

Newsletter

JANUARY–FEBRUARY 2026



President's Message

As you'll see in this issue, we had a highly successful Rock On symposium last fall and are looking forward to a number of events coming up. The theme of this year's Rock On, Easy Ways to Keep Fit in Retirement, attracted a large audience both in person and via Zoom. Sincerest thanks for a great event go to Mary Lynn Damhorst, chair of the Rock On Committee; Heather Bristow, director of the Retirees Association; and the many board members and volunteers who helped out with food, registration, and welcoming attendees.

Our first talk of the new year will be a co-presentation with OLLI (Osher Lifelong Learning Institute), presented via Zoom. Rodger Main, director of ISU's Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (VDL), will speak on "From Avian Influenza to Innovation: Updates from the ISU VDL." The link for this session will be provided on the events page of the OLLI website at <https://olli.iastate.edu/>. In February we'll hear from Max Rothschild, Distinguished Professor Emeritus in animal science, on his "bucket list" trip to the Brazilian Amazon. Speaking of trips, we also have a "Continuing the Conversation" Q&A with John Patience, who spoke last fall on traveling safely and securely. And we could extend the "travel" motif to include time travel, with a feature on the recently expanded Ames History Museum and a look back to campus in 1926.

Happy reading, and Happy New Year!

Barbara Pleasants, ISU Retirees Association President

Shaping the Future Together: Retirees Association Updates

Due to recent organizational changes initiated by the President's Office, the ISU Retirees Association Board of Directors and staff would like to share a few important updates.

Website Transition You may have noticed a new website link included in the message from ISU Retirees Association President Barbara Pleasants. As part of our transition to a university department, the retiree webpages have been incorporated into the new OLLI at Iowa State website. While the layout has changed, all familiar components remain available. Should you encounter any difficulties navigating the updated webpages, please reach out to Heather Bristow, Director of the ISU Retirees Association, who will be glad to assist you.

Engagement Survey In addition, we invite you to share your perspectives with us. The ISU Retirees Association Board of Directors and staff are eager to hear from you through a brief survey: [ISU Retirees Association Engagement Survey – Fill out form](#). Your feedback is invaluable in guiding our next steps as we continue to grow and strengthen our community. We kindly ask that you complete the survey by **February 1**.

Together, we look forward to shaping the future of the ISU Retirees Association in ways that reflect the interests and needs of our members.



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– Paul & Ardeth Rietz

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Delirium Musicum

JANUARY 24 AT 7:00 PM
STEPHENS AUDITORIUM



Hellooooo, Ames!

Mrs. Doubtfire
The New Musical Comedy

FEBRUARY 4 AT 7:30 PM
STEPHENS AUDITORIUM



“AMAZING”
BLAINE PEARCE, “BIG RADIO 2”

THE SIMON & GARFUNKEL STORY

“AUTHENTIC & EXCITING”
THE STAGE

FEBRUARY 24 AT 7:30 PM
STEPHENS AUDITORIUM



Great American
CROONERS

MARCH 1 AT 7:00 PM
STEPHENS AUDITORIUM

TO LEARN MORE AND GET TICKETS, VISIT WWW.CENTER.IASTATE.EDU

Rock On in Retirement 2025: A Moving Event!

Nearly 100 retirees and friends crowded the ballroom of the ISU Alumni Center, and another 25 joined online, for the 2025 Rock On in Retirement Symposium, Easy Ways to Be Fit in Retirement, on Oct. 30. Five presenters shared key recommendations from the U.S. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion's guidelines for active Americans and from the Arthritis Foundation's Walk With Ease program. Preventing falls was a crucial focus, and the presentations included information about safer footwear.

The primary way to prevent falls and maintain healthy, independent living is physical activity. Among the points of emphasis in the presentations were personalized, practical strategies for fitting strength and balance-enhancing activities into everyday life. The presenters demonstrated easy, adaptable body movements and ended with engagement in a brief and helpful mind-and-body-balancing meditation. Much of the audience tried out the activities, making it a very lively morning. Before the symposium and during breaks, attendees could chat with representatives of 14 local sponsors and vendors who hosted festive tables featuring gifts, door prizes, and plenty of information.

