Weekly Newsletter - June 2020 Issue 3

Monterey County and ASI Updates

No major COVID-19 news this week, but some minor news. The primary issue, as Monterey County and the world slowly reopen (still with no return to "normal"), is "what am I comfortable with?" Mimi and I have gone out a couple of times to dine in. We felt quite safe.

Returning to the gym, however, may be another story. That is probably a long time coming. And entertainment is still a good way off—no decisions even to make there yet. I got a haircut, finally, the other day, but I kept my mask on and held it to my face while he cut around my ears. The word is, stay safe and feel comfortable with what you are doing.

Monterey County still has a relatively low COVID-19 caseload, but numbers are steadily increasing. The majority of infected individuals is from the 93905 zip code, otherwise known as East Salinas or The Alisal, which has been home for farmworkers ever since the dustbowl migrations of the Great Depression.

Farmworkers work closely together and live, often, even more closely together. They are essential workers—they keep us fed. If there is anything you might do for our farmworkers, please do it. They deserve our unqualified support and our thanks.

The tourist industry—a mainstay of the Monterey County economy—is reopening. That probably will have little impact on active seniors—that's us—as we are unlikely to stay in Monterey hotels, but we may want to return to Peninsula restaurants. Now we can (I owe Mimi a birthday dinner sometime).

If nothing else, opening hotels and restaurants returns people to work—possibly including our children and grandchildren.

Meanwhile, the ASI Board continues careful planning for a reopening. We have no definitive answers to issues but we moving toward solutions.

Beware of COVID-19/Medicare Scams

Scammers may use the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to steal your identity and commit Medicare fraud. In some cases, they might tell you they'll send a Coronavirus test, masks, or other items in exchange for your Medicare Number or personal information. Don't fall for it; it's a scam.

It's important to **always guard your Medicare Number and check your Medicare Summary Notice (MSN) for errors**. Only give your Medicare Number to participating Medicare pharmacists, primary and specialty care doctors, or people you trust to work with Medicare on your behalf. Remember, Medicare will never call you to verify your Medicare Number.

Visit **Medicare.gov/fraud** for more information on protecting yourself from fraud and reporting suspected fraud, and **watch the short video** below. Beware of COVID-19/Medicare Scams.

"Our absurd life"
by Ian Stigliani
©6-9-20

MOM, HOW DO YOU START A FALSE RUMOR?

(**Updates**, continued)

What follows is an excerpt from the minutes of the June 9 Board meeting, which we include to give ASI members some sense of what we are doing.

"Active Seniors Inc. Covid-19 Draft Plan: Dwight's plan addressed seven topics regarding ASI's reopening. Each was reviewed and discussed by those present and by those on Zoom. Safety for both ASI volunteers and ASI members was the primary concern with safety versus practicality getting lots of discussion. Input from the meeting and opening guidelines from the health department will be used to draft a tighter, more specific Covid-19 Plan. Dwight asked for a volunteer to make signs reminding people to use good safety practices when they return to the center. Karen volunteered. The responsibilities of the office volunteers during the reopening were not defined during this meeting. Issues regarding screening and who will do what still need to be worked out. Susan removed herself as office volunteer coordinator. She will not be working in the office during the reopening. There will be further meetings regarding the Active Seniors Inc. Covid-19 Plan. When the details are worked out, reopening protocol will be shared with the general membership to make everyone aware of the new standards. A preopening meeting will also be scheduled for office volunteers. There was no firm date set for reopening."

> What do you call a male actor working in the adult film industry? Just another ordinary working stiff.

The ASI Board meets today and will meet weekly to continue work on a reopening plan to guarantee as much as possible the safety for ASI members. **Susan Riddoch** has presented a carefully crafted and detailed plan for reopening (for which we thank her), which the Board considers today.

It is evident, however, that a number of very wonderful and dedicated volunteers, perhaps some with compromised immune systems, may not be returning to the facility for a while after we open. In addition ASI will need more volunteers to help with screening and cleaning.

In particular we need a dedicated Office Volunteer Coordinator, someone well organized and personable, to train, supervise and schedule the volunteers who staff the office and make ASI work.

We are putting out a plea for ASI Members who will feel comfortable working at the facility to step forward and volunteer to help workshop leaders re-start some of the activities that have been important and useful to Members. It's our volunteers who make ASI such a valuable resource for all of us active seniors. Please contact Dwight or George (below).

The Board welcomes suggestions for achieving a safe reopening. Please direct your comments to the ASI Board at asi@activeseniors.org, to President **Dwight Freedman** at dfreedma@sbcglobal.net or to newsletter Editor **George Niesen** at gniesen@redshift.com. Thank you.

> A little girl was diligently pounding away on her grandfather's word processor. She told him she was writing a story. "What's it about?" he asked. "I don't know," she replied. "I can't read."

ACL Webinar Announced

Administration for Community Living (ACL, a national agency, Contact the Administration for Community Living*) is providing a webinar about "Addressing Social Isolation Through Technology Solutions." This is an important topic considering the many older adults and people with disabilities who are sheltering in place and disconnected from people outside their homes. In addition, this information may be helpful for the potential use of CARES Act ADRC emergency funding.

As described below, the webinar will highlight how technology can be leveraged to increase social engagement, identify resources for acquiring and distributing technology, and provide mechanisms for training older adults and people with disabilities to use technology solutions to mitigate social isolation. Registration and additional information can be found below (on the next page).

Webinar 6/26: Addressing Social Isolation Through Technology Solutions
Webinar on Friday, June 26 at 1:00 - 2:00 pm ET.

[Register for the webinar](#).
    ACL presents a webinar highlighting how technology can be leveraged to increase social engagement, including specific hardware and software options. Presenters will also identify resources for acquiring and distributing technology, as well as mechanisms for training older adults and adults with disabilities to use technology solutions designed to mitigate social isolation.
    Presenters: Majd Alwan, LeadingAge; Cathy Bodine, University of Colorado, Denver; Scott Code, LeadingAge; Ryan Elza, AARP Foundation; Sandy Markwood, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a); Carolyn Phillips, GA Tech Pass It On Center
[Register for the webinar](#).
    After registering for this event, you will receive a confirmation email with a calendar invite. We encourage adding this event to your calendar through this invite in order facilitate easy access to this event.
    Contact Kristie Kulinski at kristie.kulinski@acl.hhs.gov with registration questions.
    (* Ed. Note: The ACL website contains a wealth of information about services and workshops for the aging and disabled population, with numerous links to other governmental sources of information. Well worth checking out.)

An Ian Stigliani Retrospective