

SWELL NEWSLETTER
January 2023 Volume 3, Issue 1



Trea was presented with a Hawaiian Leis from his family as he completed his football career at the University of Dubuque. Dave and Ruth Assmus, Jim and Jean Delaney, Ken and Kendy Kunkel, Bob Reisch, Gary Wittman, Chuck and Dawn Andracchio, and Karen and Bob Knepper came to cheer for Trea. It was the coldest day in November. Ken Kunkel sat on the north side and blocked the wind.





The count Ginny “139 a new All-Time record”

Comments from Trea

My overall experience working with the Swell Program has been amazing. First off, I would like to thank Gary for giving me this opportunity to intern with the Swell Program. I'm very happy that I chose to do my internship with Gary and the Swell program. I have learned so many important things in this class that I will carry with me in the future and that will help me with my future job. The people that are in the Swell Program welcomed me with open arms and treated me like family, they were very nice people, and I will always remember them. I'm blessed to have this experience with the Swell Program, and they will always be family to me. Thank you again for this opportunity! Much love to my Swell family and I will miss you all.

-Trea Samifua



A Wonderful Night Out



The night started with a pre-show reception of cookies and coffee for The Lansansky Family: Mauricio, Diego, a Tomas in the University of Dubuque Art Collection. Next a performance of TUACHRISTMAS, two dozen local musicians serenading the audience with familiar carols in perfect harmony. And the grand finale *A Christmas Carol*, based on the novel by Charles Dickens. New Hampshire-based Perseverance Productions has been spreading cheer across the country with this annual holiday tour. Twenty-six beloved traditional carols of the season were woven throughout this original production of *A Christmas Carol*, accompanied by live instruments onstage including guitar, violin, and flute.

Over 30 SWELL members attended.

The Fountain of Youth



Over the centuries explorers have been searching for a fountain of youth. People around 8000 BC lived between 25-30 years of age. This was confirmed by 80 Skeletons found in Europe. In Egypt B.C. the life expectancy was 19 and if you survived childhood women could live 30 years and men 34 years. The life expectancy during the Roman Empire was 25 and reached 33 by the Middle ages. In the late 15th century people started to live longer if they didn't get the Bubonic plague or (black death).

People started to dream of drinking from a fountain or river that contained magical powers to extend one's life or actually transform them into a younger version of themselves. Alexander the Great said he came across a healing river in the fourth century B.C. In 1474 Juan Ponce de Leon was said to have discovered the fountain of youth in St. Augustine. If you drink from this healing water, you will magically maintain your youthful appearance and become younger. Today you can travel to St. Augustine, FL, and drink from this magical fountain. There is no scientific proof that the water will make you younger though. Also, it is 18 hours and 1,240 miles to Augustine from Dubuque.

Over the last 35 years a modern-day Irish/German explorer Gaire Vitmann has discovered a fountain of youth that is backed by science. In 1987 Gaire started using aerobic exercise, stretching, and Tai Chi during his classes and noticed an amazing transformation in those who chose to participate. The more the participants came and did the exercises the younger they became. Their flexibility, strength, and balance improved dramatically. There was a noticeable change in the way they walked and the ease in which they could do things that were difficult for them in the past. These SWELL individuals appeared younger without growing physically older. Amazingly they could drive their car and stay in their homes into their late 80's and 90's, not to mention they live longer. The one stipulation to this fountain of youth is that you must do these exercises 3 time a week. If you are not consistent coming to SWELL, there will be limited progress and if you stop doing SWELL you will begin to age again.

--Gaire Vitmann

Jim Willems on the Isla Mujeres Mexico Exercising on the Beach



This morning's beautiful sunrise and bringing Swell to the island of Isla Mujeres, Mexico. Thanks, Gary, for having me as a part of a wonderful group of individuals working towards a healthier lifestyle.



