaching and living near the Mexican border of Texas. Additionally, Director of Education, Sharmel Olson, from St. Joseph's Indian School relayed information about the school and Dr. Kevin Smith, DSU Professor imparted technology tips. During the evening banquet, awards were presented, and the Lakota Dance Club entertained the group. Ron Riherd received the prestigious Florence Krieger Award.

On Wednesday, May 11th, after breakfast, a Memorial Service recognized the members who had passed during the 2021-2022 year. The annual business meeting was conducted, and new slate of officers were installed. Following the meeting, State AARP Director Erik Gaikowski spoke about AARP in South Dakota. The Associate Members Benefits Advisors (AMBA) informed attendees about their program which will be offering a variety of insurances to SDRSP members. The last program of the morning, prior to the noon luncheon, was "Fraud by Zubke's". Bill and Cathy Zubke told different scenarios on how to avoid fraud scams.

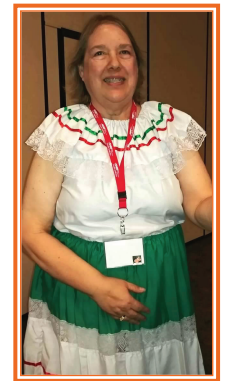
5th grader, Kylynn Schwandt, Milbank, read her winning Grandparent Essay which had placed first over 500 other essays in the state.

Rhonda Preller, State President of SDRSP, and Donna Fischer, Essay Chairperson, introduced Kylynn and her family, who were guests at the noon luncheon during the convention.

The Milbank Area Retired Teachers/Personnel Association (MARTA) was the host unit for the convention, led by Preller and Carm Tobin.



Kylynn Schwandt, a fifth grader from Milbank, received the 2022 Grandparent Essay award. Pictured are: Donna Fischer (chair of Essay contest), Kylynn, Julie Schwandt (grandmother), and President Rhonda Preller.



President Rhonda Preller, Milbank Unit, shared her experiences of teaching on the border, having lived and taught in South Texas for 25 years.



SDRSP 2022-2024 Elected Officers, L to R: Rhonda Preller, past president; Pat Johnson, treasurer; Carm Tobin, secretary; Kay Ainslie, vice president; Cathy Anderson, president-elect; Jacque Sly, president.



Ron Riherd, past president of SDRSP, received the Florence Krieger award. He is pictured with his wife, Gloria.



Bill & Cathy Zubke gave a thought filled presentation on fraud, scams and hoaxes.



Pre-convention group toured Dignity, Akta Lakota Museum and SD Hall of Fame.



Sharmel Olson, director of education at St. Joseph's Indian School, gave insight into the school and the impact it has on the lives of their students.



\$1000 scholarship to Jordan Bakken from Watertown HS is pursuing a degree in Instructional Design through Western Governor's University. Pam Raeder presented the check.



\$1000 scholarship to Marcie Wallenmeyer from Watertown Middle School is pursuing a Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction with a K-12 Mathematics Education emphasis through Black Hills State University. Pam Raeder presented the check.



The Memorial Service honored 42 members lost in 2021-2022 by displaying a flower blossom in their memory as their name was read aloud.

Community Health & Service:



Community Service Awards 2022 SDRSP Convention

As Community Service Chairman, I encouraged but did not make it mandatory to submit volunteer hours for 2021-2022, as some units were still not meeting full time.

Eight units did submit an impressive 13,089 volunteer hours. When I took over the position, I no longer differentiated between Youth and Adult hours. Volunteer hours were volunteer hours!

My formula was 3,000 to 1,500 hours earned a GOLD award. 1499 to 1000 earned a SILVER and 999 to 0 was a BRONZE.

Below is the chart of each unit, their hours and award earned.

Milbank	2860	GOLD
Watertown	2663	GOLD
Oahe	1790	GOLD
Sioux Falls	1393	SILVER
Redfield	1270	SILVER
Madison	1206	SILVER
Sisseton	1139	SILVER
Winner	768	BRONZE

TOTAL HOURS 13,089

To tabulate the monetary value of SDRSP's volunteer hours to our state, I took total hours times the average SD hourly wage of \$20.
Equation is $13,089 \times 20 = \underline{\hspace{2cm}}$

Our volunteer hours for 2021-2022 would have earned South Dakota \$261,780.00

Way to go, SDRSP volunteers!
Impressive work!

