

SWELL LETTER

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A Beautiful Day on the Mississippi: Sailing with Marian Walker



The Captain's Story

Today, I had a wonderful experience sailing with Marian Walker, an accomplished sailor and a vibrant member of our SWELL community. Marian's journey with the sport began during her undergraduate years at the University of Iowa, where she spent four years on the intramural sailing team and was officially hooked.

She took a temporary break from the water to focus on graduate school and prepare for her career as an eye doctor, her passion for the sport never faded. Upon moving to Dubuque to practice as an optometrist, she jumped right back into the sport. Twenty years ago, she purchased a beautiful sailboat, joined the Dubuque Sailing Club, and went on to become quite successful in competitive racing, winning many of her competitions.

Setting Sail and Taming the Headwind

Stepping onto the boat with Marian, her skill and years of experience were immediately obvious. As we started our day, I was put to work manning the ropes on the small sail. "Despite a brief learning curve, her expert guidance quickly had us navigating like seasoned professionals."

We began by sailing down the river into a strong headwind, tacking back and forth until we turned around at the train bridge. From there, we turned and sailed downwind toward the dam. I have to admit, approaching the dam was a little unnerving for me. I kept telling Marian that we needed to turn around and head the other way, but she just smiled and insisted we go a little further.

Taking the Helm



To my surprise, as we neared the dam, Marian decided it was time for me to take over the sailboat, steer, and control the large main sail. While I was caught off guard, it actually didn't feel all that difficult at first. Having owned a windsurfer in the past, I already understood the wind and how to read it.

With strong winds carrying us at a consistent speed all day, we successfully sailed back into the slip, wrapping up our two-hour journey.

A Legacy of Adventure

During our time on the water, Marian shared that adventure runs in her family. Her brother, who lives in a small town in Michigan and trains regularly with a friend and their families, is currently preparing to bike from Nebraska to St. Louis, MO. Looking back on the day, it's easy to see that Marian grew up in a family of adventurous people. Her eyes truly light up when she is navigating

the Mississippi winds. I am always so happy to see the incredible, active things the members of our SWELL community are doing, and I'm grateful to Marian for inviting me to share this experience. Thanks again, Marian, for such a wonderful day!

--Gary



Honor guard pays tribute to lives, dedication, service of nurses



Members of Tri-State Nurse Honor Guard pose for a photo at the Iowa Capitol on May 12. The Tri-State Nurse Honor Guard and other nurse honor guards from Iowa went to the Capitol to celebrate the signing of a proclamation declaring May 12 as Nurse Honor Guard Day. Pictured are (top row, left to right) Mindy Bassler, Diane Wolfe Harris and Mary Jo Danner and (bottom row, left to right) Doris Ries and Jayne Schuster.

For the past 12 years, a group of tri-state area nurses has united to honor those in their field who have died, and this month, that group received an honor of its own.

These tri-state area nurses have formed a nurse honor guard, designed to pay tribute to nurses at the time of their death. The volunteers who make up the honor guard attend wakes, funerals and celebrations of life for nurses who have died to honor their dedication and service to the field of nursing.

Jayne Schuster, a former nurse at then-Mercy Hospital and one of the founders of the tri-state group, said the idea to start an honor guard in Dubuque arose after witnessing an honor guard tribute for her late sister, Joanne Drahozal, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

“Twelve years ago, we were at her wake in Cedar Rapids and unbeknown to us, four women walked in wearing white dresses, nursing capes and white hats and presented a beautiful Nightingale tribute,” Schuster said. “My sister Janet and I were so touched by that and I said, ‘This needs to come to Dubuque.’” Schuster collaborated with Betty Takes, the co-founder of

Hospice of Dubuque, to create the guard. Since then, the group has performed about 75 tributes and has about 120 volunteer members. Having an honor guard at the service is optional and is a decision for the family and loved ones of the deceased nurses. If the family decides to have an honor guard at the service, volunteers from the group will arrive wearing capes and nurse caps and provide a tribute about seven minutes in length in honor of the deceased nurse.

Along with the service, group members keep a scrapbook of every nurse they've done a tribute for, and they offer the archived materials to the deceased nurse's family after the service. The honor guard also brings flowers to the service, with the bouquets having five yellow flowers representing friendship and one white flower to represent the deceased nurse.

Kellie Hancock, owner of Dubuque Flower Company, said the store has been collaborating with Schuster for a long time because the store wants to support the honor guard's efforts.

"Nurses are amazing," Hancock said. "They're great people, so if we can help them in any way, we definitely will help."

Earlier this month, a few members of the group traveled to the Iowa State Capitol for the recognition of Nurse Honor Guard Day. The tri-state group was one of 20 honor guards present at the Capitol to celebrate Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds's signing of a proclamation declaring Florence Nightingale's birthday, May 12, as Nurse Honor Guard Day in the state of Iowa.

