



# SDSTA

South Dakota Science Teachers Association

Spring Issue | Date: March 21, 2020

Hi Science Friends!

For those of you who do not know me, I have been a middle school science teacher for 19 years at Hamlin. I was not elected into the position as president but that does not mean I will not do my best as president. Jennifer Fowler, who is now our SD State Science Specialist, was our president elect. Since she is no longer able to fulfill her duties as president, Mark was able to appoint me at our meeting held in February. Jen is now our DOE Liaison. We, along with the other SDSTA officers, will be working together to plan some sort of summer PD, which looks like we will most likely wait for the summer of 2021.

We had an awesome time at the 28th annual SD STEM Ed Conference in February. The conference continues to get better with each passing year. This year there were 90 science people out of the 250 registrants at the conference. Let's try to get the number up in 2021! (Yep, I am a bit competitive.) Did you know you could get your conference registration paid for if you submit to the newsletter (or given a presentation at the conference) and refer at least three new members? (Information about this and more is provided on the last page of each newsletter above the registration form.) We are so fortunate to have a joint conference that keeps the cost low, provides lunch on both days, and has phenomenal breakout sessions. I love seeing all the new faces and the familiar ones too. It is so fun to visit and collaborate with all of you. I know there is concern about having the conference closer to the west side of the state. Believe me when I tell you that I was confused too. I asked Cindy Kroon, the conference chair (head honcho), to take a minute to write down all of the reasons we have the conference in Huron. Well, she did more than take a minute.

Please look at her write-up on page 3. Hopefully that will clear-up any questions of why we have the conference in Huron. Are there any other thoughts or concerns you have about the joint conference? If so, please let me know. If I do not have the answer, I will do my best to find out.

I need your help in achieving one of my goals this year. Let's get some more members AND let's keep the members we have! We have many science teachers in the state but only 96 SDSTA members. I truly believe teachers are missing out on our science educator comradery we all seem to have. Why are you a member of SDSTA? If you are a member that is only active the years you attend the conference, why? What do you want from your membership? What activities could we or should we be pursuing to improve science education in South Dakota? What can we do to retain you as a member even if you don't attend the annual conference? How can SDSTA improve? What ideas do you have for recruiting new members?

Finally, I wish you a restful and stress free weekend. Take some time for yourself before the new week of virtual learning begins. You deserve it! Some of you have already started your virtual learning journey and some of you will begin next week. This is a confusing time for everyone but I am sure we will continue to do what all educators are good at: making our students feel safe, making learning fun, and keeping our relationships with our students strong.

Thank you for all you do in providing a quality education for each of your students!

Michelle Bartels  
SDSTA President

Hello, science friends!

This is our time to shine as science educators. We are used to being asked so many questions because “you’re the science teacher” so let’s use these uncertain times as the opportunity to educate our students and their families. I am certain you have already been doing this, so thank you! Dr. Jones addressed the SD DOE staff on 3/13 beginning with the first line from the Rudyard Kipling poem IF... “If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs...” as a way for us to focus on the task at hand and not to escalate situations. I thought of one of my favorite weeks of the school year back when the 8th grade standards were earth science focused... Yellowstone Supervolcano Week! I designed a unit on the topic culminating in watching/studying the docudrama Supervolcano, which is highly accurate and the USGS Yellowstone Volcano Observatory was consulted on the making of it (find the movie on YouTube). I would remain calm during the entire week and reminded my students daily of our classroom motto “Be Professional” so they took the studies seriously. By the end, they were excited that if there was indeed another major eruption in their lifetime while living downwind of the ash fall, they felt they could aid others in understanding what was occurring and how to be safe, in a calm and intellectual manner.

Fortunately, humans have more control during a virus pandemic than a supervolcanic eruption, though the intensity of the hype may feel the same at times. It is our job to encourage others to stay informed with the facts, be prepared, and use our best “teacher skills” when sharing information with those who may need it the most. Just like if you want the most accurate weather forecast, you consult the National Weather Service, and when gathering details on COVID-19, keep these links available for the most current and accurate information from the scientists and officials:

Centers for Disease Control 

South Dakota Department of Health 

Information assisting K-12 science educators with online planning ideas and any news coming from SD DOE regarding instruction, assessments, etc will be shared on the DOE Science listserv. Be sure you are signed up and include colleagues as well using this link <https://www.k12.sd.us/MailingList/DOEScience>

Please let me know how I can assist you while navigating these rough waters...

~Jen  
[Jennifer.Fowler@state.sd.us](mailto:Jennifer.Fowler@state.sd.us)

*"It is our job to encourage others to stay informed with the facts, be prepared, and use our best 'teacher skills' when sharing information with those who may need it the most."*



## Join DOE Science Listserv

To join the DOE Science listserv use this link:  
<https://www.k12.sd.us/MailingList/DOEScience>

## National Youth Science Camp

Henry Heiberger (from Brandon Valley High School) and Harry Heiberger (from Brandon Valley High School) have been selected as delegates to represent South Dakota at the 2020 National Youth Science Camp. Casey Miller (from Mitchell High School) and Lyric Oslund (from Harrisburg High School) have been selected as alternates.

**Though the National Youth Science Camp has been cancelled for 2020 due to public health concerns, the National Youth Science Foundation is discussing options for providing recognition and program opportunities for the students who were selected to attend this summer.**

In its 57th year, the NYSCamp is a science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) program hosted in the eastern mountains of West Virginia. Students have an opportunity to conduct research at the nearby Green Bank Observatory and to explore the surrounding Monongahela National Forest through backpacking, mountain biking, caving, rock-climbing, and kayaking.

Support from the National Youth Science Foundation (<http://www.nysf.com>) allows Henry Heiberger and Harry Heiberger to attend the NYSCamp programming opportunities free of charge – transportation included.

For more information about the program, please see <http://www.nyscamp.org>. The application process for the 2021 National Youth Science Camp will open Fall 2020. 

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**UPCOMING EVENTS**

April 4

**Postponed**

**It's All About Science Festival**

Sioux Falls, SD

April 22

**Earth Day**

April 25

**DNA Day**

July 11

**Neutrino Day**

Lead, SD

**February 4-6, 2021**

**SD STEM Ed Conference**

Huron, SD



The SDSTA Newsletter is published four times a year and is e-mailed to 96 paid members. The membership year in SDSTA starts with the February conference and ends the thirty-first of January. Dues are due at each conference for member discount rates. SDSTA members may give a one year free membership to their student teachers by submitting the student teacher's name & address. One paid conference registration may be given to the SDSTA member that has made a submission to the newsletter (or given a presentation at the conference) and has referred at least three new members. Members may also earn a 10% finder's fee for any science related ads placed in the newsletter. Our rates are \$50 per page (or 3 to 4 quarter pages).



**Become a Member!**

**\$5** Student, K-6, Retired **\$20** All Others

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Your School \_\_\_\_\_ School Phone \_\_\_\_\_

School Address \_\_\_\_\_

Your area (circle one) K-6 7-8 9-12 College Other \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by \_\_\_\_\_