The main presenters, Colleen Schwartz and Abbie Coniglio from Walk With Ease, coordinated the morning of presentations. They brought along three additional speakers – Greg Welk, Barbara E. Forker Professor in the Department of Kinesiology; Matt Petersen, director of Rehab and Wellness at the Mary Greeley Medical Center; and Sandy Perry, a yoga instructor, teacher, and wellness professional who teaches in the Ames Parks and Recreation program. They helped lead the audience in trying out the exercise movements.

The Rock On PowerPoints are available through the ISU Retirees website at <https://olli.iastate.edu/isu-retirees-association/>. Thanks to all who submitted evaluations of the event. These were quite positive, with a difficulty in hearing all the presenters being the primary area of concern.

The date for the 2026 Rock On will be announced soon. A huge thank you is owed to Retirees Association Director Heather Bristow, and to all the association's board members and volunteers who helped make the event go smoothly.

Submitted by Mary Lynn Damhorst, Rock On Committee Chair

Photo credits: Heather Bristow & Scott Elston



Ten Things You May Not Know About David Cook, ISU's New President



Photo credit:
ISU News
Service

1. Born at Mary Greeley Hospital and educated at Ames High, he is the first Ames native to become president of ISU. His wife, Katie is also from Ames; she has a Ph.D. in special education with an emphasis in behavior disorders and autism spectrum disorders.
2. He'll start his new job on March 1. Until then, David Spalding, former dean of the Ivy College of Business, will serve as interim president.
3. He won't live at the Knoll, at least not a for a while. The 125-year-old building needs extensive renovations, though it will continue to be used as an event space for now.
4. As an ISU undergraduate from 1988-1992, he had a double major in Political Science and Speech Communication. He took at least one course from Professor Ray Dearin that touched on both interests: Campaign Rhetoric, in 1991.
5. According to the 1990 Bomb, while at ISU he was a member of the Hockey Club. This club "competed against top Division I colleges in the United States as well as teams abroad."
6. He's spent far more time as a Jayhawk than a Cyclone; he earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from Kansas and worked there as both professor and administrator.
7. He lived and did research in Shanghai for a time, which led to his dissertation, "Communication strategies and Chinese organizational commitment in American firms in China" (1999).
8. He's the second ISU president to have an ISU bachelor's degree. The first was James H. Hilton, who received a B.S. in animal husbandry in 1923.
9. He's the first ISU grad to succeed another ISU grad in the presidency (President Wintersteen has her Ph.D. from ISU).
10. For both Cooks, taking on the presidency of Iowa State means "coming home."

Submitted by Susan Yager, ISU Retirees Newsletter Editor

Winter Presentations: Veterinary Diagnostic Lab, Travel in the Amazon

Two Zoom-only presentations are scheduled for this month and next. The first, jointly presented with OLLI, will begin at 3 p.m. CT, with no social time; the second also begins at 3 p.m. CT, but with time to socialize at 3 before the presentation from 3:30-4:30. The link to attend each program is on the events page of the ISU Retirees website at <https://olli.iastate.edu/isu-retirees-association/>.



From Avian Influenza to Innovation: Updates from the ISU VDL

Speaker: Rodger Main
Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026, 3-4:30 p.m. CT
Online with Zoom (joint with OLLI at Iowa State)

The Iowa State University Veterinary Diagnostic Lab (ISU VDL) plays an active role on the frontlines of U.S. animal agriculture, processing approximately 130,000 diagnostic case submissions and conducting more than 1.7 million diagnostic assays annually. This talk will provide insight into the current goings on at the ISU VDL, the VDL's role in combatting diseases such as High-Path Avian Influenza, and an update on the VDL Building currently under construction. We hope you can join us for the joint program with OLLI at Iowa State and the ISU Retirees Association.

