

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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Salinas CA 93901-3211
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Monthly Newsletter – June 2026

DAILY ACTIVITIES

MONDAY: Zumba w/o wts. 7:30-8:30AM* +don.
Zumba 9-10:15 AM w/wts* + donat.
Legal Serv., Pre-reg. at ASI for appt., Rm A, Free
Hula (Intermediate), 10:30-11:30AM* + donation
Ukulele & Singalong, 12N-2PM**
Mahjong 12:30 to 3:30PM, RmB**
Yoga/Pilates 2:45-4:00PM**
Bunco 1st Mon, Members First, 5-8PM, \$6/\$8

TUESDAY: Legal Services for Snrs 9:30-11:00AM,
Pre-reg. at ASI for appt. Rm A, Free
Line Dancing 10 to 11:30AM**
Bridge, Noon-3:30PM**
Beginning Bridge Noon-3:30PM, Rm A**
Social dance lesson & live band, 6-8PM, \$9/\$10
Artful Escape **3rd Tues** 1:30-3:30, drop-in, Rm B**
Card Play, **4th Tues.**, 1:30-3:30PM, Rm B**

WEDNESDAY: Yoga/Balance/Pilates 8:45-10AM*
Cribbage, 10:00 AM-12:00N, Rm A**
Book Club 10:30 AM to 11:30AM, Rm B*
Guitar Circle & Singalong, 11:30-1:00 PM**
Basic Everyday Spanish 1:00-2:00PM*
Tai Chi, 1:30 to 3:00PM** + donation
Chair Yoga, 3:15-4:15PM* + donat.
Line Dancing 6:30-8:30PM** + \$1 donat.

THURSDAY:
Knitting/Crochet (except 2nd Th), 1-3 PM** Rm B
NarAnon family support 12-1PM (not 2nd Th) Rm B
Quilting, **1st & 3rd Th**, 9 AM-12N**
Genealogy, **1st & 3rd Th**, 10-12N, Rm A
Tech Assist., **3rdTh**, by appt.-1-2pm or 2-3pm*
“Singing for Brain,”**4th Th, 2-3:30pm****

FOOD Distribution, April 30, 10:00-12:00 noon.

MEMBERS LUNCH, 2nd TH, 12N, \$15, pre-regis.
Program: ASI Ukulele Group’s Summer Concert

FRIDAY: Yoga/Balance/Pilates 8:45-10:00 AM*
Zumba 10:15-11:15 AM* +donat.*
Bridge 12N to 3:30 PM**
Cardmaking, **3rd Fri**, 1:00-3:00PM**+\$5
Western Dance, 1st & 3rd Fri., 7-9PM, \$4/\$8

SATURDAY: Office closed
Hula, Beginning 2nd, 4th, 5th 9:30-10:45am** + donat.
Bridge 1st, 3rd, & 5th, 12N to 3:30PM**

Updated 06/02/2026

* \$1 Fee for Members, \$2 for non-members; ** \$2 for Members, \$4 for non-members Office closed Sat. Bring exact change, arrive prior to start.

ASI Introduces New Services for Members via Senior Connections

Witold Piekarski, 1st VP

To support the friendly and secure environment provided by ASI and to further promote the well-being of members, a Senior Connections Committee was formed by the Board last month. This committee is based on the concept of ASI members addressing the unmet needs of fellow members within the limits of available resources, time, and ability.

ASI members are joining together to help in four areas:

- **Senior Check-in** will provide scheduled connections with members who are isolated or homebound.
- **Handy Senior Service** will provide support in doing minor fixes such as changing light bulbs, fixing a leaky faucet, hanging a picture, etc. The specific service will be handled by a two-person team.
- **Food Resources** will provide food resources in times of *extraordinary* circumstances such as illness, incapacity, death, or end of month food supplies.
- **Wheels on the Go** provides information connecting members needing rides with those willing to provide them.

ASI’s “Senior Connections” program is just getting organized. IF you want to be part of making a difference, call or email the office and leave your name and contact information. We are in the formative stage. Next month, check the newsletter for HOW to receive these different services. . . and/or how to join us in making a difference.

