

SWELL LETTER

January 2024 Volume 4, Issue 1

Let us travel through the journey of 2023 and remember the great times we had at SWELL.

Starting in 2023 we sadly said goodbye to Intern Trea Samifua

We watched Trea play against Central at Chalmers Field and supported him to play in a college invite bowl game. Trea said "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."



We set a new record, 139 SWELL members attending class, and John Richey started the Holiday hats. We attended A Christmas Carol at the Heritage Center with 30 SWELL members.



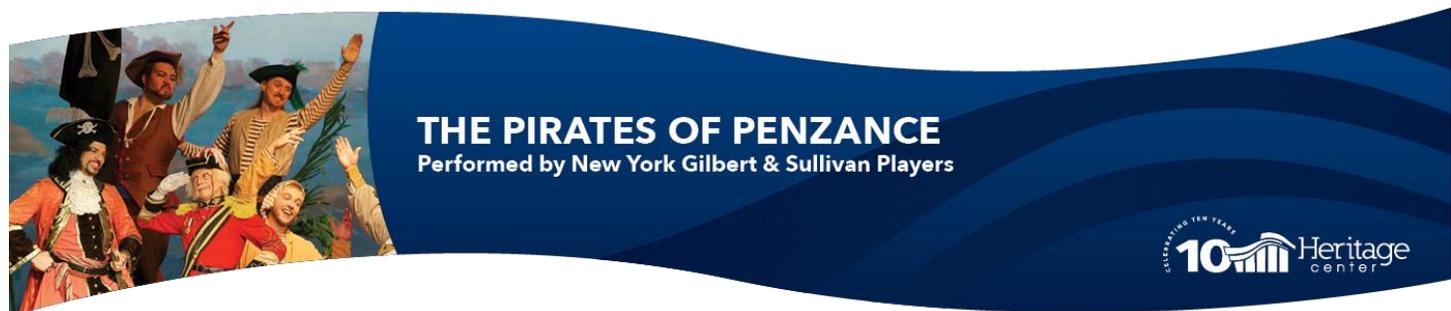
In January Jasani Williams became our 2023 Spring intern.

Jasani said goodbye to us **In April**.

SWELL is like a big family, and I am glad that I was able to be part of it. Not often do you meet people who are immediately open and accepting and wish nothing but the best for you! This is a really great community that I hope one day has the ability to expand. I truthfully did not know what to expect walking into SWELL, but I feel as though the leap of faith paid off. I will miss all the chats and laughs. Again, thank you Gary for the opportunity. I won't be a stranger!



In March we attended The Pirates of Penzance. Some of us were cultured with opera and couldn't figure out what was going on until after admission, LOL.





In May Izayah McKinnie became our summer intern and continued through the summer.

Izayah said, "I'm so glad I picked this internship. I met so many wonderful people. They were so welcoming from the start which helped me have more confidence teaching. The thing I'm most proud of is teaching the tai Chi on my last day. I felt great afterwards. I appreciate everyone in the class. Time flew by this summer teaching."

In July Mary Holshere went to the Galapagos Islands which gave me the idea that we needed to learn Chen Tai Chi her Garden Pose with a giant turtle is our first move in Chen.



In August SWELL we went to Flora Park for a few class and were reprimanded for parking near the pavilion. No one showed up to pavilion even though we moved our cars to another location. We averaged around 60 on those days. We thought bees were attacking us but later found out the TH had a drone fly over for a SWELL photo.



In September we attended the Brit Beat concert that took us back through Beatle history and Beatle Mania covering Songs from almost all of their iconic albums.



Also, in September 22 new people became SWELL members and the plank became our class favorite exercise LOL.

In October, we had the SWELL picnic with great weather and awesome food with over 100 participating .



In December, we wrapped up the year attending the University of Dubuque Christmas concert. We had 111 SWELL members attend not all pictured LOL. This was a new record for for SWELL attending an event at the Heratige Center.