Carm Tobin
Past Community Chairman



Madison Community Service award
Silver



Redfield Community Service award
Silver



Sioux Falls Community Service award
Silver



Winner Community Service award
Bronze



Milbank Community Service award
Gold



Watertown Community Service award
Gold

Greetings from President Sly:



Connect. Learn. Serve.

SDRSP members **connect** with other people. New retirees are welcomed. Long time members are appreciated. All units are working through challenges to recruit new members and retain memberships.

SDRSP members **learn** information through programs and experiences. They learn from others by visiting and socializing. They explore new opportunities from speakers and field trips.

SDRSP members **serve** others. Local units have multiple projects that involve community outreach, current school employees and volunteering in a variety of ways.

Board meeting

The 2022-2024 Elected and Appointed Board members had a meeting at the Pizza Ranch in Fort Pierre on July 14. The agenda included introductions of the members, reports from officers and committee chairs, plans for the upcoming year, transitions with AMBA (Association of Member Benefits Advisors), the need to update by-laws and responsibilities of officers, capturing historical background of the organization, upcoming leadership meetings and the 2023 convention.

August Leadership Meetings

All members of unit leadership teams were invited to attend one of the leadership meetings in August. One is scheduled for Wednesday, August 10th, 1:00 p.m. at First Lutheran Church in Brookings. The second one is on Thursday, August 11th, 10:00 a.m. at Rapid City Public Library. Leaders make our local units thrive, maintain and even grow. It is not always an easy task to lead, but am forever grateful to those leaders who have committed to their local units and to the state level leadership in order for SDRSP to continue as a viable organization.

Member emails

Each year at least two newsletters are published. Sometimes there is a need to communicate with members, i.e. "Have you sent in your registration for the convention?" There may not be a full newsletter that needs to be sent, but there might be messages to share. If your unit has member emails, please send them to the Membership chair, Mary Wilson. She will add them to the spreadsheet with member contact information. Her contact is: Mary.Wilson@mit.midco.net.

History of SDRSP (SDRTA)

If anyone has some history of SDRSP (SDRTA) stashed away some place, please let me know. We are working to gather past records to put into a document so it is not lost. Contact me at jacsly48@gmail.com or 605-343-4956.

Jacquie Sly
SDRSP President



From Executive Director:

This has been a very busy past few months regarding the Grant money that has been awarded to SDRSP. Merchandise with the new LOGO was given out at the State Conference in May. Those Units who were not present should have received/or will be receiving some of the items also. I hope you are enjoying the items and letting others know about our Group.



One of the main uses of the Grant money was for recruitment. Ads were purchased on SDPB to run as lead-in for Boys BB tournament, and on "In the Moment" and "Run of Schedule Saturday". The first printed Ad was in the July issue of SDPB magazine.

South Dakota Magazine has just run the first of three ads in their July/August issue on page 88.

Thank-you to President Rhonda, the Milbank members, and others who put on the 2022 State Conference.

Gerri Larson

SDRSP Executive Director

Membership:

The Membership information point of contact is Mary Wilson, home phone: 605-996-4053 or cell: 605-999-0669, address: 400 N. Kimball St. Mitchell, SD 57301. Please send updated contact data for **officers** for 2022-2023 or a point of contact. Then, once **new** and **renewal** memberships have been sent to the treasurer, Pat Johnson, send any additional **address changes, deaths of members, etc.** to Mary.

As I am new to this position, please feel free to share ways that you feel may increase a positive sharing of information with our membership. We are continually seeking ways to inform members of knowledge and news that will help us in retirement.

I am looking forward to serving as your membership chair. One of the rewards will be getting to know each of you on more personal bases. I will only be successful at this if you help me.

Mary Wilson

2022 State Officers Draft

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Gerri Larson

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2023 Convention

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. ~Margaret Mead

In 1966 South Dakota Retired Teachers Association adopted their first constitution. Years have passed and hundreds, perhaps even thousands, of retired teachers have worked to change the world around them.

The theme for the 2023 convention is: **“Where Were You in 1966?”** SDRTA (now SDRSP) was in its infancy in 1966, were you? The convention will be held at **The Lodge in Deadwood on May 2 and 3, 2023**. Find your favorite ‘60’s clothes, music, memorabilia and mark your calendar for May 2 and 3, 2023. More information will be coming.

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 Sioux Falls and Oacoma. In 2020 the convention was planned for Deadwood, but was cancelled. So, let’s rock & roll to Deadwood in 2023.

