

# SWELL LETTER

## February 2025 Volume 5, Issue 2



### Live and Let Live

This year, I've set a New Year's resolution to "Live and let live," a quote from my father, Robert Delbert Wittman (RD).

RD grew up on a family farm located off Garber Road, halfway between Guttenberg and Garber, Iowa. The farm was situated north of Garber Road, near what is now known as the Fritz's Farmhouse & Barn Venue. He and his four brothers and two sisters worked alongside their father on the farm, supplementing their work with hunting, trapping, and fishing.

He lived a simple yet rewarding life in an isolated farm community. During the Great Depression, they worked tirelessly to recover and generally shared a single mindset: work hard, be a man, and show respect for elders. His closest companions were the surrounding hills, woods, and streams, where he spent much of his time trapping and hunting for food and fur.

He often recounted stories from his school days. He would walk to school carrying a shotgun or rifle, which he would carefully place beside his coat before taking his seat. His teacher remarked, "Bob, you are one of the most intelligent students I've ever had in this one-room schoolhouse." On his way home, he would often hunt for game to provide supper for his family. He was a young man who lived and thought in a particular way about life.

In the spring of 1943, at the age of 18, during World War II, he enlisted in the Marines to fight for his country and freedom. After completing basic training, he was deployed to active duty and was shipped out. In 1944, 65,000 U.S. Marines fought in the Pacific Theater of World War II on the islands of Saipan, Tinian, Guam, and Peleliu. These battles were part of Operation Forager. He didn't say much about his deployment. Upon completing his tour of duty, he was stationed in San Francisco for the remainder of his service.

His experiences in the South Pacific and his time stationed in San Francisco dramatically broadened his perspective beyond the simple life he knew on the farm. He encountered the LGBT community, which was beginning to emerge in the 1920s and 1930s. This was a significant revelation for a man from rural Iowa. He came to realize the vast diversity of people across different countries and regions within the United States.

The combination of his wartime experiences and his time in San Francisco led him to develop the philosophy of "live and let live." RD recognized that the world is populated by countless different types of people, and he was simply one among them.

I believe we sometimes lose sight of the fact that people perceive the world through unique lenses. We often assume that everyone shares the same worldview, but this is far from the truth. We have liberals, conservatives, moderates, and independents. There are religious and non-religious individuals. Some people possess open minds, while others believe that everyone should conform to their own beliefs and way of thinking.

I personally aspire to be a person with an open mind.

Therefore, this year, I am adopting the philosophy my father lived by "live and let live."

**"Live and Let Live,"**

**--Gary**

## Drs. Oz and Roizen: Tai one on

BY MICHAEL ROIZEN, M.D., AND MEHMET OZ, M.D. King Features Jan 9, 2025



As you start the new year (and recover from holiday celebrations), it's smart to tai one on. By doing tai chi, that is. If you're still mentally sharp, tai chi can improve your ability to multitask, manage your time, and make decisions. And if you have mild cognitive impairment, tai chi can slow your cognitive decline more than other types of exercise.

In one study, researchers had folks with some cognitive impairment do tai chi or a stretching and toning program three times a week. After a year, only 2% of the tai chi group progressed to dementia; 11% of the other group did. And in an enhanced tai chi experiment, folks ages 65 and older with mild cognition problems either did stretching, traditional tai chi, or enhanced tai chi, in which instructors had them conduct tasks such as spelling words, forward and backward while doing the form. The enhanced tai chi group doubled the

improvement in their cognitive test scores compared to the regular tai chi group (which did better than the stretching-only group).

How does tai chi (even if not enhanced) do this? By improving blood flow and helping the brain find alternate routes for shuttling info around. It also helps you build a pose, which enhances cognition. For more info, check out the Tai Chi Foundation ([taichifoundation.org](http://taichifoundation.org)). And for tips on brain health, learn 40 ways to enhance your brain in Dr. Mike's "The Great Age Reboot."

--Dr. Michael Roizen, M.D., and Dr. Mehmet Oz, M.D.

"In my considered opinion, Tai Chi represents a remarkably comprehensive exercise regimen. Individuals who elect to forego this valuable opportunity within the SWELL curriculum are, in my view, overlooking a significant aspect of their physical and mental well-being.

