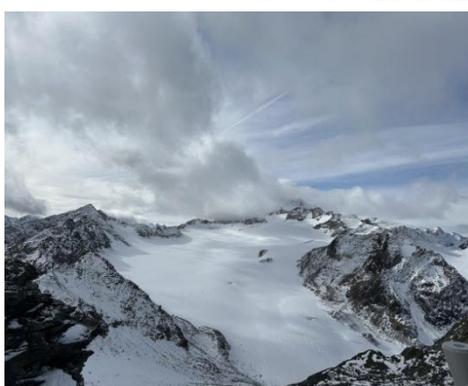


SWELL LETTER

March 2026 Volume 6, Issue 3

Meet our new SWELL members

Anne Hedrick



1. Inspiration Point, Jenny Lake Trail, Grand Teton National Park. 2. West Thumb Spring, Yellowstone National Park. 3. Loch Ness Lake, looking for Nessie. 4. Dinner in Sandeman's at Fonab Castle, Pitlochry, Scotland. 5. Rettenbach Glacier, Otztal Alps, Austria. 6. Richter-Regenspurger Winery, Tulbing, Austria. 7. Shop in Appenzell, Switzerland. 8. Castle in Cesky Krumlov, Czech Republic. In number 3, we were in Scotland hoping to find the Loch Ness Monster, but he did not make an appearance while we were on the lake!

I joined SWELL September 2025 after more than a 2-1/2-year wait. The wait was worth it! I was pleasantly surprised when Gary Wittman sent an email indicating I had secured a spot. Aggie Tauke, a SWELL member, mentioned the program to me before I retired, which piqued my interest. I retired 3 years ago as a mental health therapist with Hillcrest Mental Health Center. I have three children and two grandchildren, all living 4 or more hours away, which gives me opportunities for long visits. My interests include hiking, biking, kayaking, and walking. I enjoy reading, knitting, and learning new things. I recently signed up for classes in Genealogy. I especially enjoy the adventure of traveling with friends and family. My suitcase is always ready for travel. This past year I was fortunate to visit Yellowstone and Grand Tetons National Parks, Scotland, Austria, and seven neighboring European countries. In addition to healthy exercise, what I enjoy about the program is the friendliness of members who share a greeting, conversation, or introduce themselves to me.