Happy faces of SWELL members gathered as the John and Alice Butler Pipe Organ's sonorous chords soared through the grand halls of the Heritage Center, heralding the start of Christ's birth celebration. The UD choirs' angelic voices blended harmoniously with the Concert Band's vibrant melodies, weaving a tapestry of faith and joy. As the last notes faded, the aroma of cookies, hot chocolate and cider filled the air. Laughter danced with the lively notes of the UD Jazz Band's jazzy rendition of "Jingle Bells," as SWELL people gathered in small groups of excited conversation. With bellies full of sweetness and hearts brimming with festive warmth, we carried the echoes of music and the glow of shared faith into the starlit night, the spirit of Christmas lingering long after the last carol, carrying us into the 2023 final holiday season.



**1st Mary Hoelscher
Peace on Earth**



**2nd John Richey
I fell into a Christmas tree**



**3rd Claudette Bees
Christmas Bees by Claudette**



December, we set records for SWELL attendance 148 and had our first Holiday Hat contest.

Attendance Records

- 148 All-time one-day record.**
- 389 All-time One-week record**
- 729 All-time Two-week record**



In 2023 the Schramm family celebrated Sue's Mom's 90th birthday. We vacationed with Joe and Jane out West and spent lots of time with Tim's and Andy's families. Life is good.

We wish you Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years!

Peace on Earth in 2024,
Paul and Sue Schramm

Dear SWELL Family, thank you,

From the bottom of my heart, I want to express my deepest gratitude for making this year at SWELL so incredibly special. Sharing my life's goals and dreams alongside each of you has been a truly enriching experience. We've laughed, sweated, and cheered each other on through workouts, social gatherings, and forging friendships that I know will last a lifetime.

Each day spent with you has been a gift. Witnessing the joy on your faces before and after class, the blossoming of new friendships as we walk the UD indoor track together, and the sheer determination you bring to every challenge fills me with an immense sense of gratitude.

I hope you know that SWELL is so much more than just overcoming an "obstacle" of fitness. It's about embracing the journey, sharing it with like-minded souls, and making every step count. I want SWELL to be something you crave, something you can't wait to experience, something as vital and necessary as each breath you take.

So, thank you, dear SWELL family, for making this year unforgettable. As we move forward in 2024, let's continue to support one another, celebrate each other's victories, and walk this path of life together, one smile, one shared dream, and one inspiring workout at a time.

Thank you so much for the wonderful gifts! John Richey, your pick of caramels, the golf shirt, and the golf balls were fantastic choices. As I read through the card, filled with all of your kind words, and well wishes, I could visualize each and every one of your smiling faces. Your generosity truly touched my heart.

The gift of money will be put to good use. \$500.00 will be given to Izayah McKinnie for SWELL Intern of the year. With the remainder of your gift, I am planning to travel and see my son Tim for his birthday February 8th through 17th. We are going snowboarding at Breckenridge and Keystone.

The most appreciated part of the gift is the thoughtful card with all of your names. This alone is enough, you really don't need to contribute money. Next year if you decide to do this, a card would be enough gift.

Thank you again for everything. Your friendship and kindness mean the world to me.

Thank you, Karen Knepper,

I wanted to express my deepest gratitude for being such a trusted friend and allowing me to take these special trips. Knowing I have you holding down the fort in my absence gives me incredible peace of mind, and I truly appreciate your dedication to keeping our class running strong.

"God bless us everyone!" Gary



Healthy Gingerbread Cookies (Complex sugars)

Prep Time 30 minutes mins.
Cook Time 10 minutes mins.
Total Time 30 minutes mins.

Cuisine: American

Servings: 12 large cookies

Ingredients

Gingerbread Cookies

- 2 cups (240g) flour,
- ¼ cup (55g) Low cholesterol butter, chilled block or room temperature spreadable
- ½ cup (100g) White coconut oil
- ¼ cup (85g) maple syrup, ¼ cup (60g) water, or as needed
- 1 tablespoon ground chia
- 2-3 teaspoons ground cinnamon,
- 2-3 teaspoons ground ginger, to taste
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- Pinch of salt

Frosting (note 3)

- ½ cup (65g) coconut butter, softened
- 1-3 tbsp vanilla almond milk, as needed

Instructions

To make the cookies:

- 1) **Ask 2 little kids to help you make cookies for Santa.**
- 2) Use all-purpose flour, you'll need less or no water. Start with no water and add a little at a time until the dough comes together.





3) Add all the cookie ingredients to a large mixing bowl. Mix the ingredients with a spoon and your hands until it comes together. Add more flour or water if needed (the dough should be soft and pliable). Alternatively, mix the ingredients in a food processor or stand mixer.

