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Newsletter

MAY–AUGUST 2025



President's Message

As I write this at the end of March, Ames just had an incredibly warm day—in the 80s! Crocuses, daffodils, and blue squill are in bloom, and flowering trees are showing color on their buds.

Our spring Retirees Association activities are well underway. We just had a program on plans for Ames to become more pollinator-friendly. Our final program before summer will be on human trafficking; this will be in-person only at Green Hills on May 1. On the morning of May 21, we will have our annual Memorial Day program. Details about these events can be found elsewhere in this newsletter and on our website.

Planning is well underway for next fall and several speakers are already scheduled. As you will read elsewhere in this newsletter, the Retirees Association will join with OLLI for some of our programs. Also, look for information in this newsletter about the exciting program being planned for Rock On in November. We'll have further details in our next newsletter.

Wishing everyone a happy spring and an enjoyable summer,

Barbara Pleasants, ISU Retirees Association President



Memorial Day Program Set for May 21

This year, the ISU Retirees Association will hold its annual Memorial Day program on Wednesday, May 21. Each year the association honors retirees, recent faculty and staff, and their spouses and partners who passed away since the previous Memorial Day observation.

Once again, the program will be offered in person at the ISU Alumni Center in Ames and online via Zoom. (For Zoom access, go to the ISU Retirees events page: ISUalum.org/RetireesEvents.) The event will be recorded and placed on our Memorial Day webpage. The Alumni Center and the Zoom connection will open at 8:30 a.m. CT for a time of visiting, and the program will begin at 9 a.m. CT.

During the program, the names of those remembered will be read. Afterward, family members, friends, and colleagues can share short stories, comments, or condolences.

The ISU Retirees Association thanks Green Hills for sponsoring the Memorial Day program and providing table centerpieces. Thanks also to the ISU Horticulture Club for providing flowers that will be placed on the graves of those buried in the ISU Cemetery during the past year.

Anyone with questions about this event may contact Heather Bristow at (515) 294-5790 or hbristow@iastate.edu.

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Rock On in Retirement 2025 Gets Lively This Year: Mark Your Calendars!

This year's Rock On will be held on Thursday, November 13. We'll meet on the second floor of the ISU Alumni Center with Zoom access available, from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. CT.

The symposium program, "Easy Ways to Be Fit in Retirement," will include three 40-minute sessions of activity and information. Colleen Schwartz and Abbie Coniglio, from the ISU Walk with Ease program, will start the morning with warmup activities to prepare us to try simple movements and exercises that help to stabilize balance, prevent falls, and manage arthritis, as well as keep us moving throughout any day. Plans are still in progress, but components of chair yoga, Tai Chi, Pilates, and exercise "snacks" may be incorporated. Brief meditation and calming techniques will also be introduced to facilitate liveliness of mind.

The movements will be conducted safely while participants sit or stand with chair support. We'll encourage you to dress comfortably if you can and want to participate. Colleen and Abbie will explain why the movements are valuable and identify relevant apps and websites.

Representatives from a wide array of local organizations will be in attendance to provide information about their services and products. They enjoy talking with Iowa State retirees and often provide small treats and gifts. Some vendors contribute prizes that are awarded at the end of the symposium.

We hope you'll be able to join us. As usual, participation is free thanks to our sponsors and exhibitors.

THE PRESENTERS:



Colleen Schwartz is the Clinical Outreach Coordinator for the Iowa State University Translational Research Network (U-TuRN) in the Department of Kinesiology. She has previously served as a podiatrist and rare tumor patient advocate. Aiming to improve public health and quality of life in the community, Colleen supports evidence-based and innovative public health strategies focusing on fall prevention, chronic disease prevention, management of arthritis and diabetes, and increasing physical activity. Colleen received her Doctor of Podiatric Medicine from the California School of Podiatric Medicine and completed her residency at Stanford University and the Veterans Administration, Palo Alto. She is certified in Structural Acupuncture for Physicians from Harvard Medical School CE and in Tai Chi for Arthritis and Fall Prevention, Meditation, and Pilates for Rehabilitation.



