

As retired educational employees, we all know that from day one, our learning begins with our ABC's. Start with A, end with Z. What are the odds that we would do that? Slim. NONE! Instead, to recap "The Wizard of Odds", we will go from P to P.



Walking through the Emerald City of registration, past the Rainbow promising a pot of gold, we began with —

The Prayer—Oh God, you have given us this day to use as we will. We can waste it or use it for good. What we do today is very important because we are exchanging a day of our lives for it. When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever, leaving something in its place. God you gave us this day, give us the wisdom to know how to use it—to be directed to add good to it, not evil. May the life that you gave us be well spent for this day.



We were then joined by a well known Personality, Mr. Paul Higbee—a renowned writer for the South Dakota Magazine. Mr. Higbee entertained us with some of his favorite columns (including a sneak peak at the one to be published next!) about life in Dakota! The stories were delightful—his wit—entertaining, and his follow up? Well, ask Bud Webb. He seems to be enjoying a talk with Mr. Higbee.



Following a brief respite from sitting, we were introduced to art Pioneer Dick Termes, internationally acclaimed artist and creator of the Termesphere. Working from a six point perspective, Mr. Termes did what every elementary educator hoped he would do. It was show and tell! Should anyone ever tell you that math, science and art are diametrically opposed, you simply need to listen to Dick. Suggestion—it would be good to listen with a person that understands math and science! Don't sit next to me!



Published! Our third presentation was by one of our own. Convention planning committee chairperson, Community Service board member, and author extraordinaire, Joanna Jones took us through the teaching of history through children's literature. Referencing the four books (which she graciously gave to each attendee) Joanna stressed the fact that there was much to learn from the history of our very own state. Energetic...Amazing!



And speaking of Community Service, we can definitely be Proud of our accomplishments! Living by our motto "To serve, not to be served", we as an organization tracked SOME of our hours and submitted them to Joanna. According to a national evaluative commission, we provided over \$1.5 MILLION in services to our communities. Proof that we continue to make a difference!



The Poetic tribute of member Marilyn Kratz is among the most moving experiences at every convention. In a candlelit service, those members that have gone before us are remembered. As each carnation is placed in the vase, we are reminded both of the gain and the loss of a life dedicated to serving students. The gain? The amazing difference they have made in the lives of so many of their wards. The loss? The emptiness they leave in the lives of their co-workers and friends. Go in Peace.



Professionally, we are lucky enough to have our alphabet soup (AARP and SDRS) bring us up to date on “What’s what”. Lindsey and Eric reminded us of how AARP and SDRSP can impact our communities—and what they offer. Travis amazed and entertained us with his ability to remember and explain what’s happening to our money. Both, by their presence, made us smarter and more aware.



The Penultimate convention experience? My favorite! We were treated to an oral presentation of our fifth grade winning essayist, Emma Vandebark. Honoring her grandmother Treena (and former president of the Winner unit of SDRSP), Emma drew a picture of a caring, humorous, exciting grandma—and who could ever hope for better than that? Thanks to her parental units, the context of her speech can be found on the Grandparent Essay link on SDRSP.ORG!



So that is it—almost! We started with a P. We end with a Poem!

Last year at convention, a question was raised
 In regard to "the odds"...the results? I'm amazed.
 Just form a committee then step back and see
 The wizardry happen--what has come to be.
 From Emerald city to tourney with slots
 These ladies worked wonders--put gold in our pots.
 For learning? Enjoyment? They gave us their all
 'Twas speakers and artists and authors--a ball

But best of the magic? The friendships renewed...
 The time spent together in meetings with food!
 We celebrate gladly the things that we've done--
 We're doing--we will do--our course not yet run.
 We leave this convention with joy and panache
 And those who were lucky may leave with some cash
 Next year we will meet in Falls--name of Sioux
 From now until then? Here's what we must do...
 Continue the service our motto demands
 Do good--do it often and then start your plans
 To join with us next year--we're hoping you would
 Be among those exclaiming...**Hooray Hollywood!**

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