Mikki Lueken



I have been in the Swell program since March of this past year. My sister Pat Herbst encouraged me to join and I'm very glad I did. I enjoy the program very much. I am retired from Nordstrom Distribution in Dubuque. My husband is a retired Deere worker and farmer although he still enjoys helping friends who still farm. We have five children and twelve grandchildren with TWINS BOYS on the way approximately May 22nd. Our oldest son lives in Rapid City, S.D with his family. He is the athletic director for the School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City. Our second son lives in Dubuque with his family, he is a firefighter and paramedic for Dubuque fire department. Our middle son lives in Vero Beach, Florida with his family. He works for Thyssen Krupp elevators in sales and installation. Our (only) daughter lives in Dubuque area with her family. Last year she decided to be a stay-at-home mom-which like her mom she is quite successful at. (J/K) Our youngest son lives in Urbandale, Iowa with his family he works for a landscaping company as job site supervisor, his family are the Blessed ones who are having the twins! I enjoy meeting the people in Swell class and talking to them and look forward to talking with more.

John and Mary Waldmeir



John and Mary moved to Dubuque 26 years ago from Bismarck, North Dakota. John taught Religious Studies at Loras (during many of the same years that Gary coached at the college) and for a time he had an office next door to Fr. Mark Ressler. John retired a year ago this January after teaching and writing about sacred scriptures and the ways different religions interact with art and culture.

For the past 15 years Mary has worked in the education department at the Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium, where she gives tours, organizes early childhood programming, and takes animals out into schools for viewing and instruction. Together, they raised two children here in Dubuque: Louis is now the head brewer for Wander Brewing in Bellingham WA. and Helen currently works full-time as a news clerk with the *Telegraph Herald*. They joined SWELL after they heard about the program through good friends Chuck and Dawn Andracchio. Classes have been really valuable, especially the stretching exercises, which helped John prepare for a total knee replacement last August. It turned out that, by going into the

surgery with greater flexibility, he was able to recover his movement much easier—something Gary no doubt knew all along. Thanks for reading, and it has been nice to meet and chat with so many of you.

Kay and Gary Gansemer



We joined SWELL in April 2022 based on the recommendation of long time SWELL participant and our good friend, Doris Ries. She spoke so highly of the camaraderie of this group and the benefits of the exercise program. We have not been disappointed. Both of us were born and raised in Dubuque of loving parents and a large extended family. We started dating during our sophomore years at Wahlert. I went off to St. Ambrose University to study psychology and Kay started her work career. We married before my senior year in 1972, which means we celebrated 50 years of marriage on August 5th, and 56 years since we met in high school. We have three beautiful daughters, three sons-in-laws, and eight grandchildren spread out in Onalaska Wisconsin, Dubuque, Peoria, Newton Iowa, Seattle, and heaven. Our two

oldest granddaughters are identical twins, like Kay and her sister Kathy. We enjoy watching our grandchildren's tennis matches; band/ orchestra and show choir performances; swimming meets; and games of baseball, t-ball, and basketball. Besides celebrating 50 years of marriage, having two grandchildren graduate from college with one of them to be married next June, make us respect our age and experience. SWELL sure helps us with the aging process. Kay ended her work career in 2015 as the Administrative Assistant for the Education Department of Loras College. This concluded an eighteen-year career in college education that started with the Tri-College Education Program. This career focus saw her work on the campus of Clarke, UD, and Loras. Many former students fondly remember that Kay was always there to offer advice on school and/or life. In addition to family events, Kay's retirement activities focus on creating quilted wall and table pieces.

Our house and the houses of family and friends are adorned with her artistry. I retired as the President/CEO of Hillcrest Family Services in 2017 after nineteen years in that position. Prior to that I serving as an administrator for Area Residential Care for 13 years, Hillcrest as Assistant Executive Director for 8.5 years, and Mercy Medical Center for 1.5 years. I was fortunate to be a part of a team in all three organizations that accomplished much for those people who experienced life difficulties. In retirement I have been writing a book on Hillcrest's 125-year history, helping with set/up and tear down at Reflections in the Park, and volunteering at the Miracle League Field. Tennis is my main focus during the summer with an occasional golf match, and in the winter my attention turns to pickle ball. As we prepare to celebrate the holidays with many friends and family, we wish all of our new SWELL friends a Very Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Happy 2023.