Rodger Main is a veterinary professor and director of the ISU VDL. A team of 30 faculty and 155 technical staff at the ISU VDL are broadly recognized for their work in one of the preeminent food animal-centered veterinary diagnostic labs in North America.



A Bucket List Adventure: Touring the Brazilian Amazon

Speaker: Max Rothschild
Thursday, Feb. 19, 2026, 3-4:30 p.m. CT (social time starting at 3, program begins at 3:30)
Online with Zoom

Enjoy hearing about travel adventure in the Amazon, travelling by riverboat, and exploring the edges of the Rio Negro and Amazon Rivers. This talk will highlight the birds, animals, plants, and inhabitants along the rivers in one of the most ecologically diverse regions of the world. Tips on planning your next adventure will also be offered.

Max Rothschild, a Distinguished Professor Emeritus in the Department of Animal Science, has traveled to 70 countries around the world. Rothschild is an active outdoors person and with his wife enjoys travel and wildlife adventures. He has spoken to a number of groups on organizing special travel vacations to see exotic places and wild animals in their natural habitats.

With degrees in animal science and animal breeding from the University of California-Davis, Wisconsin, and Cornell, Max Rothschild was an animal science faculty member at Iowa State for most of his professional career. Rothschild has done pioneering work on the application of quantitative and molecular genetics that focuses on genetic improvement of livestock.



Continuing the Conversation

Q & A with John Patience, professor emeritus of animal science

John Patience spoke to the Retirees Association in October about traveling safely in Europe (and how his pocket was picked). Here, we continue the conversation featuring insights and suggestions for travelers.

Where will your next trip take you?

After visiting India for our son's wedding, we may next drive through parts of Canada and to the west coast - San Francisco and the Napa Valley.

What do you like best about traveling?

We enjoy learning about local history and architecture, enjoying the visual arts, and eating local food. On a recent trip to Louisiana and Mississippi we enjoyed visiting the Ground Zero nightclub in Clarksdale, MS, often called the home of the blues, and the B.B. King Museum in Indianola, MS, plus the wonderful food.

Have you ever taken a cruise or a bus tour?

We took a Viking river tour from Amsterdam to Budapest, the most relaxing vacation we have ever had. More recently, we took the Odysseys bus tour from Edinburgh to London. Cruising is more relaxing because you don't pack and unpack, as on a bus tour, but both have advantages.

You gave tips at your talk about traveling while older. What should senior travelers be aware of?

Our motto now is to choose the least stressful option. For example, in North America I book my own hotels but in Europe would use a travel agent or ask a local friend for a recommendation. Do your homework to avoid problems at the border and to know what the dangers are. Don't be afraid to use public transportation; we aren't as used to it in this country, but it is so handy in Europe.

What steps would you recommend for safe traveling?

- Using air tags on items and TSA-approved luggage locks is helpful, but not infallible.
- Carry copies of credit card data, passport, driver's license, etc.
- A small LED flashlight is easy to carry and can be helpful.
- Separate your valuables (with others if travelling as a group, or in different places on your body) and use money belts under your clothing.
- Don't set a purse or knapsack beside you, on the back of a chair, or on the floor (put an arm or leg through the strap to prevent grab-and-run thieves).
- Don't forget electrical adapters suitable for your destination.
- Post photos of your travels on social media only after you return.

What is something you wish you'd known before you began traveling for leisure?

That's easy: how to pack what I need and no more. Suitcases get awfully heavy after a week or two.

Which is better – heading out, or coming home?

Heading out is exciting and full of anticipation. Coming home is comforting because it is familiar. Every place I have visited has offered insights about my life at home. In other words, you can always learn from travelling and I wouldn't like coming home from a trip without gaining ideas on how to make my life better.