"It was awesome," Schuster said. "We toured this chapel, all in our garb; every one of us had our local garb on. We had pictures taken on the Capitol stairs as a group, and as each chapter with the proclamation."

One of the group's core members, Diane Wolfe Harris, went to the Capitol with Schuster and three other members of the honor guard; she said it was an excellent decision to designate Florence Nightingale's birthday as Nurse Honor Guard Day.

She runs the honor guard's social media accounts and manages the group Facebook page that has about 100 members while also being one of the volunteers for nursing tributes.

Wolfe Harris said she joined the honor guard after Schuster approached her with the opportunity when they both worked at Mercy, and since then she has become very passionate about the work they do.

The firemen do it, the policemen do it, and I thought it would be nice to do it for the deceased RNs and LPNs in the tri-state area," Wolfe Harris said. "I didn't realize I was going to become part of the core group. ... I felt a calling for it."

BY LANCE PETERSON

Submitted by Lisa Wittman

The Power of Consistency: You Are in Control of Your Destiny

It's one thing to say that you are a member of SWELL. But the real question is: **are you a consistent participant?**

Our bodies possess an incredible ability to adapt to almost anything within a two-week period. Once that adaptation takes place, we can continue to grow, build strength, and improve our overall fitness and health. However, the reverse is also true: if you are inconsistent with your efforts, your improvements will be just as inconsistent.

With every passing calendar year, it is entirely possible to develop stronger bones, more flexible muscles, and greater physical resilience. Ultimately, **it is all a matter of attitude.**

Smiling Faces at the CRWC

As I walk into the CRWC three times a week, I notice many of the same faces each day. Those faces are always smiling. They smile because of the improvements they feel in both their physical and mental health. Most importantly, those faces are smiling because they are consistent—they simply make it a point to never miss a class.

Emulating the Blue Zones

In past articles, we have discussed how we are trying to emulate the habits of the five global "Blue Zones." These are regions where people routinely live vibrant, healthy lives well into their 90's and 100s. They enter each calendar year healthier and happier because they cultivate an environment over which they have control.

You, too, are in control of your own destiny. You exercise that control by being consistent with:

- Engaging in regular exercise
- Eating healthy, nourishing foods
- Staying socially connected with your friends
- Actively participating in SWELL

Your Invitation to Health

Whenever you are in Dubuque and not traveling, make it a priority to show up every **Monday, Wednesday, and Friday**. Keep investing in your consistent gains, both mentally and physically.

You are worth it.

--Gary



Gary Sewells 4th High Adventure



5/29/26 - Three Old Dudes -
Stillwater & Dubuque



I completed my 4th high adventure in four years with two friends from Stillwater MN the Sunday after Memorial Day. Information on the first two adventures is in the September 2024 SWELL newsletter. For number 4, we backpacked a 58-mile section of the Superior Hiking Trail (SHT) from Temperance River State Park to Tettegouche State Park. This section is considered the most challenging of the 6 sections, but three old dudes were able to complete it with slow (we camped 5 nights) and steady progress over the rugged route which had an elevation gain of over 10,800 feet. The challenges were rewarded with spectacular views and a satisfying sense of accomplishment. I only fell once, which was due to Loose gravel under both feet going down a hill, landing on my butt and was able to cancel the SOS that my smartwatch initiated. For those unfamiliar with the SHT, there are many trailheads where one could experience some of these spectacular views with planning day hikes (trekking poles highly recommended).



-- Gary Sewell

The Journey of an Athlete: Hiram Melendez Story



It all started in Lawton, Oklahoma, where Hiram and his brother were All-Star athletes. Both football standouts, Hiram chose to compete in track and field in the spring. His senior year, he won the state championship with a discus throw of 188 feet two inches in May 1974. Hiram has always been an outstanding athlete and has maintained that status by staying flexible going to SWELL. He was recruited to play football for the Iowa Hawkeyes by Hayden Fry on a full ride scholarship. Hiram also played rugby with the Iowa Rugby Football Club.

The Road to the National Senior Games

In January 2018, he was reading an article describing the Iowa Senior Games and thought, "Hey, I could do something to compete in the games." The question was what. Lots of choices; he settled on something he had been successful with in the deep past (44 years in the past), throwing the discus. So, the training started for a June event and he acquired an implement. Fast forward to June: he won his age bracket, and in November received an email telling him he had qualified for the National Senior Games (NSG) to be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico the following year. After the national games and having met some very interesting, competitive, and inspiring seniors, he decided he could continue to do this competitively for a long time.