Joy Behnke



Greetings and Happy New Year from Joy Behnke! I joined SWELL in April 2022 at the same time several of my friends, Kay and Gary Gansemer and Jan Grady, joined. I had already heard good things about the program from other acquaintances as well—about how it kept them young and active and improved their balance, and they enjoyed socializing after as well. I have found these to be accurate benefits that help give me incentive to get up and at 'em in the morning. I was born Joy Link to Marion and Esther Link in North Buena Vista and moved to Dubuque when I was 5. I attended Sacred Heart School, Jefferson Middle School and Senior High School. I started working at Christensen's Greenhouse on Windsor when I was 18 years old and worked there 22 years. I may have arranged

the flowers for your wedding or prom corsage! I also worked at Loras College in housekeeping and the college bookstore for 19 years until I retired in 2011. I may have sold your children their college textbooks (sorry for the expense!). I met and married my husband, Mike Behnke, in 1975, and we celebrated 47 years in August. He is retired from John Deere. We have 2 daughters. Tricia is an Order Fulfillment Manager at John Deere and lives in Dubuque. Laura works as an auditor with the Department of Health and Human Services in Madison, WI. She and her fiancé Chris just bought a new house in Sun Prairie and plan to marry in the fall. My husband and I enjoy traveling (regular trips to Orlando and Branson, and we've been trying to get to Alaska for 3+ years now—3 trips delayed by Covid!). I also like to take trips with my daughters. We went to the Rose Bowl in 2016 (The parade floats were amazing! The Hawkeye loss—not so fun.) and diamond hunting in Arkansas in Fall 2020. We like to dine out at favorite restaurants like Breitbach's, Kalmes, and Red Roof Diner. In the summer we like to take drives in our Firebird and boat rides on the American Lady. We like riding our bikes and listening to Ron Lubbers' live music. My daughter Tricia is very allergic to dogs and cats, but we do have 5



goldfish that my husband enjoys. I enjoy reading and playing cards and Mexican Train dominoes. I meet weekly for coffee and good conversation with friends. I have enjoyed my sessions at SWELL, and I have definitely seen results. I believe my balance is better and my upper body strength and flexibility have improved. I am not one to work out by myself so an organized program with a social aspect is just perfect. I appreciate this program and enjoy seeing all the smiling, friendly faces when I participate. Thank you for welcoming me!

Laura Miller



Hello everyone, I am Laura Miller. I joined SWELL in early Spring of 2022. I am married for 47 years and have 4 great children, 3 girls and 1 boy and 4 wonderful grandkids 2 girls and 2 boys. I retired from nursing in 2014 after 41 years, working 10yrs. on the surgical floor and 10 in the ICU and 21 in the Cardiac Cath Lab at Mercy One. I found nursing to be a very rewarding career but it was time to move on so I retired and took an acrylic painting class but decided my talents were best used after taking a Master Gardener class and Master Conservationist class, both of which I highly recommend. I also enjoy crossword puzzles and reading historical fiction. I presently volunteer at the Mississippi River Museum and the Arboretum. I enjoy spending as much time as possible with the grandchildren which leads me to why I joined SWELL. [My they can be exhausting!] SWELL improves my stamina and strength and I really enjoy the Tai Chi and the camaraderie of the group. Thanks to

Gary's leadership the day starts on a positive note.

Kathy Keuter



I joined SWELL in April of 2022 shortly before I retired from my career as a hospital pharmacist. My husband Kim and I will celebrate our 40th wedding anniversary in the spring of 2023. We have 2 adult sons: Kurt is an international tax accountant in Milwaukee and Kwin is a geo-spatial computer programmer in Denver. The entire family has spent a lot of time running and competing (sometimes against the Wittman's) ----the guys all ran track and cross country in college, and I played basketball at IOWA. Currently the entire family does a lot of biking—on roads and trails and in scenic places around the country. I am a member of a

book club and enjoy reading and discussing most anything I read. I also enjoy learning, and plan to start a religious studies certificate, take a basic photography class and maybe some dance lessons in the new year. Kim and I like to travel and are focusing on the national parks in the U.S. and various European cities abroad. My favorite part of the SWELL class is the Tai Chi, because it requires concentration and at the same time is meditative and relaxing –and the movements are so beautiful to watch and be a part of in our large group. And I MUST mention all the SWELL people I have met, the friendships that are developing and our positive, encouraging leader—GARY!



Oh, the weather outside is frightful
But the fire is so delightful
And since we've no place to go
Let it Snow! Let it Snow! And let's do SWELL at home!

If the weather prevents you from getting out, remember to exercise at home like Swell class member, Bob Knepper. You can find all the Swell class videos at: www.dbq.edu/SWELL
OR go to University of Dubuque website and search for "Spartan Senior Wellness."