4) Set aside the dough in an airtight container in the fridge for 1 hour or in the freezer for 30 minutes until it's firmed up.

To shape the cookies:

1) When you're ready to roll out the cookies, preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F).

2) Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface so it is about 8mm (0.3 inch) thick. Use a cookie cutter to cut shapes out of the dough. Carefully place each cookie on a lined baking tray with a little space in between each cookie. You may need to use a flat spatula to transfer them,

3) Collect the excess dough, roll it out and cut out more shapes from the dough. Repeat until you have no more dough.

4) Bake the cookies in the oven for 10 minutes (depending on the size of your cookies). The edges of the cookies should be slightly golden brown. Allow the cookies to completely cool on the baking tray.

To decorate the cookies:

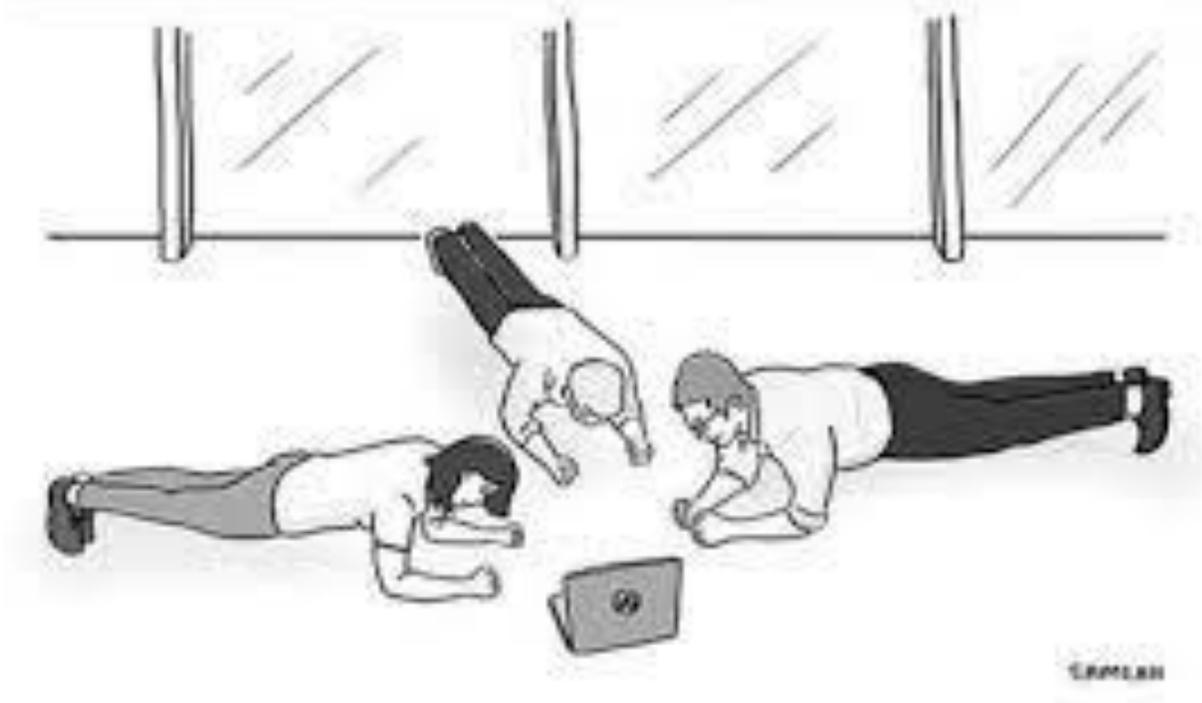
1) First make the frosting. Add all the frosting ingredients to a bowl and mix until it forms a thick paste. Add more coconut butter to thicken and more milk to thin the frosting.

2) Use a fine tipped piping bag to decorate the gingerbread as desired.

3) Enjoy immediately! Cookies are best enjoyed on the day of baking. Alternatively, store them in an airtight container for up to 1 week.



HOW TO RUN SHORT & EFFECTIVE MEETINGS



Tim Bees sent me this, I think he wants me to shorten announcements.