Explore the Ames History Museum

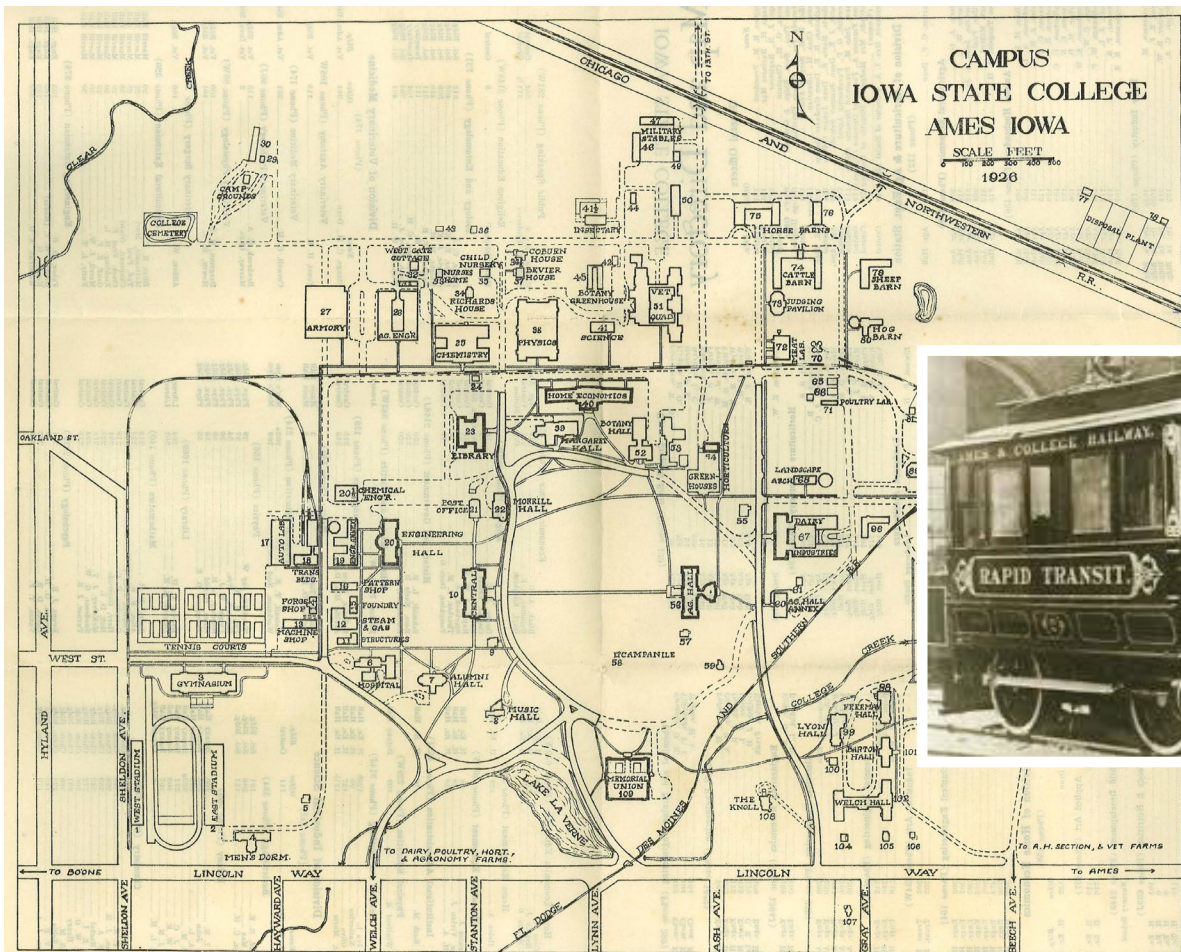
What were Ames and Iowa State like 100 years ago? It's fun to find out by exploring the recently renovated and expanded Ames History Museum (AHM), 416 Douglas Ave., or its rich online resources.

