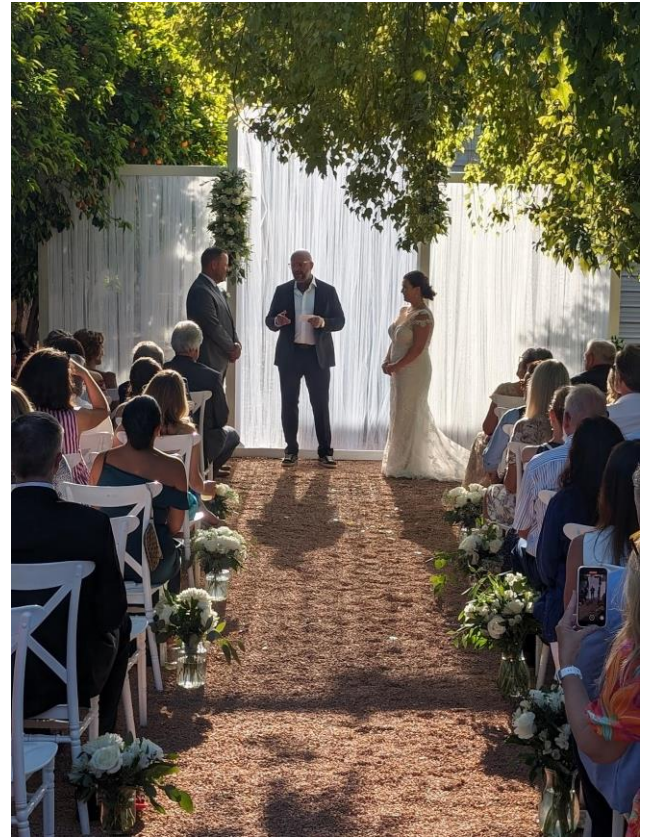


# SWELL LETTER

## April 2024 Volume 4, Issue 4



Under a picture-perfect Arizona sky, with the temperature a delightful 79 degrees, Samara and Stewart began their happily ever after. A talented violinist filled the air with classic wedding melodies, culminating in a rousing rendition of the wedding march.



Following the heartfelt exchange of vows, guests were invited to indulge in an awe-inspiring charcuterie board – the likes of which had never been seen before! A delicious dinner followed shortly after, featuring wood-fired pizzas, cheesy quesadillas, and an assortment of freshly prepared pastas – all made to order right there at the venue.



After raising a toast to the happy couple with slices of decadent cake and flaky pie, everyone hit the dance floor to burn off some calories. The night ended with a spread of late-night snacks and sweet treats, perfect for those who may have overindulged in the celebratory merriment. This was a day filled with love, laughter, and unforgettable memories, a day Samara and Stewart will cherish forever.



"For generations, the Wittman's and O'Connor's have been destined to celebrate together. Canadian weddings or stateside gatherings, it doesn't matter – family connection is always a priority."

-- Gary

## Why come to SWELL?

Dear Gary,



I have not been at class for the past month due to hip replacement surgery. I had the surgery on March 21, and things are going well. I have to believe that my recovery has a lot to do with my attending SWELL class the past two years. My physical therapist said that at 3 weeks I was doing as well as most of her patients are doing at 6 weeks. Thank you for all you do for all of us who attend SWELL. I am looking forward to returning as soon as my restrictions are lifted. Thank you again.

**Sincerely,  
Jen Stork**

### Are Telomeres the Key to Aging?

#### Telomeres: The Cell's Aging Caps and Link to Cancer Submitted by Karen Knepper

Telomeres are crucial structures at the tips of chromosomes, which are the holders of our genetic information within the cell nucleus. Here's a breakdown of their role in aging and cancer:

#### Telomeres: The Protectors

Imagine chromosomes as instruction manuals and telomeres as the plastic tips on shoelaces.

Telomeres shield the vital genetic data (DNA) within chromosomes, preventing fraying and unwanted sticking.

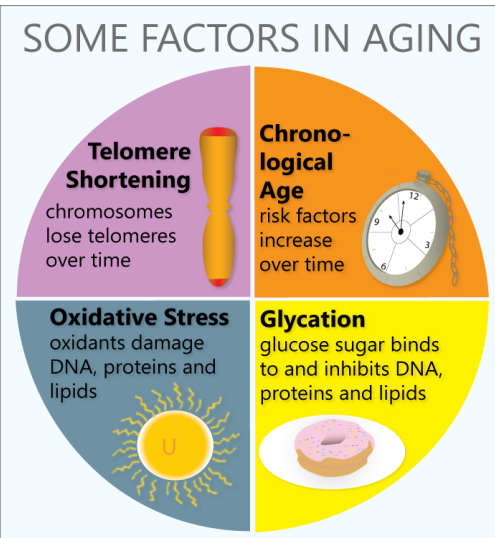
#### Telomere Shortening and Aging

With each cell division, telomeres become shorter.