As Dr. Robert Wermer, M.D. of the Mayo Clinic, has noted, extensive research substantiates the profound benefits of Tai Chi practice. These include:

- **Reduced stress, anxiety, and depression:** Tai Chi promotes a state of deep relaxation and mental clarity.
- **Improved mood:** The practice fosters a sense of tranquility and well-being.
- **Enhanced aerobic capacity:** Tai Chi increases cardiovascular fitness.
- **Increased energy and stamina:** Practitioners often experience a surge in vitality and endurance.
- **Improved flexibility, balance, and agility:** Tai Chi cultivates grace and fluidity of movement.
- **Enhanced muscle strength and definition:** Regular practice strengthens and tones the body.

These multifaceted benefits underscore the invaluable contribution of Tai Chi to overall health and well-being."

--Gary

### Jeff and Jayne Anglin



Hi, we're Jeff and Jayne Anglin, and we have just been accepted to the exercise class this September, after being on the waiting list for 2 years! We are grateful for the opportunity to join and look forward to meeting others with the same goals. Our recent schedules have made it difficult to attend, but hopefully that will change soon!

Jeff and I were both born and raised in Dubuque. We have two children, Ryan and Kristen Ryan and his wife, Anne, live in Chicago with their two boys. And our daughter Kristen and her husband live in Ankeny with their 3 boys. Things can be a little chaotic when we're together! But we love it!

Jeff (really) enjoys golfing, and we both enjoy volunteering. You may see us from time to time at the Heritage Center, as we are ushers, along with several others in this class. Jeff has been retired since 2013, and I, since 2016. We enjoyed

every minute of our retirement! The picture was taken last summer when our entire family took a trip to the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Parks. In May of 2025, we have planned a trip to Scotland and Ireland for our 50th wedding anniversary!

## Bob Krall



After retiring in April, my wife encouraged me to join SWELL, which I did in August. I appreciate the exercises that target improving my flexibility, balance, and core strength, some of the things I have lost sitting at a desk for many years. I'm from Charles City, Iowa, and got a chemical engineering degree from Iowa State, and an MBA from Iowa. My allegiance is to Iowa State, which is tough for the Hawkeye family I married into! I worked in Chicago for 20 years producing among other things gravy flavors for KFC and spent the last 16 years as plant manager at Rousselot, making gelatin for gummy bears, marshmallows, and pharmaceutical gel caps. I enjoy hiking, biking, golf, pickleball (gasp) and supporting the Cyclones, Vikings and Twins. And spending time with our 4 young grandkids, who constantly challenge my flexibility, balance and core strength! My mom is 102 years old and still in pretty good sharp, and my dad passed away at 95. I firmly believe they lived meaningful lives into their 90's and beyond because of their social connections. Meeting new people can be hard, so I am grateful for the opportunity of getting to know so many interesting people while walking the track.

--Article submitted by John Richey

## Lacking balance as you get older can be dangerous.



*Esteban Felix The Associated Press*

Taking a shower. Grocery shopping. Moving around the kitchen. Getting dressed. The underappreciated link between these mundane activities is good balance, which geriatricians say is key to maintaining an independent lifestyle as we age.

Lacking balance can be dangerous. In the U.S., 3 million older people seek medical care for fall-related injuries each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control. But falls are not inevitable, said Roopa Anmolsingh, a geriatrician who created the Cleveland Clinic's balance classes.

"Some people have a misconception that part of getting old is you're going to fall. That's not true," Anmolsingh said. "You can control how you fall, or if you fall."

[To prevent falls](#), geriatricians say people should start asking themselves questions about their balance as early as 50 years old.

### What can I do to improve balance?

Because muscle mass begins to decline in most people during their 30s, geriatricians say the best way to preserve good balance is to stay physically active throughout life. But it's never too late to start prioritizing it, Anmolsingh said.

[Tai chi](#) and [yoga](#) are particularly good for older adults because they involve controlled movements while shifting body weight. There also are [individual exercises](#) people can work into their everyday lives.

Anmolsingh recommended standing on one foot while waiting in line at the grocery store. At home, try sitting up and down from a chair several times without using arm rests. While holding onto a chair or the wall, do three-way leg lifts on each side, lifting a leg to the front, side and then back. At the kitchen counter, take a few steps to the side in each direction.

### How often should I do the exercises?

For balance-specific exercises, it's particularly important to do them regularly because it takes at least 50 hours of training to have a measurable impact, Hartley said. Besides strengthening the associated muscles, doing exercises repetitively for extended periods trains the brain to react properly when you slip or trip.

