

OFFICE HOURS

9:00 am to 4:00 pm

Monday through Friday

asi@activeseniorsinc.org

831-424-5066



ACTIVE SENIORS INC.

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Monthly Newsletter - May 2023

DAILY ACTIVITIES

MONDAY: Zumba, 9-10:15 AM* + Instr. Donation
Ukulele, Noon-2 PM**

1st, jazz songs for intermediate players

2nd, 4th, Ukulele singalong, all levels

3rd, for beginners/players reviewing basics

Mahjong 12:30 to 3:30 PM**

TUESDAY: Legal Services for Seniors, 9-11:30 AM

Call for required appointment

Line Dancing 10 to 11:30 AM**

Bridge# 12:00 noon to 3:30 PM**

Newcomers welcome

Beginning Ballroom Lesson 6-7 PM

Ballroom Dancing 7 to 9:00 PM

Fee \$9.00 (\$10.00 non-members)

WEDNESDAY: Yoga/Balance 8:45 to 10:00AM*

Cribbage, 10:00 AM-12:00 noon*

Book Club 10:30 AM to 11:30*

Beginning Guitar, 2nd, 4th, 11:45-1:00

Tai Chi 1:30 to 3:00 PM**

Tapping, 3:15-4:15* + Instr. Donation

Line Dancing 6:30-8:30 PM** + \$1 for instructor

THURSDAY: Ping Pong, 3-4 PM*

Nar Anon family support group, 6:30-7:30 PM

Quilting, 1st & 3rd, 9:30-11:30 AM**

Knitting & Crocheting, 1st, 3rd, 4th, 1-3 PM.

Tech Assistance, 3rd, 1-3 PM**

2nd THURSDAY: MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON

May 11, Noon, \$12. Program: Kellie Morgantini,
Legal Services for Srs.

FRIDAY: Yoga/Balance/Pilates 8:45-10:00 AM*

Zumba 10:15-11:15 AM* + Instr. donation

Bridge# 12:00 noon to 3:30 PM **

Western Dance, 7-9:30 PM, 1st and 3rd Fri. \$8/\$10

SATURDAY-1st, 3rd: Bridge# 11:30 AM-3:30 PM**

1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th; Zumba, 9-10 AM *Limit 40.*

SATURDAY-2nd: Yoga/balance/pilates, 8:45-10 AM

(mat, block required); *max 30 participants**

Zumba, 10:15-11:15; *max 40 participants**

Tai Chi, 11:30AM-1:00PM; *max 40 participants***

* \$1 Fee for members, \$2 for non-members;

** \$2 for members, \$4 for non-members

Come in or call office, 831-424-5066, a week prior to reserve Bridge seat.

Seven Benefits Gardening and Yardwork Have on Your Mental Health

By Jayce Lambert. Thanks to Jim Tripp

Spring and summer should be a time we look forward to. A break from school, time to travel, or hang out with friends. Instead, we find ourselves living our lives online and indoors and general uncertainty and stress still affect our mental health. One fix is outside your door with seven benefits gardening and yardwork have on your mental health.

1. You Can Depend on It. It sounds simple, but gardening has an emotional return on investment undervalued before the pandemic, something you could depend on to make you feel good. Studies show uncertainty affects mental health. Schedule an hour a day for gardening and pruning. Digging, pulling weeds, pushing seeds into the earth is a holistic and healthy way to achieve balance in an unpredictable world. A neat lawn or yard of blooming flowers returns normalcy and certainty to your life.

2. Green is Good. Just being outside in a green space is good for your mental health and can result in reduced stress. This effect is so well documented that psychiatric hospitals are beginning to incorporate mindful green spaces and gardens in their designs. There's also a mental health benefit to digging in the dirt. Scientists have found that stirring up microbes lifts spirits by stimulating the production of serotonin. Maybe that's why urban planners are looking at ways to make inner cities greener.

3. Better Nutrition. It's no secret healthy eating boosts your mental health. A diet rich in fiber also boosts your immune system. Plant an array of colorful vegetables such as sweet potatoes, eggplant, green beans, and swiss chard for a healthier menu.

4. Gardening as Exercise. Researchers say gardening counts as exercise. Just a few minutes of gardening can help lower your levels of the stress

(continued on P. 2)

Gardening Benefits (continued from P. 1)

hormone cortisol. Getting the proper amount of exercise also boosts your immune system. It's not just running and biking that gets endorphins going. Push lawn mowing burns between 250 and 350 calories an hour.