Association Member Benefits Advisors

South Dakota Retired School Personnel (SDRSP) is partnering with Association Member Benefits Advisors (AMBA) to give members options for supplemental insurances. There is no waiting period, there is open enrollment, and there are competitive group rates. Some policies include dental, vision, long-term care, Medicare supplement plans, plus discounts on travel, dining, computers and more.

One might be asking how SDRSP connected with AMBA. Gerri Larson, SDRSP Executive Director, was at a national meeting. She heard a presentation by AMBA and heard positive reviews and comments from directors from other states that have AMBA. Actually, South Dakota is one of the few states that did not have AMBA supplemental insurance options. After meeting several times with the AMBA leadership the board determined that there could be a benefit to offering members the insurance options.

There is no obligation, no commitment, but only an opportunity to explore what is offered through AMBA. If it works for you, great. If not, that is fine.

Tom is willing to speak to your local unit or speak individually. If you want to be contacted by the AMBA representative, here is his contact information.

Tom Miller

District Manager

Association Member Benefits Advisors

CO, WY, MT, ID, WA, OR, SD

D: 720.787.7982

C: 714.337.1607 (use if texting)

T: 800.258.7041

Unit News:

Madison

Madison Area Retired School Personnel Highlights Submitted by Marilou Scheafer, Secretary

Group highlights include an April 25th noon luncheon meeting at Nicky's attended by eighteen members. Michelle Majeres of SE Prevention Resources Center presented an informative and interesting program on drug statistics and the use, storage, and disposal of opioids.

The business meeting, conducted by Pres. Rita Brown, include recognition of the service of Lois McAreavey and Eleanor Enga who were presented flowers as thanks for their service to the group. Joyce Welbon and Marilou Scheafer were installed as Treasurer and Secretary and received flowers.

Rita Brown and Barb Hyland will continue as co-presidents. Mona Reisig conducted a memorial service in memory of Ruth Spencer and Rose Marie Brashier who were long time Madison educators and MARSP members.

The July sack lunch meeting held at Prairie Village was attended by 15 members and included a talk by Faron Wahl, village manager. He discussed the upcoming jamboree and covered updates on the village and safety concerns regarding driving and parking during the jamboree. Members signed up to clean the library as well as be present during the jamboree to greet visitors at the library.

Several members spoke of their convention experience with the highlight being the AMBA presentation on supplemental health benefits available to members. Members are contacting retirees they know regarding the availability of insurance and to invite membership to SDRSP. Rita Brown announced that our group won a certificate of excellence in community service, silver award for their donations of time to their communities and various groups.

The Lake County 1st place winner in the Grandparents Essay contest, as well as 2nd place in the state, Grace Wilkens, along with her mother Valerie Wilkens and grandparents Mike and Dayle Chilson joined the group to hear Grace present her essay. They stayed for dessert and to visit with members.



Pictured with Grace Wilkens are Grace's mother, Valerie Wilkens, and Grace's grandparents, Mike and Dayle Chilson. Presenting the certificate on behalf of MARSP is member Joyce Welbon.

Watertown

Submitted by Denise Ottenbacher, WARSP

Watertown Area Retired School Personnel (WARSP) kept busy this spring despite having to cancel our April meeting because of bad weather. In March, we toured the new nursing section of Lake Area Technical College.

In May, Watertown High School students entertained the group by presenting their oral interp pieces and giving a debate demonstration. We wrapped up the year in June by touring the Goss Opera House followed by lunch at Mavericks.

We are now planning programs for our next year beginning with a potluck picnic and membership drive at Bramble Park Zoo.



Members check out the conference room at the Goss Opera House.



WARSP members marvel at the renovations of the Goss Opera House.

Unit News: Milbank

The Milbank Area Retired Teachers/Personnel Association (MARTA) has been meeting regularly after taking time off during the Covid pandemic. Although, attendance has been down slightly, we are hoping people continue to participate in our educational and always fun times together!

MARTA had a regular meeting on March 17th, so what better way to enjoy St. Patrick's Day then to have a St. Patty's Day Party. Members dressed in green and played fun games with lots of prizes for everyone.

Milbank Unit was the host unit for the annual May SDRSP Convention, so in April, MARTA members worked on convention prep with decorations and sorting items into bags for each person attending the convention in Oacoma.

For the May meeting, newly retired teachers/personnel were invited to our meeting with members giving "retirement tips". It was a fun time to chat, laugh and enjoy the Pizza Ranch buffet. A free buffet and membership to MARTA/SDRSP was offered to the retiring folks!

