

SWELL LETTER

August 2026 Volume 6, Issue 8

Important Dates.

Fall sign-up during class

*Returning SWELL Members (Now through Friday 22nd August)

Please let me know if you are not returning to SWELL.

*New members sign up (Monday August 25 through Friday September 26th)

\$110.00 each in an envelope with name on it, Make payment to Gary

Wittman

SWELL Registration:

Online Waver Form (Required):

1. Click the link below to access the online waver form:
 - o <https://dbqcentral.etrive.cloud/?isAnonymous=true#form/193>
2. Complete all fields on the form, including the E-Signature and Date at the bottom.
3. Click the "Submit" button located in the bottom right corner
4. (Tip: Look carefully for the button!)
5. Next screen may ask if you are a robot, click no.
6. You may be asked to identify some photos.
7. The screen will show you have successfully registered your form when finished

Sample of what the form looks like.

The screenshot shows a web form for registration. It includes fields for Participant First Name, Last Name, Date of Birth (MM/DD/YYYY), Email, Phone, and Affiliation to UD. Below these is an 'Emergency Contact' section with fields for First Name, Last Name, Relationship to Participant, and Phone Number. At the bottom, there is a section for E-Signature and Date (07/28/2026). A 'Submit' button is located at the bottom right of the form area.

Make sure you click submit when the form is filled out.

*** SWELL Picnic (Wednesday, 4:30 PM)**



SWELL PICNIC

Wednesday October 7th, Rain Date Thursday October 8th

STARTS 4:15-4:30 PM

EAT AT 5:00 PM

16674 WITTMAN HAMM CT.

DUBUQUE, IA 52001

BRING TABLE SETTING, DRINK, YOUR FAVORITE DISH TO PASS, AND CHAIR

SWELL WILL SUPPLY PULLED MEAT AND BUNS

RSVP SELF AND GUEST

RETURN TO THIS EMAIL

garydonaldwittman@gmail.com

We could use a few volunteers to help with parking.

The Secret to Exceptional Flexibility: The Stretch-Release-Stretch Method

To achieve great flexibility, you must learn to trick your muscles into deep relaxation.

Many people instinctively tense up during a stretch, which creates resistance and limits their range of motion.

The Stretch-Release-Stretch method counteracts this reflex, signaling your nervous system to let go so you can safely elongate the muscle.

How It Works: A Step-by-Step Guide

Use the single leg pull while lying on your back as an example, here is how to execute the technique:

1. The Initial Stretch: Lie on your back and pull your leg toward you until you reach a point of mild discomfort. Hold this position briefly.
2. The Micro-Release: Back off the stretch just slightly, maintaining mild tension while allowing the muscle to relax.
3. The Deepened Stretch: Exhale deeply and pull the leg a bit further into the stretch, then slightly release again.

The Power of Breath Progression

The key to this method is tying your movements to your breath. Progressive breathing deepens the relaxation response over time:

- Phase 1: Begin with 4 breaths in the stretch-release rhythm.
- Phase 2: Advance to 6 breaths.
- Phase 3: Complete the cycle with 8 breaths.

Work with this method with all of our stretches at SWELL. I have been doing this for years and have mentioned it at times, but I am not sure how many of you are using this method to stretch.

This is why we start with 4 breaths with the triple leg stretch while on our back. By the time you finish the final eight-breath cycle, the target muscles will be significantly looser, elongated, and completely relaxed.

--Gary

Renewing Priestly Promises Mark Ressler Celebrates 50 Years

Each year, dioceses hold a special Holy Week liturgy called the Chrism Mass, during which the bishop or archbishop consecrates the sacred Chrism and blesses the other oils used for the sacraments throughout his diocese. The diocesan priests also gather to renew their priestly promises after the homily and before the blessing of the oils. This is an annual opportunity for priests from all over the Archdiocese of Dubuque to come and gather at the Cathedral of St. Raphael to renew the promises that they made at their Ordination to the Priesthood. This includes both active and retired priests from across the archdiocese.

Below, Fr. Mark Ressler, reflected on their presence at the most recent Chrism Mass on April 15, 2026.

In the case of many priests who are now retired, they were ordained in their home parishes rather than in the Cathedral of St. Raphael. More recently, it was decided that priests would be ordained in the mother church and people would be invited from all across the archdiocese to attend.



Fr. Mark Ressler “I was ordained by my uncle Bishop Justice Driscoll in my home parish of St. Martin in Cascade,” Fr. Mark Ressler shared. “In my era, we were ordained in our home parishes. This made it a ‘solo’ event.”

“The first time that I renewed my promises at a Chrism Mass, I was with hundreds of fellow priests from the Archdiocese. It was and still is great to be among people who have the same commitment to Christ and His Church.”

Over the years, priests’ understanding of the Chrism Mass and their priestly promises deepen and change, similar to how a married person’s perspective might change as they evolve in their relationship with their spouse, and as time passes since the day that they were married and made their wedding vows.

Marian and Gary sail the coast from Greece to Croatia

Living the true life of a sailor, Marian seizes every possible opportunity to take Gary on her ocean-crossing adventures. Their latest journey has them navigating waters around the world, as well as cruising the historic Mississippi River.

Gary Conlon and Marian Walker, along with friends Don and Julie McGovern, started their trip with three nights in Athens. Their hotel rooftop terrace offered a spectacular view of the Acropolis—the perfect spot for daily breakfast and evening drinks. The group took two walking tours, exploring Athens' major highlights as well as its smaller neighborhoods, followed by an excellent food and wine tour.

Next, the travelers boarded the Star Clipper, a tall sailing ship that holds up to 166 passengers from across the US and Europe and 75 crew members. Ports of call included four stops in Greece—Poros, Santorini, Katakolon, and Corfu—followed by Kotor, Montenegro, featuring a stunning 17 km sail through the Bay of Kotor. From there, the ship visited four ports in Croatia: Dubrovnik, Korcula, Hvar, and Cres.

With spectacular scenery at every turn, excursions provided plenty of history, including a visit to the site of the first Olympic games, an olive oil tasting, and a tour of the excavations at Akrotiri (the Greek Pompeii).

On the final night crossing the Adriatic Sea from Croatia to Italy, the ship encountered quite a storm, but weather cleared in time for debarkation in Venice—a lovely, unique city. Everyone enjoyed being aboard the Star Clipper, a true working ship where crew members actively raise and lower the sails. Passengers were even permitted to climb the mast up to the crow's nest and lounge on the net under the forespar while under sail.

Dining was exceptional, with buffet breakfasts, lunches, snacks, and six-course dinners every night, complemented by a personal mission to sample gelato at almost every port.





THE STAFF

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Thanks to those who submitted wonderful articles to our SWELL newsletter