Thank You SWELL People



John Richey presenting a Christmas card and gift to Gary from the SWELL class.

Thank you everyone. I really enjoyed the card and gift. I love to visualize every one of your faces as I read your name on the card. You are wonderful and caring SWELL people. I am so fortunate to have so many amazing friends that come and spend time waking, doing SWELL exercises, and Tai Chi.

Don't forget your News Years Resolution.

A good News Years resolution could be to come to class when ever possible. Work your appointments around SWELL so you can make it every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Make SWELL a way of life, make it who you are. Live a long, healthy, younger, and independent life.

Karen Knepper's Cranberry Muffins form December SWELL newsletter



We made 6 giant cranberry muffins, and everyone loved them. $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ muffins will fill you up. We reduced the baking time to 25 minutes for the giant muffins. Smaller muffins cook around 15 to 20 minutes.

Left, Leo and Mary mixing in the ingredients.



Right, Emma and Mary can't wait to try the giant muffins. We will let them cool over night and have them for breakfast.

Healthy Recipes by Sue Olson



Welcome 2023! We all want to start a new year with making better choices. Start with keeping your SWELL commitment.



Follow with this recipe that gets great nutrition during winter and is sure to warm you to your toes.

CHICKEN VEGETABLE SOUP.

- 1 - 2 chicken breasts, baked, de-boned, cut small cubes/or left over roasted chicken (approximately 2 cups)
- 2 32 oz organic chicken bone broth (watch the sodium content, under 100mg)
- 2 cups carrots, cut small cubes
- 2 Cups celery, cut small cubes
- 1 - 2 cup turnips, peel skin off, cut small cubes
- 1 - 2 cup kohlrabi, peel skin off, cut small cubes
- 1 onion, chopped

Instead of wheat noodles use:

Rice pasta of your choice, OR chopped cabbage cut to size of noodle width

OR zucchini peeled to noodle width and length

2 tsp dried parsley

Fresh ground pepper, to desired taste, start with $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp.

For an extra savory soup, add to taste dried rosemary, thyme, and/or sage (start with $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp until desired flavor . (1/2 cup at a time more bone broth or water so veggies and broth have desired balance.)

DIRECTIONS:

In a crockpot or large stock pot on medium to low, add bone broth.

Add carrots, celery, turnips, kohlrabi, and slow cook/simmer until begin to tender, 1-2 hours depending on how fast

vegetables cook.

Add seasonings. Add vegetables of choice in place of wheat noodles (cabbage, zucchini).

Add chicken. Simmer to just begin to tender. Stir to combine well.

*If adding rice noodles, follow directions on package, using a separate pot. When to desired consistency add to crockpot and combine well. *

The key is to simmer vegetables so NOT MUSH! Vegetables that keep shape also retain more nutrients!

**I have also added chopped frozen kale or spinach when adding cooked chicken, ensuing the soup returns to simmering and everything is uniformly hot when ready to serve. **

Happy New Year!!

Recipes by Karen Knepper



Best Ever Sugar Cookies Recipe

- 1 cup butter - softened
- 1.5 cups powdered sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/4 tsp. almond extract
- 3 cups flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1/2 tsp. salt

Cream butter. Add powdered sugar and beat until fluffy. Add egg, vanilla, and almond extract, then mix well. Place remaining ingredients in separate bowl. Add gradually to creamed mixture

and mix well. Shape dough into balls and place on pastry sheet that has powdered sugar sprinkled on it. Use a rolling pin to roll dough to 1/8 inch thick and cut into desired shapes. Bake on lightly greased baking pans at 375 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned around the edges. Cool before decorating. Makes 4 to 6 dozen cookies, depending on cutter size.

THE STAFF

- Editor..... Gary Wittman
- Feature WriterTrea Samifua
- Feature WriterJim Willems
- Feature Writer..... Gaire Vitmann
- Healthy RecipesSue Olson
- Healthy RecipesKaren Knepper



We are looking for feature writers each month, try your hand at it.

Suggested information (Vacation or travels, sports, important milestones like anniversaries, and hobbies).

Email articles to: garydonaldwittman@gmail.com

*Have a SWELL New Year as
You Commit to a Younger,
Healthier, Happier You*



Happy Holidays

Mary, Emma, Lisa, Gary, Maeve, Leo, and Luca