June was a "vacation" month for meetings, but our Grant Committee met for morning pastries and heard wonderful news. AARP National announced the AARP Community Challenge 2022 award recipients and MARTA was chosen to receive \$14,000. Over 3,000 organizations applied for these grants and only 260 groups were chosen. MARTA is partnering with the City of Milbank to provide different items for the parks including water fountains, bike racks, playground equipment, benches, and signage. So much thanks to AARP for this opportunity to help out the adults and kids in the community of Milbank.

In July, MARTA met for breakfast at the Millstone restaurant. Besides chatting and eating, we hosted a school supply drive for our local food pantry. This is a July activity that MARTA has done for many years.



Black Hills

Black Hills Retired Teachers Personnel are looking forward to a new 2022-23 year. With our theme of "Adventures of Life," we needed to try new ideas. Our meetings are normally at the Canyon Lake Activity Center, but this year we are going to have two of our meetings at retirement communities. Our August meeting will be at St. Martin Village, a beautiful place for an inside picnic with no flies or ants. Christmas we will have Milo Winter's swing jazz band at the Westhills Village. Milo is a member of our chapter and has gathered retired players for his band. This will be our December meeting when weather conditions making it difficult for some of the residents to leave the facility to attend.

As you have probably read in the news, Rapid City and Douglas School Districts are going through modifications. With this group of members involved with school, we are all interested in hearing from administrators on what is transpiring in those adjustments. We have invited the different schools for two different 2023 meetings. Our intent is to give administrators a better perspective of what has happened and what are future plans.

One of our programs last year was done by the Well Done Players of Black Hills Community Theatre. The reader theater play was called "A Well Done November." We laughed at teacher quotes, children's sayings, sang school songs and funny thoughts about Thanksgiving preparations.

We are looking forward to having the Well Done Players entertaining us for Valentine's Day. LaRee Mayes, third from the right in this picture, is an active member of BHRSP and Well Done Players.



2022 SD Legislative Summary

SDRS, EDUCATION and SENIOR LEGISLATION BILLS AND DISCUSSIONS

Submitted by Bob and Sharon Rose

We are sure you all enjoyed the 3.5% raise you received from the South Dakota Retirement System. The largest raise ever and actually the most that can be given. The retirement system is very healthy and is one of the most solvent systems in the country.

All benefits receive an annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) between 0 percent and 3.5 percent. The process to determine the COLA considers affordability based on SDRS' Fair Value Funded Ratio and the annual inflation rate as defined by the Consumer Price Index (CPI-W).

Remember to tell the teachers of SD you appreciate them and thank them for being educators. They are now the people that are paying into the retirement system and they are also the ones that keep our social security going.

Numerous education discussions and bills occurred during the sessions. Fortunately, most did not pass such as ending collective bargaining.

Governor Noem addressed transgender sports participation, limiting critical race theory and "active civics", requiring a moment of silence and prayer in schools. Noem did request a 6% increase in education funding.

Property Tax Relief for Seniors – HB 1001

- The program is still limited to adults 65-plus and people who have disabilities, but the property value limit was boosted by more than 40%, to \$300,000 from \$208,828. And the program has expanded its support to \$35,000 for people who live alone and \$45,000 for multi-person households, up from \$30,423 and \$38,029, respectively.

High-Speed Internet – SB 55

Access to high-speed internet benefits:

- *Education*: Access to online educational tools and courses.
- *Jobs*: Employees can work safely from home and job seekers get the training they need.
- *Health care*: People stay healthy at home by seeing doctors or specialists who are far away through telehealth services.
- *Local businesses*: Local businesses depend on the internet to successfully serve neighbors and customers regardless of location.
- *Avoid Isolation*: Virtual visits keep residents of nursing homes and other long-term care facilities connected when in-person visits are limited.

Sales & Property Tax Credits for Low-Income Seniors – HB 1014

- A second AARP-backed tax relief bill passed survived the House and Senate and received the Governor's signature this session: House Bill 1014 allocates \$450,000 towards sales and property tax refunds for qualifying seniors with lower incomes.

\$10.1 million for nursing home staffing grants – SB 60

\$5.7 billion budget includes funding for Medicaid providers, state employees – HB 1340

Fighting for Medicaid Expansion by the Legislature – SB 186

Fighting for Accessible, Secure Voter Information Website - SB 69

- During the 2022 Legislative session, lawmakers had the opportunity to enact a bill that would let South Dakota voters update information like their address or party affiliation easily on a new, secure website managed by the Secretary of State.