Carleen and Bruce Rehmke

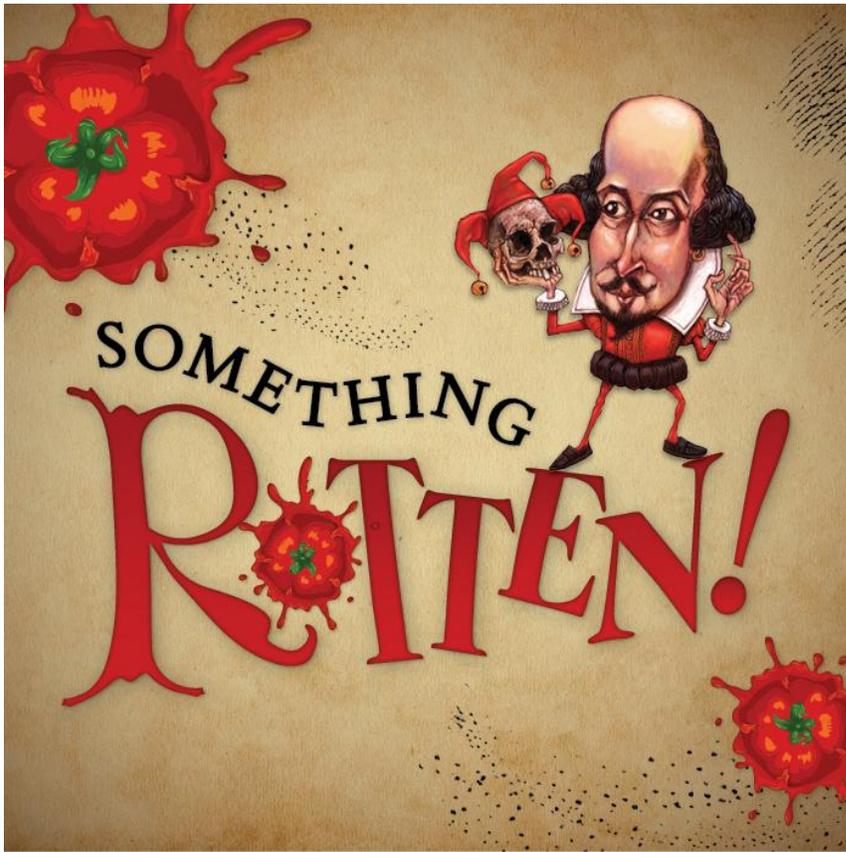


We, Carleen and Bruce Rehmke, joined SWELL in September of 2025 after patiently waiting for two years. It's been well worth the wait. The whole atmosphere of the class is friendly and non-judgmental. The exercises are adaptable to a wide range of abilities, and the leaders do an excellent job.

The Dubuque area has been our home since 1979, and we're retired after many years in nursing (Carleen) and banking (Bruce). In retirement we enjoy traveling and socializing with our friends. In her leisure time, Carleen likes to read and quilt. Bruce gardens, hunts and volunteers at a couple of local agencies.

We have three children and 6 grandchildren ranging in age from 5 to 17. Fortunately for us, most live nearby and the others are only 3 hours away. We have a dog named Hansi that we adopted from the Caribbean island of St Martin 12 years ago. We're not sure how old he is, but we think he was about two when we got him so he's a senior just like us.

Friday, March 20th 7:30 pm Something Rotten.



The University of Dubuque's Department of Fine and Performing Arts will perform *Something Rotten*, music and lyrics by Wayne and Karey Kirkpatrick and book by Karey Kirkpatrick and John O'Farrell. In this production, set in the 1590s, brothers Nick and Nigel Bottom are desperate to write a hit play but are stuck in the shadow of that Renaissance rock star known as "The Bard." When a local soothsayer foretells that the future of theatre involves singing, dancing, and acting at the same time, Nick and Nigel set out to write the world's very first musical. But amidst the scandalous excitement of opening night, the Bottom Brothers realize that reaching the top means being true to thine own self, and all that jazz.

Something Rotten! will be directed by Joe Klinebriel, MFA, professor of theatre.

Jerry and Kris Hermsen, Gary Conlon and Marian Walker vacation to Jamaica



The four of us and 10 other non-Swell members took a short vacation to Jamaica during the recent cold snap. Some of the weather followed us there with a high of 70 and 40+mph winds for a couple of days, but Kris was determined to soak up the sun even in the cooler weather! Marian decided to stay warm! We did a lot of walking and posed in the Golden Rooster for a photo near the beach.

There was lots of good food and lots of good conversations. Gary went swimming in the pool with his phone and earbuds on the first day, so was fairly tech free for a week! Marian had a beach vendor including a goody bag of marijuana with a t-shirt she bought, so was lucky she didn't just shove the bag in her suitcase without looking or she might still be in the Jamaican jail!



The Benefits of Tension Release Meditation

By integrating the **Tension Release meditation protocol** into your daily routine, you unlock a path to both physical rejuvenation and mental clarity. Here is how it transforms your well-being:

1. Significant Stress Reduction

Stress is more than just a feeling; it is a physiological burden. It is estimated that **80% or more** of all physical and mental health challenges are rooted in chronic stress. By releasing this tension, you proactively protect your long-term health.

2. Enhanced Full-Body Circulation

Improved blood flow is the cornerstone of vitality. By increasing circulation, you provide your body with the tools it needs to:

- **Accelerate Recovery:** Heal faster from daily aches, pains, and minor injuries.
- **Fluid Movement:** Restore your body's ability to move freely and effortlessly.

3. "Age-Reversing" Mobility

The Tension Release protocol helps you reclaim the agility of your youth.

- **Move with Ease:** Reduce the stiffness often associated with aging, allowing for a smoother, more confident stride.
- **The SWELL Philosophy:** Through our SWELL framework, we don't just age—we grow younger in spirit and function.
- **Safe for Everyone:** This protocol can be practiced regardless of your current pain level or stiffness, offering a pathway to relief without the risk of further injury.