"Just like an athlete needs to do repetition to train for a sport, you're doing repetition to train for everyday balance activities," he said.

## Janet Veach Faster than Millennials can Text



"I had a fascinating chat with Janet Veach while we were walking the CRWC track. I casually inquired about her career before she retired.

She told me she was an office worker, back in the days before emojis ruled the world. Apparently, she could jot down notes faster with a pen and paper than most kids can text 'LOL' these days.

Speaking of which, you might encounter some of these acronyms used by the younger generation:

**ROFL:** Rolling on the floor laughing (I'm pretty sure my grandma uses this one!)

**TMI:** Too much information (Seriously, kids, some things are better left unsaid.)

**AFAIK:** As far as I know (A safer bet than claiming to know everything.)

**JK:** Just kidding (But sometimes it's hard to tell!)

**TGIF:** Thank goodness it's Friday (Amen to that!)

**LOL:** Laugh out loud (But are they really laughing, or just typing?)

**NBD:** No big deal (But it usually is.)

**TBA:** To be announced (So you can plan your life accordingly...)

**TLC:** Tender loving care (Always a good thing!)

Janet underwent an intense training regime in shorthand and typing at Dubuque Senior back in the 70s. Imagine trying to keep up with a teacher dictating at lightning speed – talk about a workout for your brain! Through this tough training Janet learned to transcribe conversations faster than any millennial can text and with impeccable grammar. Janet didn't need the red line auto correct she was the original autocorrect!

Janet's exceptional transcription skills made her the sought-after expert for accurate documentation. Professionals from various fields, lawyers, doctors, and even city officials—relied on her expertise. Her reputation for precision led her to be called upon during the high-profile Iowa Trust Scandal of 1991. With the need for impeccable records crucial, Janet was entrusted with documenting the proceedings. Her work was so vital that she even appeared on KDUB-TV, meticulously recording every second of the hearing. Janet's dedication to accuracy and comprehensive notetaking truly made her a pioneer in the field, a human equivalent of early AI.

She did mention her 5 minutes of fame, in 1977 Dubuque station KDUB-TV captured Janet in all her glory while filming Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter's speech at the Delta Queen. She was easily spotted in the crowd, sporting her signature oversized hat – quite the fashion statement, even by today's standards!

So, next time you're tempted to complain about the slow internet or the perils of autocorrect, remember Janet Veach. She was a true legend of the office, and a reminder that sometimes, the old ways are still the best ways.

--Gary

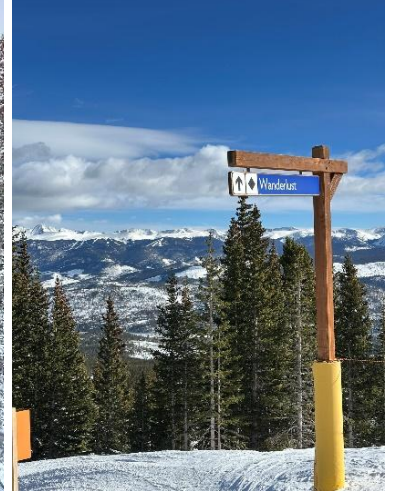
### A Heartwarming Snowboard Trip to Breckenridge: Celebrating Tim's 30th

For 22 years, a special tradition has filled my winters with joy: a trip to Colorado to celebrate my son Tim's birthday. This year marked a milestone – Tim turned 30. As I considered the future, I gently mentioned that this tradition might evolve as his life changes. He's getting married in June 2025, and while his fiancée is wonderfully supportive, and my wife Lisa encourages my trips, I know how quickly things can shift with a growing family. Tim, ever optimistic, simply shrugged off my concerns. I chuckled, knowing he'd understand someday. We even talked about shorter trips in the future, if needed.



But for now, I cherish every moment. The joy of celebrating with my children on their special days is immeasurable. These trips are a gift I treasure. My journey began with a flight from Cedar Rapids to Denver. After collecting my bags, I hopped on the efficient train to Denver Union Station, a beautifully restored landmark that always impresses me. Stepping off the train, I was greeted by Tim's warm hug. We loaded my snowboard and luggage into his Jeep and headed to Frisco, our home away from home. The Frisco Inn, a charming bed and breakfast, is our preferred spot. With both indoor and outdoor hot tubs, it's the perfect place to unwind after a day on the slopes. Each evening, we'd use the handy kiosk to order breakfast for the following morning. Come