Abbie Berryhill-Coniglio grew up in Ames and developed a lifelong passion for preventive medicine and assisting older adults here in Iowa. She earned her B.A. in Health and Human Physiology from the University of Iowa and previously worked as a Health and Wellness Coach and Patient Care Advocate before returning to Ames. Abbie is currently working on her M.S. in Health Education and Health Promotion at Walden University online. She is a Tai Chi and yoga instructor, as well as a program leader with Walk with Ease, an evidence-based program originally developed by the Arthritis Foundation. In that role, she guides in-person walking groups in Ames. With assistance from ISU Kinesiology students, Abbie provides educational information and support for all participants in the weekly walking sessions.

Submitted by Mary Lynn Damhorst, Rock On Committee Chair



SPEAKER SERIES NEWS: Don't Forget May 1 Presentation; Prairie Planting; Joining Forces with OLLI

- **Don't forget our final presentation of the spring.** Human Trafficking: Awareness, Prevention, and Action will be on Thursday, May 1, at 1 p.m. in the Green Hills Community Room (2205 Green Hills Dr. in Ames, with a social time at 12:30 p.m.). Unlike many of our presentations, this one will be in-person only. Our speaker, George Belitsos, has served as the board chair for the Iowa Network Against Human Trafficking and Slavery for six years. He is the founder of Youth and Shelter Services, Inc. (YSS) in Ames.
- **In late March, retirees heard from Paul Domoto, retired professor of horticulture, on making Ames a pollinator-friendly city.** Attendees heard about the importance of letting leaves stay where they fall and of including native plants – flowers, grasses, or sedges – in homeowners' yards. After the presentation, Paul chatted about the timing of the latter. He says that he's planted prairie seeds as late as June, but his advice for those reading this newsletter in May is to get rooted plants into the ground "right away!"
- **Beginning this fall, the ISU Retirees Association and OLLI at ISU will join forces to sponsor one presentation per semester that will interest both OLLI at ISU members and ISU retirees.** ISU retirees will still be able to enjoy six presentations per academic year; the only change is that two will be sponsored jointly with OLLI, the other four being organized solely by the Retirees Association. The first joint talk should be most interesting: an update on the CyTown development from Jamie Pollard, ISU director of athletics. Jamie spoke to the Retirees Association in 2019 and 2023, but in Fall 2025 he'll provide the latest updates on CyTown, its layout, and possible tenants.



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What's Going On Over There?

This feature highlights events and developments of possible interest to retirees who haven't been "over" to campus lately, whether you're a mile or a thousand miles away.

IOWA STATE'S RN-TO-BSN PROGRAM

Imagine an academic program in which most students are working full time. Then imagine that these students take 16 credits per term over two semesters (or 8 per term over four – either way, it's daunting). Now imagine that this program has a fantastically high completion rate of 94%. In fact, it's not imaginary, and it's been on campus since 2018: the RN-to-BSN program, designed for nurses already in the field.

The program, administered jointly by the College of Health and Human Sciences and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, has conferred about 90 BSN degrees through the Spring 2025 semester. **Dawn Bowker**, director of Nursing Education and clinical associate professor, explains that many working nurses, or RNs, have an associate degree in nursing (ADN). Among employers in the field, however, there is an increasing demand for nurses with a BSN, Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree. Research has shown that the quality and safety of nursing is higher with nurses who have a BSN, and patient outcomes are better as well. Thus, employers seek to hire BSNs in order to improve their level of service, and RNs seek to become BSNs in order to improve their job and income opportunities. This combination, Dawn says, is driving increased interest and enrollment in Iowa State's BSN program.



Karla Kerkove, clinical assistant professor in the program, outlines its three major areas of focus – leadership, research, and population health. In their first rigorous semester, students study leadership in the nursing field, nursing research and evidence-based practice, and U.S. health systems. In the second term, they broaden their view to include global health nursing. Students then apply what they learn in a course with an accompanying practicum, "Population Health Nursing."