When telomeres reach a critically short length, the cell can no longer divide effectively and enters a state of inactivity or dies.

This shortening is linked to aging, increased risk of death, and potentially age-related diseases like heart issues, cancer, dementia, and bone weakness.

#### The Telomere-Cancer Connection



The enzyme telomerase helps maintain telomere length in some cells, especially those that divide frequently (e.g., stem cells). Cancer cells often reactivate telomerase, allowing them to divide uncontrollably.

Researchers are exploring ways to inhibit telomerase activity as a potential cancer treatment.

#### The Remaining Questions

Scientists are actively investigating the precise reasons behind telomere shortening and its connection to various diseases. Improved methods for measuring telomere length are also being developed.

#### Taking Care of Your Telomeres

While research is ongoing, certain lifestyle choices may be beneficial:

Regular aerobic exercise

Quitting smoking

Getting sufficient sleep

Managing stress

Following a healthy diet rich in:

Vitamin C

Plant-based foods

Fresh fruits and vegetables

Nuts and legumes

Whole grains

By understanding telomeres, we gain insights into the aging process and potential approaches to promoting healthy longevity.

**Review by Gary**

## SWELL at the Galena Center of the Arts: A Night of Art, Appetizers, and Appreciation



The recent SWELL event at the Galena Center of the Arts was a delightful social gathering. We were captivated by the stunning still life paintings of Barbara Hitzman and Pam Hiatt. Barbara's mastery of pastels was evident in her works, while Pam's oil paintings showcased her own unique talent.



The evening wasn't just about art – delicious hors d'oeuvres and a variety of wines were served, adding to the convivial atmosphere. Special recognition goes to Wesley Heitzman, Barbara's supportive



husband, who beautifully framed many of her paintings. The event drew a crowd from across the tri-state area, and it was heartwarming to see attendees connect with the art and even purchase pieces from both artists. It was a truly enriching experience, and we're so glad we attended!



### From Mail Carrier to Masterpiece Maker: Pam Hiatt's Artistic Journey

My longtime friend, Pam Hiatt, has embarked on a delightful new chapter in her life. After years of dedicated service as a postal carrier, she's turned her passion for art into a flourishing career. Pam's stunning still life oil paintings are gaining recognition throughout the Tri-State area, captivating audiences with their vivid colors, intricate details, and texture.



### **SWELL Intern of The Year Award**

**It is my pleasure to present Izayah McKinnie class of (23), with the Spartan Senior Wellness Intern of The Year Award.**

**Izayah, a dedicated exercise science and wellness major from Rockford, Illinois, has been named the 2023 SWELL Intern of the Year. His unwavering commitment has improved the lives of over 200 seniors in the Dubuque area during the summer of 2023.**

**Izayah embodies compassion, tailoring his approach to each individual's needs within our diverse exercise program. He has mastered various disciplines, from Tai Chi to weightlifting, and even became the first intern to lead the entire 55-minute class, solely from memory.**

**We are incredibly grateful to Izayah Mckinnie for his dedication and exceptional service, which has had a tremendous impact on Spartan Senior Wellness.**



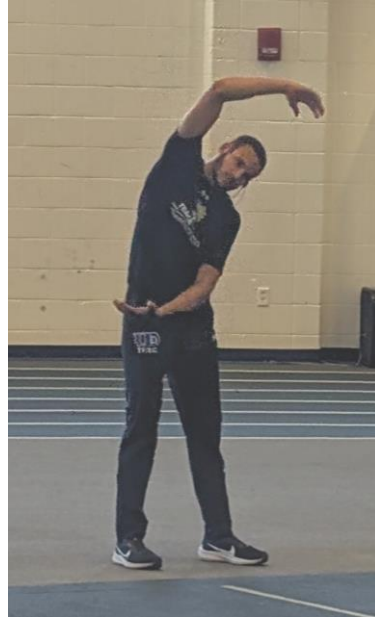


Chuck Andracchio was an outstanding tour guide of Little Maquoketa River Mounds. He guided us up a steep ascent to the Native American burial ground sharing us his expertise. Chuck has been working with the Dubuque County Conservation to help maintain this historical park. The Little Maquoketa River Mounds have survived for 2000 years. When discovered by the Dubuque County Conservation this park was registered and protected. People like Chuck Andracchio are maintaining and protecting our ancient history. Native Americans bury the remains of the deceased on high ground. The bodies are tightly wrapped in blankets and shawls. Many of the Indian's personal effects are buried with them or deposited on the grave. They are believed to be sacred, and great care is taken to respect and honor them. Through their burial, the deceased provided their descendants with spiritual growth and sustenance as their remains became one with the earth.



