

Bartlett's News Briefs

NOT JUST ANYBODY

community-sponsored stories

by Pacifican Jean Bartlett, longtime Bay Area News Group writer

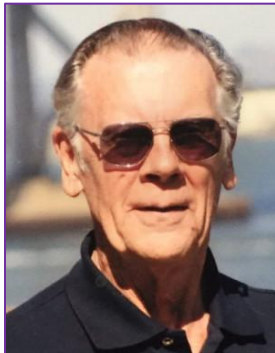
For 12 weeks in the New Year, five Pacificans, who all happen to be veterans (*with guest answerers as needed, like this week*), answer a Question on the Street

Background: when I wrote features for the printed *Pacifica Tribune*, for many years that also included a question on the street – *Bartlett's Bullets*. It's interesting to hear what our neighbors think. I've asked five well-known community volunteers, all veterans and members of the Pacifica American Legion, to answer a question each week for 12 weeks. (*This week has a guest answerer.*) The purpose is not to stir up annoyed responses from people who are not part of this group, but to just have a listen to what someone else is willing to share. It is also to encourage community dialogue.

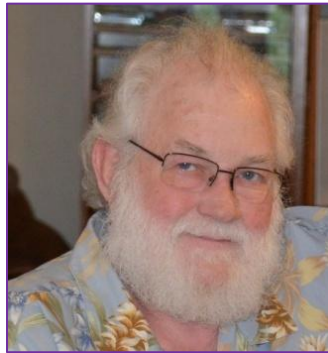
Date: February 10, 2026

Question 6: Any ideas on how to turn Palmetto into a "play street" – a street that is a destination for Pacificans, folks from all over the Bay Area and tourists?

Answerers:



Robert Biby



Ed Clements



Mel Condos



Jay Crawford



Allan Hale

Robert Biby. (Served: United States Marine Corps)

The little landscaped parcels on Palmetto that were placed there to make the street look nice between Paloma Avenue and Clarendon Avenue, those need to be rethought as far as care and upkeep. Someone had the great idea that volunteer organizations would take care of them, but some of our volunteers in these organizations are too busy to do it effectively or the volunteers are too old. I was doing the Lions' parcel for a while, but I wasn't doing a good job. Also, open up the Seahorse Brewing Company, or at least make it look open. That's one of your early views of Palmetto when you are coming from Clarendon and it looks like an abandoned building.

Ed Clements. (Served: United States Navy)

A good reason to go down any "Main Street" is shopping. I drive down Palmetto and I see so many empty lots and they have been empty forever and I don't know why. Is it a permitting problem? I do think we need more businesses on Palmetto. We have the new Bay Area laws encouraging more housing in every city. On Palmetto, they could do that and add businesses by having a combination of apartments above, and businesses below – businesses that are local boutiques. The Seahorse Brewing Company does not look open. I understand that it is, but who knows when they are open. That should look like a destination. If you look at the north end where you have the school, people could use the ballpark when school is not in session. There is a playground on the south end, just when you turn on Palmetto. It's a small playground but still, people can bring their kids there when they are taking a break from places to shop at. A few weeks back I talked about building a hotel at the old wastewater treatment plant, that whole ground floor should be a nice restaurant, or restaurants, and boutique shops. That's what we need. At our sister city in Half Moon Bay, you pull into their Main Street and there is one place after another to go into: to eat, to see things, to shop and it's a great walking area. Also, importantly, they have a public restroom area on the street, easily found, which is well-maintained and can handle more than a few people. I think we need to be, instead of, "me, me, me," developing something that is available for all of us to go to on Palmetto and enjoy. When we have the Fog Fest, people go to everything on Palmetto. But the businesses that are there shouldn't look like they are sitting next to empty spaces. Cotton Crustacean is a great place to buy tee-shirts, hoodies and hats and other things. I understand there is a new taproom right next to them, but you can't tell because there are no signs. People who live in the neighborhood might know about all the shops and places to eat, but most people don't because the street looks so empty. That empty lot across from Florey's Books needs to have something done with it. The street needs visual improvement so people can see there is a reason to park there.

Mel Condos. (Guest Answerer)

I would love to have a breakfast place on Palmetto that is the equivalent of Breakers in Rockaway. I do love David's Bagels on Palmetto. That is a destination for me. I think that there is a lot that is zhuzhing up in Sharp Park, particularly on Francisco Blvd. For example, the wine shop (Table Wine) as well as the great place to get burritos (Taqueria Pacifica), though the parking on Francisco is terrible. Palmetto needs benches from Paloma to Clarendon, because there is no place to sit. The Seahorse Tavern always looks closed, even when they are open. If they had any sort of signage or lights, that would help. It does feel like all the food on Palmetto is takeout. A question I have is – what is there for a family to do on Palmetto? There are tons of families in the area. There is a little park there, close to Clarendon, but it's not enough. If there was a taco truck on Palmetto, or an ice cream truck, that would help. I think Palmetto businesses offer a monthly weekend event but I don't really know anything about it. Sometimes, I stumble upon the signage. I've heard there is the Sharp Park Taproom, they're new and they bring in food trucks. I haven't seen any signage for it. How would I know about these things? Lots of people go on walks on Palmetto, so maybe have a gathering area with food trucks and benches, where you can bring your dog.

Jay Crawford. (Served: United States Army)

We've got wonderful things on Palmetto, but the street looks uninviting. First thing, the street needs to be cleaned. By that I mean – the roadway, the sidewalks and the fronts of the shops. Put more colorful planter boxes at storefronts. Also, a shop's interior seen from its street window should pull you in. Something that can't be done immediately but it would be nice if it was done, is take that old building where City Council meets, level it and make it a park where families can go. They can enjoy food and other purchases they've made, and their kids can run around. To celebrate the Ocean Shore Railroad, it could have a train theme. To celebrate surfing it could have surfboards to stand on, that don't go anywhere.