The practicum includes an immersion experience which can be carried out in Ames or Des Moines, on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota, or in Norway. Locally, students engage in multiple days of community immersion, collaborating with a range of organizations and community resources. These efforts address the healthcare needs of community members across the lifespan. In Pine Ridge, located in one of the poorest counties in the U.S., students spend eight days working with the Oglala Lakota Nation. The first immersion experience in Norway will occur in May. All these experiences offer students new and broader perspectives on different cultures and medical practices.



The 94% completion rate is far higher than the national average of under 59%. Without doubt, the program attracts dedicated students! But in addition, students gain from being in a cohort system (in which students take courses together), and from its hybrid format. According to **Sarah Miller**, academic advisor, the online portion of the curriculum offers flexibility while "face-to-face Tuesdays" maintain clear communication and foster a sense of cohesion among the cohort members.

The RN-to-BSN program gained accreditation in 2020 from the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). Being more than usually impressed by ISU's then two-year-old program, ACEN awarded it the distinction of "Exemplary Program" and now uses Iowa State's self-study document as a guide for others seeking accreditation. That's comparable to hitting a home run in your first big-league game – and it looks like the RN-to-BSN program has launched a Hall of Fame career.

Submitted by Susan Yager, ISU Retirees Newsletter Editor



Did You Know?

For Retirees, Parks is Open

No, that isn't bad grammar! It's news you should know: Iowa State's Parks Library can be used by Iowa State retirees. Retired faculty and staff can borrow items from Parks, including using the services of Interlibrary Loan. In order to do so, retirees who are residents of Iowa must stop by Parks in person or call the library's main number, 515-294-3642. It is helpful to have a Retiree ISU card. Retirees may use many of the library's online resources while on campus, but for a handful of resources access is limited to faculty with emeritus status. To learn more, search "retirees" on the Parks Library website, www.lib.iastate.edu.



Social Security Accelerates Payments

In late February, the Social Security Administration announced that it was expediting retroactive payments and higher monthly benefits for people whose benefits were affected by the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO). These provisions, per the Social Security Administration website, "reduced or eliminated" Social Security benefits for more than 3.2 million people who receive a pension based on work that was not covered by Social Security and did not pay Social Security taxes.

Anyone who will receive an adjusted benefit or retroactive payment should receive a notice about it in the mail. However, many recipients will get a retroactive payment weeks before receiving the mailed notice. For more information, see the Social Security Benefits website, blog.ssa.gov/category/social-security-benefits.



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Continuing the Conversation

Q&A with Jessica Duncan, program director for the Iowa chapter of the Alzheimer's Association

February's Zoom presentation on Ten Warning Signs of Alzheimer's was well attended, indicating a high level of interest in this topic. At the end of the presentation, Jessica Duncan, program director for the Alzheimer's Association's Iowa chapter, mentioned further opportunities for learning about this disease. Here, we continue the conversation with a Q&A with Jessica. Contact Heather Bristow, ISU Retirees director, to view a recording of the original presentation at hbristow@iastate.edu.

Q. Can you tell us more about common misconceptions people have about Alzheimer's?

A. As we mentioned in the presentation, it's no longer the case that Alzheimer's cannot be diagnosed. Clinical and behavioral data allow diagnosis with a high degree of accuracy. Another misconception is that people with Alzheimer's all look and act a certain way, and that a diagnosis of Alzheimer's means the end of one's ability to plan and act— that's not the case! A post on the Alzheimer's Association web page discusses misconceptions and stigmas about the disease: www.alz.org/news/2022/six-things-people-living-with-alzheimer-s-disease-and-other-dementia-want-you-to-know.

Q. In the presentation, you said that the Alzheimer's Association had scheduled sessions on health and the brain, and the possibility of delaying or preventing Alzheimer's. Can you give us a little more information about that?

A. It's not news anymore that physical activity and healthy eating are good for you, and they might even reduce the risk of cognitive decline, including developing Alzheimer's or other dementias. In fact, up to 45% of dementia cases may be prevented or delayed through modifiable risk factors such as diet and exercise. We know that limiting sugar and saturated fats and eating less processed foods, like fruits and vegetables, can help the heart and may keep the brain healthy. No single diet is best for everyone, but to lower the risk of developing Alzheimer's, it may be beneficial to follow the DASH diet – that's "Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension" – or the Mediterranean diet.