morning, the delicious meal would arrive precisely on cue, fueling us for a day of shredding the Gnar. For three glorious days, Tim and I hit the slopes, pausing only for my famous brand muffins and coffee. Evenings were spent soaking in the hot tub, enjoying light dinners at the Inn, and venturing out for culinary delights. Ollies became our go-to for the best wings in Colorado, while Ein Prosit tempted us with elk jalapeno sausage and imported beers. Saturday night, we indulged in burgers and duck fat fries at the iconic Satchels on 6th. All too soon, it was Sunday morning. After a final breakfast at our traditional Denver Village Inn, it was time to return to Dubuque. As I settled back in my seat, I was filled with a profound sense of gratitude. I am truly blessed with the family I have, and I deeply cherish these precious moments spent with them.



Video on slopes shredding the Gnar.

<https://share.icloud.com/photos/0e5CXvRqhPMXomhHIIrvroCiw>

--Gary

News:

Dear SWELL,

Please be advised that the SWELL class scheduled for February 6th, 2025, will be cancelled.

This date coincides with the UD Career Connections Fair held in the CRWC.

This is a valuable opportunity for students to:

- Connect with employers in person: Explore potential full-time and part-time jobs, internships, and shadowing opportunities.

- **Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7:30 PM** Heritage Center Spring Musical Theatre Production of "Assassins"



### **Trouble Sleeping? Tension Zen Can Help!**



Research from the Cleveland Clinic shows that meditation can help you achieve deep, delta sleep. To maximize your chances of reaching this restorative sleep stage, the Cleveland Clinic recommends:

- A consistent bedtime routine
- A relaxing, dark, and quiet sleep environment
- Avoiding stimulants like caffeine and alcohol close to bedtime
- Regular exercise (but not too close to sleep)
- Relaxation techniques like meditation or deep breathing

Essentially, prioritize healthy sleep hygiene with calming activities and a consistent sleep schedule.

Tension Zen Mind and Body on Patreon offers resources to help you sleep better, including two dedicated posts on the topic. Our Tension Zen meditation, incorporating tension release and deep breathing (as recommended by the Cleveland Clinic), can help calm your mind and reduce stress, promoting deeper sleep. Sleep meditation, a valuable self-care technique, can further reset your mind and body for sleep.

**Our Tension Zen meditation app is available on Patreon!**

For just \$1 a month, you'll gain access to a wealth of resources designed to improve your physical and mental well-being.

<https://www.patreon.com/TensionZen>

## Healthy Granola recipe by Janet Zhen

Prepared by Mary and Emma

### INGREDIENTS

8 cups old-fashioned rolled oats

3.5 cup raw nuts (*I use sliced almonds, pumpkin seeds, seeds and cashews*)

2 tablespoons ground flax seeds

1 tablespoon chia seeds

2 teaspoon kosher salt or Mrs. Dash

2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 tsp nutmeg

2/3 cup melted coconut oil

1 cup honey

1/2 cup maple syrup

2 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cup coconut flakes (*I use Bob's Red Mill brand*)



### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a large, rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. Microwave coconut oil for 45s in a large measuring cup until it is liquid. Add maple syrup/honey and vanilla to the measuring cup and stir until well mixed.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine the oats, nuts, coconut flakes, salt, nutmeg, and cinnamon. Mix with spatula or spoon.
4. Pour the oil, maple syrup and/or honey and vanilla over dry ingredients. Mix well until evenly coated.
5. Pour the granola onto the pan and use spatula to spread into an even layer.
6. Bake for 12 minutes and then gently stir mixture. Press into even layer.
7. Bake for another 12 minutes or until golden brown.
8. Remove from oven and let granola cool undisturbed (at least 45 minutes). The granola will further crisp up as it cools.
9. Transfer cooled granola into a large bowl and break up chunks with a spoon. Top with the dried fruit (optional).

Store the granola in an airtight container at room temperature for 1 to 2 weeks, or in a sealed freezer bag in the freezer for up to 3 months. The dried fruit can freeze solid, so let it warm to room temperature for 5 to 10 minutes before serving.



## **THE STAFF**

**Editor..... Gary**

**Feature Writer ..... Jeff and Jayne Anglin**

**Feature Writer ..... Bob Krall**

**Feature Writer .....**

**Feature Writer ..... Gary**

**Article Submitted..... John Richey**

**Healthy Granola Recipe .....Mary and Emma**

**Thanks to those who submitted wonderful articles to our SWELL newsletter.**