Very Helpful and Successful New Member Orientation

By Bob Whitlock, Activities Chair; Linda Evans, Co-Director Office Ops.; George Niesen, Newsletter Editor

We really hit the ball out of the park! Thank you everyone. ASI's May 15 New Member Orientation was a total success. It's an honor and privilege--and just plain darn fun--to work and play with each of you!

From ASI's Mission Statement to FAQs, ASI Volunteer Activity Leaders and Volunteer Staff put together an informative program for a good group of new (and maybe some not-so-new) members who wanted to learn more about ASI. A lineup of Officers, Committee Chairs and Activity Leaders described to an eager audience just what they do at ASI and how that can help Members. All that activity makes ASI what it is, with a multitude of offerings promoting social, mental, and physical health. We are happy to share all of it with all of you!

President's Corner

By Gerry Reynolds, ASI President

Reynolds Rap! fared better in May than in April. Cookies instead of muffins; I think I'm on the right track. Good suggestions from the attendees. It's all good stuff!

We appear to be in the season of performances. Actor Howard Burnham entertained us on stage during the May luncheon, our own Ukulele ensemble will entertain us during the June luncheon, and The Listening Place actors will present on Sunday afternoon, June 28. All of these were, or are, free and must-see events.

New activities are starting; Beginning Bridge for one, and a Wellness Focus Group is being contemplated for health and wellness information sharing, a Senior Connections committee is being formed, and a Community Support Liaison position has been created and filled.

Lotsa things going on. It's exciting to be here!

Legal Services for Seniors Expands Access

Our ASI partner, Legal Services for Seniors, has offered to provide two more hours twice a month of their wonderful service for our ASI members. In addition to their normal Tuesday morning half-hour appointments which begin at 9 AM, they are making their services available on the first and third Mondays with half-hour appointments starting at 9:30 AM. Their last appointment starts at 11:00 AM.

The deadline for reserving a Monday appointment is Thursday before noon; Tuesday appointments, Friday before noon. Call or stop by the office to make an appointment. Our number is 831-424-5066.

New Community Liaison Position

Witold Piekarski, 1st VP

The ASI Executive Committee approved the creation of a Community Liaison position April 28. This new position will be filled by Loretta Salinas. The Community Liaison will be responsible for strengthening connections between Active Seniors and local organizations to expand available resources and programs. Key responsibilities are:

- Partnership Identification: Identifying opportunities with local organizations that benefit seniors.
- Outreach and Representation: Attending community meetings and networking events to promote ASI programs.
- Program and Event Collaboration: Coordinating joint activities/workshops with partner organizations.
- Communication and Coordination: Serving as primary bridge between ASI and community partners.
- Community Support and Engagement: Connecting seniors with external services such as food assistance and wellness programs.
- Documentation and Reporting: Maintaining records of partnership activities and providing monthly updates to the Board of Directors.

Congratulations, Loretta, and thank you for stepping up!

Mary Ellen: Early Family Lessons Shaped Her Journey

By Sera Hrasuna

Mary Ellen Parra's family story starts with the fairy-tale romance between her mother, Esther Stanghellini (translates to "angel" or "messenger" in Italian), and her father Jose Parra. They met in Spreckels, where Esther lived and where Jose came every summer to work. The teens would continue their friendship until Esther was 17. When they tried to elope, the authorities intercepted them. Jose was sent to jail in San Francisco.

Esther, who refused to return home, was sent to a Juvenile Hall. She continued to refuse until her Jose was released. Eventually, Jose was released! Jose then *walked* from San Francisco back to Spreckels where the two were married by a Justice of the Peace and then later, by the Church.

This family romance was legend for the children. Jose, "who looked like a movie star," came from a family of 16, and worked hard to bring each one of his parents and siblings from Mexico. Esther, who was born in Spreckels, was a fulltime mother and a renown cook of Italian cuisine and Mexican cooking.