--Gary

Tension Imagery Healing the Body and Mind

Release Tension Method

Many tai chi or qi gong masters mention Dantain. Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioners believe that Dantain is the seat of life force energy in the body. Many cultures of ancient India believe in the three treasures of the body, Jing, Qi, and Shen. In both Hinduism and Buddhism, the third eye is a mystical invisible eye. It symbolizes the power of knowledge and leads to inner realms and spaces of higher consciousness and a state of enlightenment.

Are these forces real? I have found that healing forces of the body do exist and are backed by the top two clinic hospitals in the world. Mayo and Cleveland clinics and hospitals help us understand how our mind and body can work together to heal us.

Patients Practicing Body Scan Healing at Cleveland Clinic and Hospitals

Dr. Young (2023) at the Cleveland Clinics discuss the immediate and long-term health benefits of body scan tension and relaxed breathing. The Cleveland Clinic is ranked as the No. 2 hospital worldwide by Newsweek's Best Hospitals 2023 list. Other sources, such as the No.1 ranked Mayo Clinic, use body scan meditation and tai chi with their patients. Dr. Walker (2017), a Professor at UC Berkeley, the world's leader in sleep therapy, talks about the

importance of deep sleep. Dr. Orlick (2016), a Professor at the University of Ottawa, the world leader in mental imagery, uses body scan relaxing breathing methods. Dr. Orlick passed away in 2021.

When tensing muscles, the cells constrict, strengthening and toning the muscles as an isometric exercise. When tension is released through deep breathing, the muscles dilate, increasing circulation and bringing nutrients and oxygen to muscles and joints. These findings explain how healing powers of the mind and body can strengthen and heal muscles and joints. Dantain translates form Chinese to mean “field of elixir.” Focusing on the area below your navel or lower abdomen with deep breathing and gentle movements to release energy.

James Roland (2019) Health Journalists Healthline writes that muscle flexing can be especially helpful when recovering from an injury, especially to a joint like the shoulder or knee. Holding muscles in one position does not put extra stress on the joint or injured area. When having a joint injury or arthritis, isometric is ideal and less painful than other strength training exercises.

Many top clinics have found that tensing and relaxing muscles with breathing can help speed up recovery from injury and overtraining. Body scan tension and relaxed breathing help to reduce pain, increase circulation, and relieve stress and anxiety.



I have used this body scan tension release with students for the past five years at the University of Dubuque. The meditation students have enjoyed and have benefited from body scan tension release. There is a group of students that could benefit from this technique. They are called SWELL. It is a safe and easy way to heal and strengthen stiff, sore, or damaged muscles and joints. Dr. Roizen (2023) points out that isometric exercises lower blood pressure.

There are five steps of the body scan method. Let us call it Tension Zen Imagery.

Close your eyes and take deep "belly" breaths to slow down your sympathetic nervous system. Follow these steps for each muscle group, beginning with the toes:

1. Inhale and contract (squeeze) each muscle group. Hold for five seconds.
2. Focus on how the tension feels and visualize tight muscles.
3. Exhale and relax that muscle group for 10 seconds.
4. Visualize relaxed muscles and notice how they feel.
5. Repeat with the next muscle group.

After you scan the entire body, you focus on stiff, sore, or painful areas. You repeat the five steps emphasizing these sore muscle and joint areas.

After Tension Zen Imagery, we focus on mental stress, relaxing our brain and thoughts. Besides healing the body, Dr. Kempert (2023) at the Cleveland Clinics talks about immediate and long-term health benefits of body scan and relaxed breathing. Research shows headaches and benefits to control anxiety, help you sleep, relieve stress, and tension headaches, and enhance movement performance.

In conclusion ancient cultures were indeed experiencing healing through focus, deep breathing, and meditation. Now the top research clinics and hospitals have adopted isometric positions, deep breathing, slow movement, and meditation to heal the mind and body. Practice tension release meditation with Gary's Zen Meditation Series on Patreon.