The year 1926 saw the opening of the Pantorium dry cleaning business in downtown Ames. That building, coincidentally, is now the entrance to the museum. Carr's Pool, "a state of the art swimming pool," was built in 1926 by Alpha and Emmet Carr "when voters turned down a referendum to construct one" (AHM). And Main Street was paved that year, with concrete replacing tar-coated wooden bricks that were prone to buckling due to moisture. "Gown" was well ahead of "town" in this regard, as parts of "Boone Street" (now Sheldon Ave. and Lincoln Way) were paved a full five years earlier.

The museum is rich in online resources, especially [maps](#), accessible through the Internet Archive. The Iowa State campus map of 1926 features many landmarks familiar to us, such as the Campanile, Morrill Hall, the armory, and the library. However, it also shows not only horse barns but also cattle, sheep, and hog barns, as well as military stables, a forge shop, foundry, and poultry lab – and a single parking area! But if parts of the then-college would seem strange to us, we'd recognize the names of many campus leaders: Knapp, Curtiss, Marston, Richardson, Stange, Beyer, and Cessna.

For retirees living in or visiting Ames, the Ames History Museum is well worth a visit (open Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., admission \$8). A viewing window offers a peek into the "collections vault," a 2,600 square-foot "attic" of once-scattered artifacts now in one highly organized location. The museum's permanent exhibit, "Ames From Prairie to Present," features a replica shell of the Dinky, a means of connecting town and campus from 1892-1920; a temporary exhibit, "We the People of Ames: A USA 250 Exhibit," runs through Nov. 14.

Submitted by Susan Yager, ISU Retirees Newsletter Editor





Congratulations, New Retirees!

James Ball
Steven Constance
Marc Dicklin
Alan Eggenberger
Trond Forre

Timothy Gleason
Jane Hahn
Jane Houk
Curtis Johnson
Keith Kutz

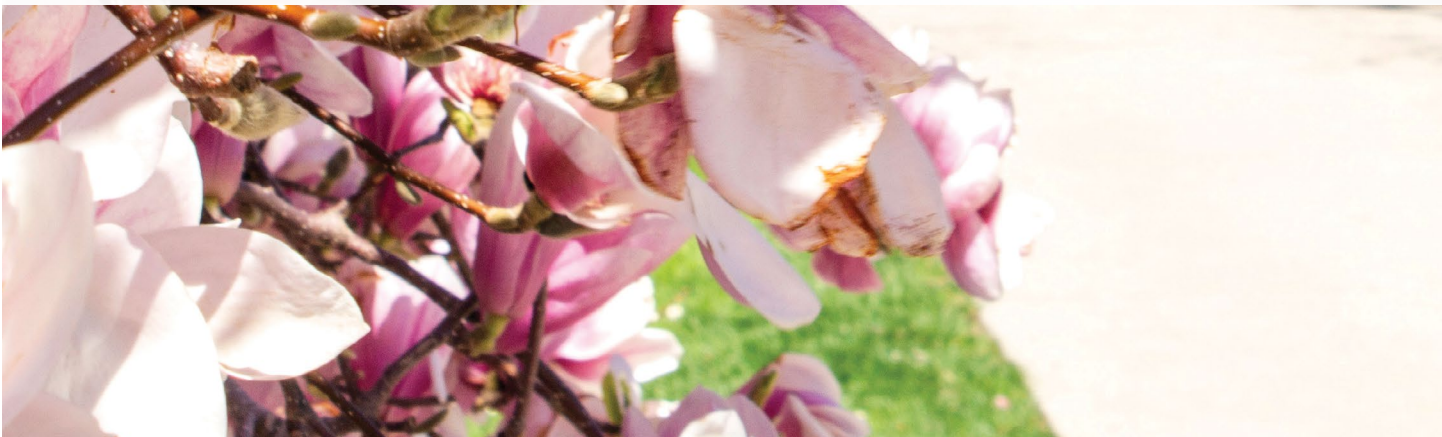
Kelly Netcott
Susan Roos-Rickels
Jerry Schumacher
Christina Tait
Collette Winfrey

William Wing
Alice Wisner
Leesha Zimmerman

Special Benefits for OLLI Members

Don't forget that an annual OLLI Membership (\$35 for the fiscal year) includes two complimentary tickets to the Central Iowa Symphony (a value of \$40), two complimentary tickets to an Ames Chamber Artists concert (a value of \$30), buy-one-get-one tickets to select shows at Stephens Auditorium, as well as 10% off one purchase over \$25 at the Octagon Center for the Arts in Ames.