Mary Ellen, who herself is famous at ASI for her cooking, says she learned it from *both* parents. The Parra kids grew up eating Pasta Fagioli and homemade tortillas--and anything else available in the pantry. Creativity is key when there are 13 kids to feed.

The entire family grew up in a three-bedroom home with all of the kids sharing beds. Mary Ellen, the tenth child, slept with three other sibs throughout her childhood. "It was a close-knit loving family," says Mary Ellen. "We didn't have friends over because there was no *room!* So, we became each other's best friends." (Mary Ellen as Spider Woman!>>)

When the two oldest kids were sent home from school for not speaking English, Jose announced that only English was to be spoken at home. He taught himself to read and write, along with his children. The children were given "American names." Mary Ellen, for instance, was named for her Aunt Maria Elena.

What do you think when you picture a mother raising 13 children? Everlasting fatigue? Not Esther. Mary Ellen says sometimes when the dishes were done, her mother would turn on the radio and dance with all of them! Is it any wonder that Mary Ellen loves dancing—ballroom dance, country line dance, you name it. Her mother's joy for music and dancing was contagious.

But the family has also been through dark times as well. Cancer has visited many times. Mary Ellen's mother died of cervical cancer. Her father died of heartbreak eight months later. Three sisters died of breast cancer or other kinds of cancer that metastasized after a period of remission. Even male members of the extended family were affected by cancer.

The family's story is so astonishing that they were asked to be a part of a long-range Cancer study run by the American Cancer Society. No doubt we all owe the Parras for their contribution to Cancer research. Mary Ellen and her seven surviving sibs (out of 13) still get calls from the Society every year asking about their health status.

Smuckers: Mary Ellen spent 35 years working for Smuckers in Salinas! She worked in Quality Control and was also President of Safety Commission at Smuckers. Smuckers was a union shop, and it closed its Salinas plant in 2005 in a reorganization that distributed its production to a non-union state. "It was a great place to work."

Del's: Mary Ellen went back to school to learn bookkeeping and office management. After a few companies, she was hired fulltime at Del's Farmer's Produce, becoming the "face" for Del's for 18 years. She finally retired at 77 after offering two years of part-time help, pro bono! She had run the company, concentrating on customer service. During COVID, she never missed a day.

(continued on next page)



Mary Ellen Parra (continued from P. 3)

The VFW: Esther was the first to join the VFW Auxiliary at the LT Billy Paulsen, Jr. Post 6849, the formal name for the post in Spreckels. Esther's brother had served in Korea, after all, and Mary Ellen's cousin was shot down in Korea. His remains were brought back by the VFW, and buried in Arlington National Cemetery. Mary Ellen joined the VFW in 2014, and became President of the Auxiliary in 2016. Under her leadership, the Auxiliary was awarded the VFW's National Circle of Excellence All-State Award six years in a row! Recently, she vigorously opposed being nominated for Auxiliary Chair in the VFW District that runs from Pacifica to King City. "I just retired," she says firmly.

ASI: In 2022, Mary Ellen was invited to an ASI luncheon by friend Loretta Salinas. In no time, Mary Ellen was working in the office Friday afternoon. She still works that shift. In 2024, she organized her own Bunco group (meets every first Monday of the month). Ask anyone in Bunco why they come. Besides the fun, the camaraderie, Mary Ellen is a fabulous cook, who spends her Sunday cooking for the Bunco crowd.

By the way, Mary Ellen's fresh food connections were the source of produce for ASI's early Food Distribution, long before ASI turned to the Monterey County Food Bank. Mary Ellen treasures her time at ASI. Between a huge extended family, church, the VFW, ASI, and her pandemic-era cat, life is good.

ASI's Mystery Painting

By Bob Whitlock, ASI Co-Director of Office Operations

One of our volunteer staff, Russell Regester, has found this painting (>>>) in the shed and would like to have it. Do any of you know its history? Who owns it? How did it get here? Anything about it?

Please let your Newsletter Editor know what you know about its origin. Contact George Niesen, text or phone 831-595-3165 or email gniesen@redshift.com. Thank you.