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Melissa Young, MD, Integrative Medicine, Center for Functional Medicine at the Cleveland Clinics, Health Essentials (February 3, 2023) (Body scan Meditation for Beginners: How to Make the Mind/Body Connection) Retrieved October 19, 2023

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James Roland Health Journalists, Healthline (August 27, 2019). (Can Flexing Your Muscles Make Them Stronger?) Retrieved October 19, 2023

--Gary



Grace Brumley Spring 2026 SWELL Intern



I am from Chicago, Il and previously attended Taft High School. I have a twin brother as my only sibling. I have played basketball for 14 years and I am a member of the Women's basketball team here at UD. I am a sophomore in college and majoring in human health science and psychology. I plan to attend graduate school and become a cardiac sonographer. Beyond working out and playing sports, I enjoy shopping, listening to music, and hanging out with my friends. I am so excited to work with the SWELL class and can't wait to learn more about senior wellness!

Thank You,
Grace Brumley

Grace and Gary will present a Lecture for 1 hour to explain research of Jackson Pollock 3 site body composition test, healthy eating and exercise for the SWELL members.

Lecture will take place in the MTAC Welcome Center from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm. We are waiting for final confirmation. Those in the study will be contacted.

Grace and Gary will be conducting Jackson-Pollock 3-site skinfold testing for SWELL

Our goal is to use data-driven insights to help everyone reach their health and fitness goals.

How it works: Sign-up at SWELL

- **Baseline:** We will start by determining your current body composition. **Jackson Pollock 3 site skin fold test.**
- **Action Plan:** We'll use [MyPlate.gov](https://www.myplate.gov) as a resource to refine our eating habits and improve overall health.
- **Follow-up:** At the conclusion of the study, we will retest everyone to measure your progress and celebrate your improvements. Also, a questioner asked how well you followed your MyPlate plan.
- **Body composition** While your body weight gives you a single, often misleading number, **your body composition reveals the actual quality of your physical health.**

Myplate.gov

Unique Needs of People Ages 60+

Core Dietary Habits

- Eat for Prevention: Choose a variety of foods across all groups to lower the risk of chronic diseases (diabetes, heart disease, etc.).
- Prioritize Protein: Ensure adequate daily protein intake to preserve essential muscle mass.
- Focus on Key Nutrients: Prioritize foods rich in Potassium, Calcium, Vitamin D, Fiber, and B12.

Smart Substitutions

- Avoid "The Big Three": Minimize added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium (salt).

- Hydrate Proactively: Drink water frequently even if you don't feel thirsty. Low-fat milk or 100% juice are also good options.

Lifestyle & Safety

- Weight Management: Balance a healthy dietary pattern with an active lifestyle to maintain energy and weight.
- Food Safety: Prevent foodborne illness by following the four safety steps: Clean, Separate, Cook, and Chill.

Nutrition Tips for Ages 60+

Healthy Eating as You Age: A Summary

Maintaining proper nutrition throughout your life helps meet nutrient needs, manage weight, and reduce disease risk. Follow these key strategies:

- Prioritize Protein: Eat seafood, dairy, soy, and legumes to maintain muscle mass.
- Simplify Produce: Add fruits and vegetables to every meal; use frozen or canned options to save time on prep.
- Stay Social: Make meals enjoyable by eating with others or joining community potlucks at least twice a week.
- Monitor Micronutrients: Focus on Vitamin B12 through protein and fortified foods, as absorption decreases with age.
- Consult Professionals: Always speak with a healthcare provider before starting dietary supplements or nutritional drinks, as these can contain hidden sugars.

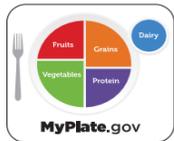
Stay Active for Better Health

Regular physical activity helps older adults remain strong, independent, and mentally sharp. To stay on track, aim for: 150 Minutes: Weekly moderate activity (anything that raises your heart rate).

- 2 Days: Weekly muscle-strengthening exercises. Benefit: Improved balance, bone strength, and brain function.

[MyPlate Plan Calculator](#)

Example of MyPlate Plan



Start simple with MyPlate Plan

The benefits of healthy eating add up over time, bite by bite. Small changes matter. Start Simple with MyPlate.