A big attraction to visitors is the Pier. We've got one bait shop on the north end, on Francisco, and we used to have another on the south end, on Palmetto, but the owner retired. We still need a bait shop on that south end of Palmetto and there needs to be fun, interesting signs for those bait shops and for the Pier. We've got Domino's Pizza on the north end of Palmetto, past the middle school, but we could also use a pizza place on the south end. Put cafe tables outside of Florey's. That invites people who buy coffee in the area, to sit down and read the book they bought. It gives the street a more welcoming feel. There should be signage in front of the Sharp Park Taproom. The Taproom brings in interesting, delicious food trucks. That needs to be known by people who walk along the street during the day. We've got lots of walkers, including people walking their dogs, investigating as they head to the Pier and the Sharp Park promenade.

The Seahorse Brewing Company I understand is open more now. I've heard it's got good food, good drinks and an interesting atmosphere. If you walk past it during the day, it doesn't look like anything except a building that needs paint. I actually thought it was abandoned. There's no signage, no information on the door. Maybe they are going to fix that up, but that's a good one to tackle, because they can really help define why Palmetto is a destination street. They've already got the product.

We have historic buildings in Sharp Park, including our Pacifica Museum at the Little Brown Church on Francisco. Volunteers with the Pacifica Historical Society currently do walking tours of the area. All of these things need to be more obviously known by signage at least.

Wonder if we did a 1920s theme on Palmetto, including with signage. The way Pacifica developed with the Railroad coming through in the teens and the early 1920s - that is theme material. Maybe the Seahorse would be willing to do a monthly Speakeasy night. We have wonderful businesses on Palmetto that certainly existed in the 1920s: tattoo shops, a bookseller, cafes, restaurants, a grocery store, antique stores, a bagel shop, artisan shops, drinking establishments, bait and fishing gear shops – with interesting signage and some awnings, you could change the feel, and as far as I know, there is no 1920s-themed street in the Bay Area. The people that do set building at the Spindrift Players, they would be good sources for information. The City doesn't have any money but the City could make it easier for Pacificans who want to dig in and help Palmetto businesses, and they could also just make it easier to be a business owner on Palmetto. Don't make business owners wait six months to get a building permit. Get it done in 15 minutes.

We could have volunteers, maybe from the Historical Society that could, on a planned weekend, walk around in 1920s fashions, dressed as farmers, saloon owners and shopkeepers. We need character and historic characters. We could do signage in front of the old Anderson's store. Signs that direct people to all the great places on Francisco and Palmetto, and also points to Eureka Square. People heading to one place, also want to discover what's around the corner. Eventually, maybe we could have more events on Palmetto besides the Fog Fest, an ice cream social for instance and certainly other ideas, but first, we need to do things that are not so expensive. Clean it up and put that interesting signage all over Sharp Park. Maybe even Recology of the Coast could do something on their buildings related to the 1920s theme. Do something relatively simple to give an idea of the old livery stable, which is now our modern garbage and

recycling center. If all the businesses on Palmetto, including those that are industrial, did something fun and celebratory of Pacifica's history and scenic views, that might just up the street's possibilities as a Bay Area destination.

Allan Hale. (Served: United States Coast Guard)

In order to answer this question, people need to know Pacifica's background. The Coastside was born from the busy lifestyle of the people of San Francisco wanting a recreational and retirement area. Following WWII, a vast number of people looking for work and housing flocked to the area. San Francisco knew what would take place and acquired the property that holds the golf course, the archery range and the rifle range. After so many years, in 1957 the nine coastal communities incorporated to form Pacifica. However, we lost the meaning of what we had originally planned. Today, with the government requiring more housing, we are faced with less space in Pacifica and a different community. Today, with the loss of the car dealerships, horseback riding in the quarry, the movie theater, the lumber company, the bowling alley – the revenue the City needs falls upon the homeowner to make up the difference. Palmetto has a few underdeveloped lots available including the old sewer plant, and the people of Pacifica have long-proved we can work together and we're needed to work together to give us back what this City needs. During our Fog Fest, we have things for people to do all along Palmetto, that idea can help us build a better all year-round Palmetto.

Palmetto should become a recreation area, similar to Santa Cruz. By doing this we could incorporate the vacant lots Palmetto has, including: the lot across from the Pacifica Resource Center, the lot by the collectibles shop (Vintage Cove), and the vacant lot near Florey's Books, and let's make use of the sewer treatment area. However, to make the street more of a Main Street, we need to provide transportation for parking. I think Oceana High School's parking lot is underutilized and should be used for weekend shoppers with a bus, just a hop on/ hop off vehicle, to provide rides for people in the school's parking lot down to Palmetto and back. We need to have some more recreation areas like a park where kids could play, and an area where adults would have some sort of recreational activities. We have lost the bowling alley, we've lost the movie theater, we've lost the horseback riding, and not only have we lost them, but we've lost the ability to collect money from them. Where are we headed? The government says we have to have more affordable housing but it's really businesses that bring tax advantages to a city. Recreation would make it a destination. We've got the Pier but we need to make something valuable that would help our entire community.

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By Jean Bartlett (February 10, 2026)

Writer Jean Bartlett was recognized by the Board of Supervisors, County of San Mateo, for "her writing that connects community and preserves local history." She can be contacted through her website, www.bartlettbiographies.com. This article was anonymously sponsored.