5. A Sense of Connection. COVID disconnected us from the familiar. Caring for a living garden, or better yet a community garden, can renew a sense of purpose and keep you surrounded by like-minded people.

6. Being Mindful. Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines mindfulness as "the practice of maintaining a non-judgmental state of heightened or complete awareness of one's thoughts, emotions, or experiences on a moment-to-moment basis." And that's the trick in the yard. Activities such as pruning roses or cutting back bushes, encourage you to practice being in the moment. It's a practice with proven mental health benefits.

7. Pride of Accomplishment. Before the pandemic, Americans spent on average between seven and 17 minutes a day on yardwork. Now that many of us are sticking closer to home, you might be able to spend more time working on an Instagram-worthy flower garden.

Whether you're home alone or still going into the office, you can reap the benefits of gardening or yardwork. Don't have a big plot of land? Create a balcony garden or kitchen herb garden to improve your mental health. It's an activity that's proven to come with big benefits to your stress level and mood—and is time well spent.

Jayce Lambert is a graduate student in Texas who loves traveling, camping, hiking, and cycling. She's managed to find some places off the beaten path these past few years to continue to enjoy nature. Her love of the outdoors is apparent in her dorm room, which she adorns with hanging plants and ferns.

From the Salinas Public Libraries

No Backyard? No Problem!

You don't need yard space to have a garden! Grow bags can turn your apartment balcony, porch, or driveway into a portable edible garden. With the coaching of UC Master Gardeners, you can learn how to choose, plant, and nurture vegetables to maximize your harvest and enjoy the fruits of your labor.

At the workshop, each household will get two grow bags, soil to fill them, a watering can, your choice of a tomato plant, and other vegetable plants, grown by the UC Master Gardeners. Spaces are limited for this bilingual workshop and registration is required. In-Person Program. Saturday, May 6, 2023. From 12 PM - 2 PM. At Cesar Chavez Library. [Register Online](#). For more information, contact Cathy at CathleenA@ci.salinas.ca.us.

Welcome to the Blue Zones Project

The Blue Zones Project evolved from *National Geographic* journalist Dan Buettner's research in communities around the world with high percentages of centenarian residents. (Note: They are all in Mediterranean or sub-tropical zones and were labeled as a result of a mapmaker's blue lines identifying them.)

Buettner, as he interviewed many people more than 100 years old, found commonalities among lifestyles throughout these regions, which he synthesized into nine "Lessons" or principles, which he terms the Power 9. They are: Move Naturally; 80% rule; Plant Slant; Loved Ones First; Grapes of Life; Purpose Now; Downshift; Belong; Right Tribe.

Over time, as we have room in the Newsletter, we will provide more detailed information on how to follow each of these principles as you work to adopt a healthy lifestyle. The Blue Zones Project in fact has now become a global movement educating and inspiring people to live longer, more active lives.

As a part of that process early on, Salinas (now all Monterey County) was chosen as a Blue Zone community for several reasons. The County is in a Mediterranean zone. It has wonderful produce available year-round. Good seafood and good wine are readily available.

Unfortunately the County also has a high incidence of both obesity and diabetes among its population, which means the community can benefit greatly from the educational programming provided by the Blue Zones Project.

If you are interested in starting practices leading to a healthier life, please stop by the Blue Zones Project office at 252 Main St., for all kinds of good information. You can also go to the website, <https://montereycounty.bluezonesproject.com>, for a wealth of information, including a calendar of a huge number of events and activities each and every month. Here's to good (and healthy) living!

Readers Theater Production May 27 at ASI

By Susan Keenan

THE LISTENING PLACE READERS THEATER proudly announces the opening of its 2023 season with *Private Lives*, a comedy of manners by British playwright and actor Noel Coward. First produced in London in 1930, the plot revolves around acerbic divorcees Amanda and Elyot, who both happen to be honeymooning in the same hotel with their new spouses. A chance meeting on the adjoining verandas of their adjacent rooms leads to delicious mayhem. This uniquely humorous play is considered by many critics and theater-goers alike to be one of the most sophisticated and entertaining plays ever written.

Directed by Linda Hancock and featuring Pat Horsley, Susan Keenan, Richard Boynton and Carl Twisselman. The performance at ASI is Saturday May 27 at 1:30. Free, but donations welcomed.