The Listening Place Readers Theater Returns

If you haven't yet experienced a Listening Place Readers Theater Production, you should. Well selected plays and skillful readings make words come alive. Who needs sets and lights?

About four times a year The Listening Place Readers Theater visits ASI on a Sunday afternoon with one of its wonderful readings. And an informed and loyal audience attends. But we'd like to spread the word and encourage more people to attend. Please help us. Here's what you need to tell your friends.

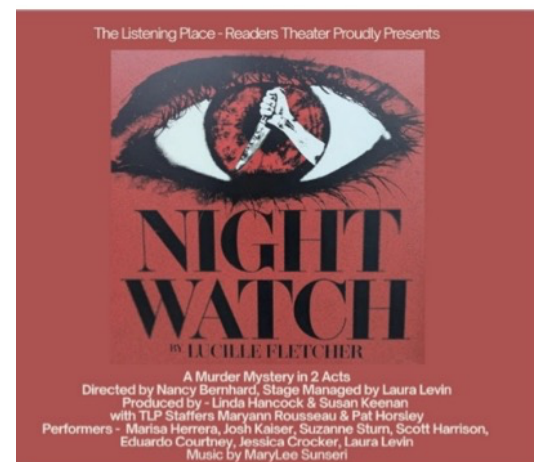
This upcoming production is Sunday, June 28, at 1:00 pm at Active Seniors. The play is *Night Watch* by Lucille Fletcher. This suspense thriller was first performed in 1972.

The main character, Elaine Wheeler, an insomniac heiress, lives in a Manhattan townhouse and from her window sees a dead body in a neighboring abandoned building. The police find nothing nor does her husband or a close friend. Elaine's sanity is questioned.

Was there a murder? Where is the body? Come join us for this tense twist-filled story and climax. Directed by Nancy Bernhard and read by local actors. Produced by Linda Hancock and Susan Keenan with Maryann Rouseau and Pat Horsely

No reservations. Performance is free. Donations accepted. Questions: Call Susan Keenan 646-1535.

This production is in compliance with Concorde Theatricals.



Free Admission
Donations Welcome

831-646-1535

<http://thelisteningplace.weebly.com>

Two Performances Only!

Saturday, June 27 @ 1pm
Carmel Foundation

Sunday, June 28 @ 1pm
Active Seniors, Salinas

Doors open at 12:30pm

ASI's 10th Anniversary as Chamber Member

ASI has been a Salinas Valley Chamber of Commerce non-profit member for 10 years. ASI Member Witold Piekarski attended a Chamber meeting a couple of months ago to accept the plaque (>>>).

Chamber membership offers certain benefits to ASI and its Members. The Chamber promotes ASI and its programs, particularly ASI's special events. It introduces ASI and its activities to Chamber members on the cusp of retirement, individuals who may bring to ASI a wealth of experience and knowledge as a Volunteer.

At the same time ASI supports the Chamber and the community through its dues and through ASI Members' active involvement in the larger Salinas community. The Chamber supports the community through numerous programs aiding, supporting and helping grow small businesses, although that's probably not a significant benefit to those of us already retired.

One other significant benefit to ASI: The Chamber delivers to ASI a stack of its monthly *Business Journal* newspaper. Pick one up. You'll learn a great deal about what's going on in and around the City of Salinas. It's some of the last local coverage of truly important Salinas area news.

You can call the Chamber office and get yourself on its email list to keep up with its activities—from ribbon cuttings to lunch, and award ceremonies to community special events. Plus, you'll get electronic delivery of the *Business Journal*.



From the Salinas Public Library

Title: Healthy Living Series: Composting Workshop: Feed the Soil, Not the Landfill. Date: Thurs, June 11, 4:00-5:00 PM. **Location:** El Gabilan Library. **Description:** Transform kitchen leftovers and yard waste into nutrient-packed soil with the help of worms! Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority and Republic Services will teach you the benefits of composting, how to build a compost pile, and the basics of setting up your own worm composting system. We'll hold a drawing to give away a worm bin and backyard compost bin! **Registration is required as space is limited to 30 people.**

Register: online: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/9TWWk9CkeL> Questions? Email library@salinas.gov.