Be thinking of issues you want addressed during the 2023 legislative session. Stay active in policies and politics that interest and affect you.

Get to Know your Officers

Jacqueline (Jacque) Sly grew up in Platte SD. She graduated from Northern State College in 1969 with a bachelor's degree in Elementary and Special Education. She has a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction. Her teaching career was all in SD, including Watertown, Platte, Corsica, Geddes, Wagner, Huron and Rapid City. Many of those years were in special education with a few stints in regular ed, alternative ed and STARBASE. After almost 4 decades of teaching, she served in the state legislature for 8 years. She also served 4 years on the SD State Board of Education Standards. Now her life is filled with family, travel and serving on several non-profit boards. Her interests include gardening, reading, crocheting, embroidering, and traveling to new places. She enjoys time with her husband, 3 adult children, and 4 grandchildren.

I, **Gerri Larson**, have been an Educator in South Dakota for 34 years teaching Family and Consumer Science/ Home Economics Classes. I have been involved with South Dakota Retired Teachers since I retired some 15 years ago. I enjoy sewing/quilting, reading, playing Bridge, traveling, and spending time with family (three sons and six grandchildren) and friends.

I am **Carmal (Carm) Tobin** from Milbank. I taught Preschool in Pipestone, Mn and lower elementary (3rd Grade, 1st Grade and Kindergarten) in Hecla and Britton. When I retired in 2010, after 34 years of teaching, I moved back to my hometown of Milbank to be with my family. I am currently the secretary of my local unit (MARTA), as well as the SDRSP secretary. In my free time, I enjoy reading, playing the piano, collecting recipes, playing games - everything from cards to corn hole, trying new restaurants, taking road trips and spending time with family and friends.

Hi, **Mary Wilson** here, am looking forward to getting to know you. Something about me: I was born on a farm outside Canistota which since then has been turned back into a corn field. My teaching experience began with a group of sixth graders who gave me a run for my money but in the final analysis taught me how to be a teacher. I was married to a wonderful man until he died of cancer, have five lovely daughters & son-in-laws and twelve of the best grandchildren anyone could hope to have in their lives. God has blessed me greatly.

Diane Spilde grew up in Estelline, SD. She was an educator for 39 years, graduating from Dakota State University in 1970 with a teaching degree in Elementary Education and South Dakota State University in 1980 with a Masters. She has taught various grade levels including Physical Education in Arlington, Ramona, and Oldham-Ramona and was an administrator in Ramona and Oldham-Ramona. She currently does volunteer work for her church and local Legion Auxiliary. Her interests include digital scrapbooking and helping all save and organize their family photos. She also loves the outdoors and to quilt and read. She has two grown children and 5 grandchildren.



What a Dilemma!

Submitted by Diane Spilde

What does an organization do with almost 50 years of historical information? Which of our members wants to store it in an attic, basement, or garage for an indefinite period of time? Perhaps we could pass those heavy boxes and totes onto the next President. We pondered that question until we were fortunate to have a new member join our group. Diane was experienced in scanning, saving, and organizing information in a place on the Cloud called FOREVER, a site chosen because it is permanent, private, and secure.

Barb Hyland, current Co-President of MARSP asked me, Diane Spilde, if I would be interested in joining the Madison Area Retired School Personnel. Being a retired teacher, and wanting to give back to my community, I responded, "Yes, I most certainly would. After all, who doesn't need a little something to do in retirement?"

We didn't meet during the pandemic. However, when we finally did, Co-President Rita Brown asked if I would give a presentation on FOREVER at our September meeting. I shared information about the site and showed the group examples from my family's stories and how we were able to share pictures and memories related to them. Eventually, a committee was formed to organize and scan our precious history. That's when the fun began!

I have created an account and we are now scanning MARSP history to the FOREVER site while showing members how they can access the documents whenever they wish. I have found it to be very rewarding as I read through and scan those timeless memories. I truly believe we all have stories to tell, not only personally, but also through the organizations in which we belong. All of the history and memories are truly worth saving.

I would be willing to share FOREVER with you and demonstrate how you too can save, share, and organize your retired school personnel's history. Please feel free to contact me if you are interested in learning more about our project and how you can replicate it in your organization.

Diane Spilde

dmspilde@gmail.com





South Dakota
Retired School
Personnel

Diane Spilde
45389 225th St.
Ramona, SD 57054

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