Your New Ukulele—and Guitar!—Classes Schedule

First Monday of the month from noon to 2:00 pm--a new series of lessons on jazz songs for intermediate-level ukulele players.

Second and fourth Mondays from noon to 2:00 pm—Ukulele Singalong. Do you enjoy singing the old familiar songs? Come join our Ukulele players and sing all your old favorite campfire and folk songs. Members of all levels, beginning to advanced, are welcome.

Third Monday from noon to 2:00 pm-- a fresh series for ukulele beginners and players who want to review the basics. We will have ukuleles to lend during the lesson if you don't have your own yet, so you can try before you buy. The slideshow [Ukulele Newbie to Ukulele Clubbie -- Introduction to the Ukulele \(2023\)](#) will give you an idea of what the beginner course will cover over many months on the third Mondays. Send an email to stanleysokolow@gmail.com to request a loaner ukulele or to get on the club's own email list.

Second and fourth Wednesdays from 11:45 to 1:00 PM--Interested in learning to play the guitar? We are starting a Beginning Guitar class. If you have never played a guitar, come join the fun—players of all levels are welcome. Member Barry Tomasini leads the activity.

More New Programs? Leaders Needed

ASI is looking for activity leaders willing to create and conduct workshops for several activities Members have recently suggested and requested: **A Garden Club; A Walking Group; An Easy Exercise Group.**

If you could lead one of these activities, please contact Activities and Events Committee Chair Loretta Salinas.

Spotlight on Line Dancing



No, line dancing is no longer “country western line dancing.” Although it became popular with the 1980 movie *Urban Cowboy*, and the song “Achy Breaky Heart”, line dancers have traded in their cowboy boots and western shirts for tennis shoes and comfortable clothing. While there are some country songs, members dance to rock n roll, pop, Latin, Irish, and swing, to name a few.

Many dancers in the group have been line dancing for more than 20 years, but newbies are encouraged to join in. There are two line dancing classes per week, as well as an every other Friday dance without lessons. Sylvia Teixeira, the Tuesday morning instructor, who has run it since 2007, teaches the dances during the first hour of the class before putting on the music.

Instructor Sharon Piazza, who leads the Wednesday evening group, says this class is best for beginners, while the Tuesday morning class is more advanced. The best advice from members of the group is, “Don’t give up! Just keep coming, and eventually you’ll learn the dances.”

May Birthdays

Sandra Bergam	Nancy Palmer
Armando Berriz	Veronica Polovneff
Brian Birkeland	Jo Ann Reynolds
Ardell Breeding	Janet Richards
Ursula Bronson	Violet Rodriquez
Helen Garcia	Carol Rogers
Laurie Gerletti	Julie Ryan
Susan Gonzales	Janet Silva
Kris Hadley	Claire Smith
Jayne Harris	Tim Swick
Maria Holliday	Sylvia Teixeira
Candice Jansen	Laura Thayer
Yong Kim	Meredith Towle
Jacqueline Kramer	Cary Tremewan
Guadalupe Lopez	Majorie Trigg
Wayne McDaniel	Jim Tripp
Fran McGrew	Maria Uribe
Sally Nator	John Viarengo
Deborah Norman	Cheryl Ward-Kaiser
Sandra Obrien	Michael Wichert
Shawn O'conner	Mark Wilson
Connie Ortiz	



Impostor Scams

Thanks to Jim Tripp

Impostor scams once again will come in among the most common scams of this past year.

- These scams generally start with an unsolicited call, email, text or social media message, impersonating organizations you would already trust, like your bank, another business you may have a relationship with or a government agency such as the IRS.

- These criminals seek to instill a heightened emotion – fear that your electricity will be cut off or that your Social Security benefits have been paused, or excitement that you’ve won a big prize, for example. When we are in this state, it is hard to access logical thinking, and the criminals know this.

- We can’t trust caller ID, and we can’t trust links or phone numbers in emails or texts about some alleged problem, sadly.

- If you receive such a message, don’t click a link or return the call on an offered number; find a way to reach the entity at a number you know to be trusted if you think there may be a legitimate reason to connect.

ASI Activity Calendar

Golden Gate Fields: Saturday, June 10. Belmont Stakes.

Horseracing, lunch and more as you like it. \$155/person.

Hearst Castle: Thursday, July 27. Tour with lunch at a local restaurant. Cost \$135.