Title: No Backyard? No Problem! Grow a Garden Anywhere. Date: Sat. June 6, 10:00 AM-1:00 PM. **Location:** Cesar Chavez Library. **Description:** You don't need a yard to have a garden! Grow bags turn any space, from a porch to a driveway, into a portable edible garden. With coaching from the UC Master Gardeners, you'll learn how to plant and nurture vegetables to get a great harvest. Each household gets: Two grow bags, potting soil, and a choice of vegetable and flower plants. Children will have a garden activity. **Registration is required as spaces are limited.** You can only register for one workshop. Please note, the English language workshop is full. If you register for the English workshop, you will be placed on the waitlist. There are still spaces in the Spanish language workshop. You will receive an email confirming if you are registered or on the waitlist. 10-11:30 AM (English), 11:30 AM-1:00 PM (Spanish). Register at: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/g/5NbhWmmZzd>. **Questions?** Contact Kate at Kathryn.Black@salinas.gov. Cost: Free. Website Link: <https://library.salinas.gov/learn-explore/research-learning/events/ccl-no-backyard-no-problem-grow-garden-anywhere-2>

Attend "The Sound of Music" Live!

By Sharon Piazza, ASI Director of Tours

One of our "favorite things"--this timeless story of Maria and the Von Trapp Family is coming to San Jose. "Do, Re, Mi", "Sixteen Going on Seventeen", and, of course, "Edelweiss" are just a few of the songs you'll want to hear and sing along with. This is the iconic tale of a spirited nun who chooses to follow her heart and "Climb Every Mountain."

WHEN: Saturday, July 25.

TIME: Leave Park Row at 10:15 AM; Return by 6:30 PM.

RUNNING TIME OF PLAY: 2 hours 40 minutes.

COST: \$208.00 (Includes Transportation, Lunch at Old Spaghetti Factory, and Theater ticket). Checks and cash only. No credit cards accepted.

Registration due Tuesday, June 23. Flier online at the ASI website or on display rack at ASI. Registration with full payment needed for sign-up. For information, call Sharon at 831-261-8087.

Arts and Crafts Are Good for You!

Thanks to Bob Whitlock

I saw this article in my "All Healthy" daily email. Thought it might promote our Card Making and Artful Escape classes.

Drawing A Sad Face: The job market is rough for a lot of folks right now. Being out of work — or even newly retired — can mess with your head. One easy pressure release: arts and crafts.

The Study: UK researchers looked at survey data from 7,000+ adults in an attempt to find an answer to a simple question: Does everyday creativity — doodling, knitting, woodworking, etc. — help improve our well-being? This short answer is yes!

What They Found: People who make things reported more life satisfaction, more happiness, and a stronger sense that life is worthwhile — even after factoring in age, gender, and job status. But what really stood out was that **arts and crafts provided a greater sense of satisfaction than work alone** (we've been having a lot of fun with [these collage kits](#)).

Keep in Mind: All they found here is correlation, not causation. Still, **cultivating a regular creative hobby you actually enjoy is low-cost, low-risk, and good for your mood** — especially when work is weird.

ASI Public Health Policy

On the eve of the Ebola epidemic in Africa and the start of the FIFA World Cup Games held June 11-July 19, and with an estimated 5 million people coming to the US for the games, we feel it necessary to reiterate ASI's Public Health Policy. Note: World Cup venues include LA and Seattle with some matches also being held at the Levi Stadium in Santa Clara. In all 11 cities in the US will participate.

COVID taught us that a formal health policy is a priority here. We are an organization of seniors where many may have weakened immune systems and/or have a vulnerable family member at home.

The policy applies to all members, staff, and participants (whether members or not). Therefore, in crowded settings, you are free to mask in public. We have masks in the office.