Ruth Lewis



I joined SWELL in September, and it has been a very positive experience for me. Connecting with old friends and making new ones...what could be better? And I always have more energy on the days I come to exercise. I love learning more about my swell community and I am excited to share some of myself with you all.

I was born on a farm 10 miles West of Bellevue, the second of twelve children. I grew up with nine brothers and two sisters. Whenever someone would ask my Mom, "How did you do it, raising twelve kids?" she would say, "I had Barb and Ruth first." Let's just say I took care of a lot of kids before I had my own two.

I graduated from Marquette High School in Bellevue and then went to Kirkwood Community College for Dental Assisting. I worked in the dental profession for 44 years, retiring in 2014. I worked for Dr. Tom Nesler, Dr. Mike Lattner, and retired from Schultz Family Dentistry after working for my niece, Dr. Meghan Schultz.

My husband, Jim Lewis, and I were married in 1972. Jim retired in 2013 from Rite Hite after about 45 years. We were married 48 years before his death in 2020, from a rare type of blood cancer. In his lifetime Jim painted and gifted hundreds of paintings, many capturing the Iowa landscape. He also made wine, played bass guitar, and loved being a grandpa. He is extremely missed by all who knew him.

Jim and I did some traveling through the years. We traveled to Europe three times. I think our favorite country was Italy. We also visited Iceland, Mexico, did a cruise and traveled to many of the states. Recently, I took a trip with my younger sister and her husband and friends to Rotan, Honduras. We did lots of snorkeling, which I decided I am not very good at. It was beautiful and lots of fun.

Jim and I have two children and five grandchildren. Abbey and her husband, Aaron Higgins, are both teachers for Dubuque Community School District. They have two children: Tomas is 14 and Lucy is 11. Tomas and I have been doing the Dubuque Advertiser route for almost three years. Lucy is taking after her grandpa, painting, and saxophone.

My son, Nathan, and his wife Samantha live in Kansas City, MO. They both work for Hallmark Cards and have three daughters. Johanna is 9, Rosemary is 6, and Naomi is 2 years old in February. The older girls are learning piano and spend a lot of time playing with neighborhood friends. I try to get to KC every 6-8 weeks to spoil my granddaughters and help out. It is about a six-hour trip, and I enjoy listening to audiobooks on the drive over.

I stay busy with family events, lunch dates with family and friends, yard work, scrapbooking on Shutterfly, making wine, (Jim was a good teacher), and volunteering in the gift shop at the Arboretum and The Discovery Shop. SWELL has been the perfect way to keep my mind and body strong so I can keep doing the things I love to do.





Tension Zen
Mind and Body

Patreon Website and App Links: Open link and click on collections to see all of our posts and New Tai Chi videos.

Direct link to Tension Zen Patreon Page: <https://www.patreon.com/TensionZen>

Patti Parker



Hi, I'm Patti Parker. I joined SWELL in September of this year. I'm so glad I did. I love the variety of work outs. And have met so many friendly people.

I'm married to Tom Parker, retired police officer. I have 5 children. 2 boys & 3 girls. I have 17 grandchildren & 3 great grandchildren. Any summer day you can find me at a ballpark cheering on the grandkids. I also enjoy reading and

gardening. Mostly flowers from seeds. I also volunteer for

DuRide.

My husband and I enjoy traveling in the US. We always drive to places, making the drive part of the experience. Except of course when we went to Hawaii.



My favorite workplaces include Fulton Elementary School and Keystone AEA where I was an Audiometrist. My first job was a waitress at Busy Bee restaurant.



I hope your New Year is filled with family, friends, and plenty of exercise. Keep moving, go to SWELL, and get younger.



2024 Dates

Monday January 1, 2024, No Class
Monday February 19, 2024, No Class
Friday March 29, 2024, Flora Park
Monday May 27, 2024, Flora Park

THE STAFF

Editor..... Gary Wittman
Autobiography..... Patti Parker
Autobiography..... Ruth Lewis
Feature Writer..... Paul and Sue Schramm
Feature Writer..... Gary Wittman
Healthy Recipe..... Gary Wittman
Cartoon..... Tim Bees

We are looking for feature writers each month, try your hand at it.
Suggestions (Vacation or travels, sports, important milestones like anniversaries, and hobbies).
Email articles to: garydonaldwittman@gmail.com