Mystery Trip: Thurs., August 17. It’s a surprise! Cost 110.

“Tina Turner Musical”: Sat., Sept. 2. A comeback story like no other! A celebration of resilience, an inspiration of triumph over adversity. SJ Center for Performing Arts, lunch at Old Spaghetti Factory. Cost \$187.

Fleet Week: Sun., Oct. 8. Celebrate all things Navy. See Blue Angels from San Francisco Belle, w/lunch. Cost \$197.

West Coast Getaway: Feb. 17-22, 2024. Crown Princess. San Francisco-San Diego-Ensenada. Cruise only starts at \$347. Call Jeanine Light, M-F 8:30-5:00, 800-901-1172 x21705 to reserve, ASI Group Booking #4GVJHH.

For tour information call Sharon at 831-261-8087 or visit ASI website, activeseniorsinc.org/tours.

Your brain has two sides—left and right. In the left side nothing is right. In the right side nothing is left.

About Dancing

Thanks to Jim Tripp

The Brain and Heart Connection

Conditions that threaten cardiovascular disease—such as diabetes, high cholesterol, and hypertension—also increase the risk for Alzheimer’s disease. The physical activity of dancing—along with a diet that limits sugar and saturated fats and is rich in fruits, vegetables and whole grains—can lessen the chances of developing cardiovascular disease.

The Brain and Mind Connection

More specifically, dancing produces challenges to the brain, including memory, coordination, attention, and cognition. Recalling dance movements has been shown to stimulate several areas of the brain. When neuron activity in the brain increases, it opens new pathways for thought and ideas. According to Harvard Medical School, PET imaging has revealed that dance activates “identified regions of the brain that contribute to dance learning and performance.” A study of 469 people over age 75 published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* indicated that “participation in leisure activities is associated with a reduced risk of dementia.” The study called for further evaluation but stated that “dancing was the only physical activity associated with a lower risk of dementia.”

The Brain and Social Health Connection

Studies also link social connections with mental health as we age, including lowering the risk for Alzheimer’s disease (though experts aren’t certain about the reason for this link). Since partner dancing in a room filled with other people is a great opportunity for social connection, it fills the human need for bonding with others. In studies with limited numbers of participants, people living with Alzheimer’s disease who participate in dance therapy increased their social interaction, with improved moods and less anxiety and depression. In other words, they experienced the same positive effects of dancing that people without dementia enjoy.

The Most Effective Dances

Another positive aspect of dance is that because there are many dances to choose from and learn, the brain is challenged and stimulated to learn new things. Some proponents of dance suggest learning specific dances based upon their complexity such as the fox trot, waltz, and swing dancing. The idea is to require the brain to rewire itself and make quicker decisions about the movements to be executed during the dance.

Shall We Dance?

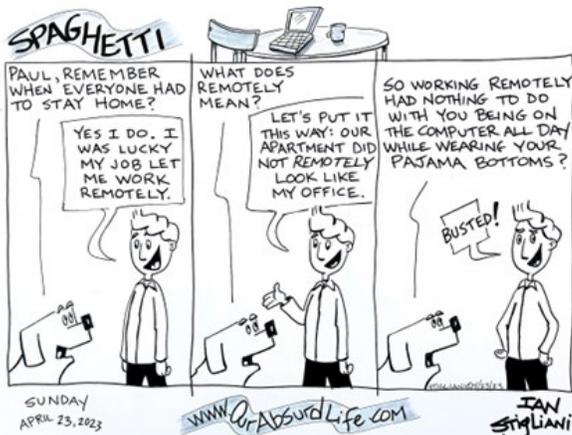
Though dance research is fairly new, many studies with a limited number of participants are adding to the literature about the efficacy of dance in helping dementia patients. Dance has also been used to alleviate the symptoms of Parkinson’s disease. Whether you’ve danced all your life, are taking lessons, or are working on some steps of your own, as someone once said, “Any kind of dancing is better than no dancing at all.”

Ed. Note: See Spotlight on Line Dancing article P. 3.

Follow Up to Balance Physical Therapy Program (March)

Thanks to Jim Tripp

Click on [this link](#) to learn about five steps to help avoid injuries from falling. (Ed. Note: I should have had this follow up to John Farahmand’s presentation in the last newsletter but sort of lost sight of it. We hope you’ll find the article useful.)



Kids exploring ancient ruins