Further, individuals who are experiencing symptoms of illness are encouraged "to isolate themselves from ASI and seek medical attention." Toward that end, we would also encourage everyone coming back from travel to monitor themselves for symptoms of illness before coming back to ASI. If you have asthma or a condition that looks like illness, it's also considerate to explain to others and/or to mask until symptoms subside. We are a family here after all, and we want to care for each other. Comments or concerns regarding this policy can be addressed in writing to the ASI President and/or the Board of Directors

Notes from Your Board Members

By Michael Beck, Board Member and Second VP

Learning about the Board is Learning about Active Seniors, Inc. I am a lifer when it comes to colleges. Wherever I live, I take college classes, listen to lectures, attend plays, meet different age students. Paths crossing. Same with Gentrain and OLLI and Central Coast Writers.

But until joining Active Seniors, the only time I took to explore beyond classes came after I enrolled in a journalism class at MPC in Monterey. I searched for stories. I discovered the institution. I found community.

During MPC classes, I started volunteering at ASI's election polling site. Twice every two years, I attended ASI. Part-time, retirement in sight. Last year was my first full year at Active Seniors, Inc. George Niesen, Newsletter editor, Election Inspector, and most importantly ASI Member, suggested I apply for the Board. I found stories. I discovered the institution. I found my community!

The Board provides an expansive view, the organizational view, and the big picture—so to speak. Stay tuned for Reflections of past and present Board Members.

Pancake (and More) Breakfast, Car Fair

Coming right up, Saturday morning, June 13, 8:00-10:00, is what is now an ASI annual event. View some marvelous classic car restorations and remodels in ASI's parking lot. See what some of your ASI colleagues are doing in their "spare time."

Then come on in for a "pancake breakfast" with all the trimmings--pancakes, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, orange drink, and coffee; all for the benefit of ASI and only \$15 per person. (See flyer >>>). Only \$15. That beats a restaurant breakfast these days and helps ASI maintain its facilities (including its great kitchen) and its extensive programming.

Lionel Gill is hosting and cooking. Plus, you're sure to meet some fascinating ASI Members as you sit down at those long family tables. Treat yourself!



June Birthdays

Alice Babione	Fred Johnson
Doris Beckman	Mary Linzer
Ursula Benedict	Pamela Lord
Natalie Bernasconi	Song Luna
Diane Cadei	John Macias
Sherrie Ceja	Joni Madolora
Frances Cherry	Robert Madrid
Bruce Christiansen	Emilie Mangompit
Kevan Clarke	Lisa McFarland
Alice Clatterbuck	Lynette McGregor
Rita Collazo	Claire McKibben
Carol Collins	Anna Meeks
Luzviminda Colorina	Roger Nichols
Josephine Cruz	Bonnie Nielsen
Martha Currey	Karma Nilsen
Jo Curtis	Teresa Ortiz
Rodney Curtis	Charles Paull
Rita Dady	Regina Pedroza
Terrie De Font	Betty Prunty
Carol Dixon	Sally Quintanilla
Fabienne Esparza	June Radicchi
Pavinee Francisco	Josie Schweizer
Sandy Georgariou	Arduth Seever
Marilyn Gibbons	Tammi Smith
Alice Giottonini	Margie Tangonan-Vargas
Lorraine Gorczyca	Maria Thompson
Gregory Higgins	Kathleen Vo
Patricia Hughes	Marietta Von Berg
Nancy Hunter	Starla Warren
Gaely Jablonski	

ACTIVE SENIORS, INC.
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Active Seniors Travel from Salinas to Tour Our Museum

Article reprinted from *Call to Duty*, June 2026, published by the Central Coast Veterans Memorial Museum

On Saturday, May 16, a group of senior citizens from Salinas made the bus trip to San Luis Obispo to tour our museum. The group is part of Active Seniors, Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Their mission is to provide a friendly and secure environment, primarily for senior citizens, giving them the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities that may be physically, mentally, and socially healthful according to their individual needs. Leading the group of 28 was the Tour Director, Sharon Piazza. Assisting with giving tours were John Smet, Paul Provence, Jim McConaghy, Lucas Wilson, Chuck Moorman, Marty Black, and Steve David.