Goals and Daily Aspirations

Goal setting being an attribute developed through the years, targets were set to qualify for the NSG, finishing in the top ten of his age bracket in future NSGs, and outlive the competition. So far, Hiram has qualified for five (the next one in Tulsa, OK 2027) and competed in four NSGs (Albuquerque, New Mexico; Ft. Lauderdale, FL; Pittsburgh, PA; Des Moines, IA); he is still working on finishing in the top ten. That third goal is a daily aspiration of which SWELL is an integral part of my regimen; in season or off. Hiram's daily routine: Wake up, take a breath, move, eat well, read, kiss my wife (Jean), sleep well and look forward to the next day; rinse and repeat.

A True Inspiration

I have always been impressed with Hiram as a dedicated athlete and SWELL member. He always has a smile and an intense focus. I truly believe that Hiram will be competing in the discus in the Iowa games or maybe even the Nationals when he's 100. He has longevity—his father lived well into his 90s, and I believe Hiram will not only live in his 90s but he will be fit and an amazing athlete at that age. He is an inspiration to me as he should be to all of us here at SWELL.

-- Information by Hiram Melendez

Volunteer Opportunity at Finley Hospital

Finley Hospital is looking for volunteers to help at the front desk and escort patients to their appointments. Shifts are just 2 to 3 hours, and the work is light and rewarding. If you're interested in helping out, please contact Marie Z. in Volunteer Services at 563-589-2643.

--Eileen Schueller

Dates to be aware of that the CRWC will be closed

[ADMISSION & AID](#)[CAMPUS LIFE](#)[ACADEMICS](#)[SEMINARY](#)[ATHLETICS](#)[ALUMNI & INVESTORS](#)[Apply](#)

PDF: [Holiday Schedule for 2026-2027](#)

2026-27 Academic Year Schedule	
Holiday	Date
Juneteenth	June 19, 2026 - Friday
Independence Day	July 3, 2026 - Friday and July 6, 2026 - Monday
Labor Day	September 7, 2026 - Monday
Thanksgiving	November 26, 2026 - Thursday and November 27, 2026 - Friday
Christmas	December 24, 2026 - Thursday, December 25, 2026 - Friday and December 28, 2026 - Monday
New Year's	December 31, 2026 - Thursday and January 1, 2027 - Friday

The Dedicated Ones



Healthy Recipe by Papa

"Pani Cakes" (Granddaughter CeCe's Favorite)

This recipe was inspired by CeCe asking, *"Papa, will you make me Pani Cakes?"* It is a massive hit with the grandchildren because they taste great, but you will love them because they are packed with protein and energy to satisfy hunger and support active, growing muscles.

The best part? They are so flavorful and portable that the grandkids eat them just like a muffin—no fork, no syrup, and no butter required!

Ingredients

- **Protein Base:** 2/3 cup liquid egg whites
- **Sweetener:** 1/3 cup pure maple syrup
- **Dry Base:** 2 cups homemade pancake batter OR pre-mixed pancake batter (such as Member's Mark/Sam's Club) 2 ¼ cups with added fruit.
- **Liquid:** Non-dairy milk (Almond milk works perfectly), added gradually
- **Add fruit:** 1 to 1 1/2 cups blueberries for antioxidants, or other fruit such as diced strawberries.

Instructions

1. Mix the Base

In a mixing bowl, combine the 2/3 cup of egg whites and 1/3 cup of maple syrup. Whisk lightly to combine.

2. Add the Batter & Adjust Consistency

Add 2 cups pancake mix to the wet ingredients. Slowly pour in the almond milk while stirring until you reach your desired consistency: 2 ¼ cups of batter with added fruit.

. **For thinner pancakes:** Aim for a thinner, more fluid batter.

. **For robust, thick pancakes:** Keep the batter on the thicker side.

4. For fruity taste: Add fruit.

3. Cook with Care

Preheat your griddle or skillet over **low heat**.

💡 **Important Note:** Because of the high protein and unique ingredients, these pancakes **normally do not bubble** on top like traditional pancakes.

You will need to slide a spatula underneath to check the bottom and flip them when they are golden brown and ready.

4. Serve and Enjoy

Once cooked through, cool them slightly. Serve them as-is for an easy, mess-free, grab-and-go breakfast or snack!



New SWELL At-Home Workout Now on Patreon! ☀️

Can't make it to class, or haven't been able to join SWELL just yet? We've got you covered!



Our latest At-Home Workout Video 5-31-2026 is officially live on Patreon. Filmed against the beautiful backdrop of the 2025 Tour of Gardens, this session is as scenic as it is therapeutic. This brand-new routine feature all of our latest core updates, including:

- **Balance Tai Chi Walking** to build steady, confident steps.
- **Toe Rotations integrated** seamlessly into our **Double Knee Tuck** for improved lower body circulation, joint mobility and stability.

It's the perfect way to keep moving, stay strong, and protect your joints right from the comfort of home.

👉 [[Click Here to Watch the Video on Patreon](#)]

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Thanks to those who submitted wonderful articles to our SWELL newsletter