OLLI, 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 Iowa State is one of 124 programs at colleges and universities from Maine to Alaska to Hawaii that are partially sponsored by the Bernard Osher Foundation.





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.

Celebrating Learning Communities

More than 140 professionals from more than 50 colleges and universities met in November at the Gateway Hotel and Conference Center for the 2025 National Learning Communities Conference. Iowa State hosted the conference while celebrating the 30th anniversary of its Learning Communities program, one of Iowa State's most powerful student success initiatives.

Beginning in 1995 serving 400 students, Learning Communities has grown so much that, according to director **Jen Leptien**, 95 percent of first-year students enroll in at least one learning community. Learning communities can be based on residence, on a major (or the search for one), or on taking courses together. A partnership between Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, the program helps undergraduates, including transfer students, feel quickly at home in a large university and learn about resources available to them.

Learning Communities benefits both undergraduates and the university by helping to increase student satisfaction and promote retention (the rate at which students return for another academic year). Nearly 100 staff and faculty serve as learning community coordinators, and they work with peer mentors who also help students feel at home on campus and in their studies.

Submitted by Susan Yager, ISU Retirees Newsletter Editor



In December, OLLI at Iowa State hosted the online Winter 2026 Course Preview event, in which instructors recorded comments about their upcoming courses. You may watch the recording on the [Course Information page](#) of the OLLI at Iowa State website. Winter classes will begin on Monday, Jan. 12. Registration is open and will remain open until the end of the term in February. Below is just a sampling of the courses available. Please keep in mind that all winter courses are online only.

Winter 2026 Courses

- Advancing Food Safety Awareness for People Over 50
- Authentic Italian Home Cooking: Valentine's Day Dinner
- Benjamin Franklin--The Wise and Witty Founding Father
- Cover Crops: Green Fields, Clear Water
- Demystifying AI
- Discussion About Ultra-Processed Foods
- Managing Your Digital Stuff
- Mediterranean Diet (Science and Recipes)
- Nineteenth Century Europe, 1815-1914
- Only Hope: My Mother and the Holocaust Brought to Light
- Parkinson's Disease and Dementia: Normal Aging vs. Diagnoses
- Physical Activity and Aging Study
- The Growth of Presidential Powers in Foreign Policy-Making
- Understanding Global Climate Change
- Understanding Iowa's Emerging Water Crisis

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

2025-26 Board of Directors

The ISU Retirees Association (ISURA) board of directors is an official university committee. Representatives from each college, the University Library, Extension, merit staff, professional and scientific staff, and the University Benefits Committee are appointed to serve on this committee. Other committee members include a Faculty Senate representative and the ISURA newsletter editor.

Barbara Pleasants (LAS): President
Scott Elston (Business): Past President
Jan Breitman (P&S): Secretary
Susan Yager: Newsletter Editor

Mary Lynn Damhorst (Human Sciences)
Norman Hill (University Benefits liaison)
Jane Jacobson (LAS)
Diana Shonrock (OLLI at ISU liaison)
Pat Strah (P&S)
Florine Swanson (Extension)
Max Porter (Faculty Senate liaison)

Ex Officio
Heather Bristow, ISU Retirees Director

Office Hours and Contact Information

Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. • <https://olli.iastate.edu/isu-retirees-association/>

Heather Bristow, *Director*
hbristow@iastate.edu
(515) 294-5790

Contact Information Updates



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 <https://olli.iastate.edu/isu-retirees-association/> or by using this QR code.