A healthy eating routine is important at every stage of life and can have positive effects that add up over time. It's important to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, grains, protein foods, and dairy or fortified soy alternatives. When deciding what to eat or drink, choose options that are full of nutrients. Make every bite count.

Food Group Amounts for 2,800 Calories a Day for Ages 14+ Years

Fruits	Vegetables	Grains	Protein	Dairy
2½ cups	3½ cups	10 ounces	7 ounces	3 cups
Focus on whole fruits Focus on whole fruits that are fresh, frozen, canned, or dried.	Vary your veggies Choose a variety of colorful fresh, frozen, and canned vegetables—make sure to include dark green, red, and orange choices.	Make half your grains whole grains Find whole-grain foods by reading the Nutrition Facts label and ingredients list.	Vary your protein routine Mix up your protein foods to include seafood; beans, peas, and lentils; unsalted nuts and seeds; soy products; eggs; and lean meats and poultry.	Move to low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or yogurt (or lactose-free dairy or fortified soy versions) Look for ways to include dairy or fortified soy alternatives at meals and snacks throughout the day.



Choose foods and beverages with less added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.
Limit:

- Added sugars to **less than 70 grams** a day.
- Saturated fat to **less than 31 grams** a day.
- Sodium to **less than 2,300 milligrams** a day.



Be active your way:

Children 6 to 17 years old should move **60 minutes** every day. Adults should be physically active at least **2½ hours** per week.

MyPlate Plan

Write down the foods you ate today and track your small changes, bite by bite.

Food group targets for a 2,800-calorie* pattern are:	Write down your food choices for each food group.	Did you reach your target?	
 Fruits 2½ cups 1 cup of fruits counts as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup raw or cooked fruit; or • ½ cup dried fruit; or • 1 cup 100% fruit juice. 	_____ _____ _____	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	 Limit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Added sugars to less than 70 grams a day. • Saturated fat to less than 31 grams a day. • Sodium to less than 2,300 milligrams a day. Did you reach your target? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>  Be active your way: Children 6 to 17 years old should move 60 minutes every day. Adults should be physically active at least 2½ hours per week. Did you reach your target? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <small>* This 2,800-calorie pattern is only an estimate of your needs. Monitor your body weight and adjust your calories if needed.</small>
 Vegetables 3½ cups 1 cup of vegetables counts as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup raw or cooked vegetables; or • 2 cups leafy salad greens; or • 1 cup 100% vegetable juice. 	_____ _____ _____	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
 Grains 10-ounce equivalents 1 ounce of grains counts as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 slice bread; or • 1 ounce ready-to-eat cereal; or • ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, or cereal. 	_____ _____ _____	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
 Protein 7-ounce equivalents 1 ounce of protein foods counts as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 ounce seafood, lean meats, or poultry; or • 1 egg; or • 1 Tbsp peanut butter; or • ¼ cup cooked beans, peas, or lentils; or • ½ ounce unsalted nuts or seeds. 	_____ _____ _____	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
 Dairy 3 cups 1 cup of dairy counts as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 cup dairy milk or yogurt; or • 1 cup lactose-free dairy milk or yogurt; or • 1 cup fortified soy milk or yogurt; or • 1½ ounces hard cheese. 	_____ _____ _____	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	



FNS-904-29
July 2021

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Holiday CRWC closed dates Special events not listed I will announce these times and dates.

- **Fri., April 3, 2026**
- **Mo., May 25, 2026**

Daily Hours For SWELL

SWELL starts walking at 7:45 am on most Fridays because of the Clark College track team rental. We can walk outside until 7:45 am on Friday until the track is open.

Exercise class 8:00 am to 9:00 am

SWELL walking after class 9:00 am to 9:45 am

Early walkers can walk in CRWC unless there are other rentals, University events, team's rentals and Holiday hours when students are on break. We can start at 7:45 am when this happens.

THE STAFF

Editor..... Gary
Biography Submitted by Anne Hedrick
Biography Submitted by Carleen and Bruce Rehmke
Vacation by... Jerry and Kris Hermsen, Gary Conlon and Marian Walker
Feature Writer Gary
Feature Writer Grace Brumley

Thanks to those who submitted wonderful articles to our SWELL newsletter