## 2024 Spring Intern Jayden Williams

My overall experience working with SWELL was very rewarding and I'm grateful for the opportunity to learn throughout the semester. I haven't worked with the senior population before coming to SWELL and I got the chance to learn the importance of senior health and exercises that can help seniors improve their health. I also got a chance to learn Tai Chi and improve my leadership skills while teaching classes over 100 people. SWELL has become family to me, and they welcomed me with open arms the first day I got there, and I can't thank them enough for the support they have given me over the semester. I have now improved my leadership skills as well as my knowledge when it comes to senior health, and I think that will set me up for a successful future.





35 Wednesday at SWELL

**This isn't your average fitness group. We're a determined bunch who set goals and crush them. Need inspiration? Look no further! Everyone here is pushing themselves, some even aiming for a century (looking at you, future centenarians!).**

**This week, Karen Knepper proved her A-game spirit, and Jayden Williams is back for weekly stretches to dominate his track season. The positive vibes were contagious – not a single complaint during the workout! As we powered through the class, the wind even seemed to ease up in respect for our dedication.**

**Speaking of dedication, our incredible SWELL members have earned a prestigious title: Navy SEALs of SWELL.**

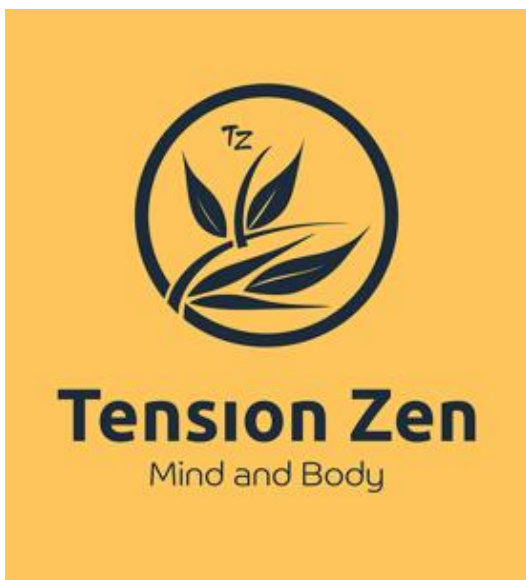
**Attention SWELL members! Our latest at-home workout is live on Patreon!**

**This session features all-new exercises, including a dynamic martial arts balance routine and a taste of the ancient Chen Dynasty Tai Chi (developed in the 15th century!).**

**Ready to level up your fitness and explore the mind-body connection?**

Click the link below to join Tension Zen Mind and Body on Patreon. You'll unlock our entire library of at-home workouts, including Tai Chi, meditation, and powerful mental imagery techniques for sports performance and injury recovery.

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



**Healthy Tuna Pasta Salad**  
**by Karen Knepper**



**Ingredients:**

- 8 oz elbow, bow-tie, or rotini macaroni (2 cups dry)
- 2-5 oz cans tuna, drained (or can use three-to-four 2.6 oz tuna packages...depending on how much tuna you prefer)
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 1 10 oz. package frozen peas & carrots.

For the dressing, mix together and set aside.

- 1/2 cup olive oil mayonnaise dressing
- 1/3-1/2 cup light ranch dressing

**Instructions:**

- Cook pasta in a large pot of salted water

according to package directions. Drain pasta and place in a large mixing bowl to cool.

- Cook peas and carrots in microwave and place in a bowl to cool.
- Add cooled peas and carrots to cooled pasta. Flake tuna into mixing bowl with a fork. Add dressing and mix ingredients together. Taste and adjust seasoning as necessary. (May need to add a little more mayo or ranch dressing.) Refrigerate until serving time. The flavors will meld and get better as it sits in the fridge.



**Upcoming performances at the Heritage Center**

**BritBeat new music set.**

**Saturday October 19, 2024, 7:30 p.m.**

**We will submit money in an envelope and hand to Gary.**

**2024 Dates**

**THE STAFF**

**Editor.....Gary Wittman**

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

**Feature Writer ..... Jayden Williams**

**Submitted Telomeres Article ..... Karen Knepper**

**Healthy Recipe..... Karen Knepper**

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