Q. Anything else we can do?

A. Sure - other ways to promote brain health include quitting smoking, protecting yourself against injuries such as falls, and simply taking care of yourself, especially if you have a condition such as high blood pressure or diabetes. Also, keep learning, whether through a formal course, practicing a hobby, or some new activity or game. Finally, walking is essential – an easy preventative measure. A great way to do that is to sign up for the 2025 Walk to End Alzheimer's, which will be on Saturday, Oct. 11. Anyone interested can learn more via our organization's website, alz.org.

Q. That's great news, especially since this newsletter always has an update on the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Iowa State University (OLLI at ISU). But on a different topic – what can you tell us about financial issues relating to Alzheimer's?

A. Living with Alzheimer's and caring for someone with Alzheimer's can be expensive, especially when it's time to move to an assisted living facility. Family members who are caregivers may find they need to postpone their retirement. However, it's important to know that Medicare covers cognitive assessment and planning for dementia care. The Alzheimer's Association also offers an hour-long class for caregivers – ISU retirees can check in their region for when this may be offered. And the resources of the Alzheimer's Association are free.



Celebration Continues at the Museums



University Museums continues celebrating its 50th anniversary – it’s the same age as the ISU Retirees Association – by showcasing works old and new from August through the end of the year, and by throwing itself a party.

The Brunnier Art Museum is focusing on the old, with exhibitions on “50 Years of Collecting,” including examples from the foundational collection of Ann and Henry Brunnier, and “Preserving the Past,” with emphasis on artworks created on or for the Iowa State campus.

Meanwhile, the new is featured in the Christian Petersen Art Museum, with an exhibition of Beth Lipman’s studio work to accompany the installation of her Hive Mind, a sculpture in bronze and glass, in the Anderson Sculpture Garden in May. Another addition to the sculpture garden in 2025 is a full-scale version of a work Petersen never completed, Unknown Political Prisoner. In connection with its installation, an exhibition of Petersen’s original maquette (scale model) and related drawings is the autumn show in the museum’s Neva M. Petersen Gallery.

As a reminder, all the University Museums have free admission, but there is a suggested donation of \$8.

Be sure to save the date for the University Museums’ 50th anniversary reception to be held on the evening of Friday, September 19, in the Brunnier Art Museum. The reception will feature a book release, special announcements, and more. More details will be announced closer to the event.

Submitted by Susan Yager, ISU Retirees Newsletter Editor

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OLLI UPDATE!

AT IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY™

Fall is around the corner ... and so is your opportunity to keep learning! The Fall Course Preview will be online via Zoom on Wednesday, August 13, at 1:30 p.m. CT, and you can register online for classes beginning on Friday, August 15, at 8:30 a.m. CT. This might be the perfect time to invite a friend to sign up for a course with you. The fall session will begin Sept. 15. Among the courses to be offered in the fall are Why We Snore, Science in the News, Photography: Tips and Techniques, Unsung Heroes of the 50s and 60s Civil Rights Movement, and Before You Donate.

An OLLI at ISU membership is still only \$35 and is valid from July 1 to June 30. To renew or sign up for a new membership, go to the OLLI at ISU website, www.lli.iastate.edu, click on "OLLI Membership," and complete the online form. If you prefer a printed form, contact Heather Bristow at (515) 294-5790 or hbristow@iastate.edu.

In addition to the lifelong learning opportunities of an OLLI at ISU membership, you may also enjoy four OLLI Talks throughout the spring at no additional cost and a monthly newsletter delivered electronically or by mail.

Submitted by Diana D. Shonrock, OLLI at ISU Representative, ISU Retirees Board

A lifelong learning program was developed by the ISU Retirees Association in 1993 and later was invited to become an Osher Lifelong Learning Institute. Today, OLLI at ISU is one of 124 programs at colleges and universities from Maine to Alaska to Hawaii that are partially sponsored by the Bernard Osher Foundation.

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Be sure to send us your most current contact information so we can keep you up-to-date on the latest news and events for ISU Retirees. You may access the information form online at www.ISUalum.org/RetireesInfo or by using this QR code.