

## Bartlett's News Briefs

Stories by longtime Bay Area News Group writer Jean Bartlett

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# Seniors Give Pacifica's Senior Services 5-Star Rating

Read all about the lunch program, activities, classes, transportation and more

By Jean Bartlett



Jean Bartlett photo

**Tina Jurado waves "Welcome!" outside Pacifica's multi-purpose Senior Center.**

A resident of Pacifican since 1963, Tina Jurado has been a regular at the multi-purpose Senior Center located at the Pacifica Community Center since 2001. A division of Pacifica's Parks, Beaches and Recreation Department (PB&R), Senior Services programs are provided at the Center and Tina readily gives the Center five stars.

"I came here originally because AARP was providing free tax preparation at the Center and I met some wonderful people and have been coming here since."

Tina is known for the baked goods she provides to her fellow seniors, which include: snickerdoodles, apple strudel, lemon puff pastries, cupcakes, chocolate chip cookies, banana bread and birthday cakes. There are never any leftovers.

"Is there anything higher than five stars?" longtime Pacifican Pauletta Cravotto inquired.

Pauletta was a preschool teacher with PB&R for 35 years. She taught cooking and craft classes to students ranging in age from 2-1/2 to 5-1/2. She has some funny stories from those days and a legion of former students who absolutely love her.

"I've been coming to the Senior Center since I was of age, which was just barely yesterday," Pauletta laughed. "It is so fun. Marvelous people come here and I am one of them! I come here to visit. I take classes. Today I've got my Feldenkrais class at 1 p.m. Yesterday I took a special course provided by Senior Services on the Apple iPhone. It was offered to everyone, it was wonderful and very much needed. One of the great things that Senior Services does is provide seniors with all the new technology. They also have a delicious lunch program and they always greet us with a smile."

Pauletta was recently asked if she would sit and talk with newcomers and she got right on it.

"I love doing this," she said. "Though these people don't know what hit them!"

During this interview, Dolores Da Costa was sitting with Pauletta. Dolores is the cashier for the all-volunteer run bi-weekly rummage sales which benefit seniors.

"I moved to Pacifica three years ago and I was looking for a Senior Center where I could volunteer," Dolores said. "I had a friend volunteering here and she asked me to come on over and I have been coming here since. I love this place. What kind of a rating would I give it? Five Stars!"



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**Rummage Sale Cashier Dolores Da Costa and Senior Greeter Pauletta Cravotto enjoy a visit during one of the bi-weekly rummage sales.**

"This place is definitely five stars," said senior and Pacifican Earl Adkins. "I've been coming here since September of 2014. I saw they had computer classes and I especially wanted to learn Microsoft Excel to manage my accounts. I want to see if I am going up or down."

Earl, whose working days included being a mechanic at a Harley Davidson shop, a Yamaha, Suzuki shop and as a Muni mechanic on San Francisco police motorcycles, has quite a collection of motorcycles and said he won't mention if he ever got any tickets.

"I've met a lot of people here at the Center," Earl continued, "and the food is first class and reasonable in price. Today I took the special course they offered on the Android phone and it was excellent. I learned things I didn't know before. I've taken a lot of computer courses. All the instructors are very helpful."



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**Motorcycle enthusiast Earl Adkins and instructor Eleanor Kikuchi head to Eleanor's computer course.**

DJ Rey (Rey Hauser) definitely has the beat of the Senior Center. Every month he brings in his sound system to play three hours of danceable tunes. Rey worked as a deejay back in his clubbing days in San Francisco in the 1970s. Harold Melvin & The Blue Notes, Gloria Gaynor, the O'Jays and The Trammps – those were on his tune list back then and they still are along with songs from the 1940s and on up through the decades. The longtime San Franciscan moved to Pacifica about seven and a half years ago, and once he moved across the street from the Center, he's been a regular since.

"The people make this Center five stars," Rey said. "There are also the classes and activities. I take ceramic classes. I play Mahjong on Tuesdays and Nickel Bingo every week. There's a lot to like here."



Jean Bartlett photo

**Kathy McGuire.**



Jean Bartlett photo

**DJ Rey Hauser.**

"I came here for the beat," Kathy McGuire laughed. A former flight attendant, Kathy has been coming to the Center for about nine years.

"I started out with their ballroom/line dancing classes. It was great exercise and the music was wonderful. But also one of the first things I did was sign up to deliver Meals on Wheels."

The Pacifica Meals on Wheels program provides meals to homebound individuals age 60 and older. They are delivered to the door by volunteers, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 10:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

"It does take some doing to deliver meals," the longtime Pacifican noted. "You drive to the senior's home, you might have to maneuver stairs, or be buzzed in by an intercom. But you meet such nice people and it's very rewarding. I did that for about 8 years and then retired out. Now I am enjoying taking Photoshop classes. You can really make your photos so much better. Oh. I've got to add. All the instructors are fantastic."

"The thing about our Senior Services, which is absolutely five stars, is that this is a place you can come to because you always feel welcome," Kathy concluded. "When you first start out you might feel a little bit shy. But if you reach out and say 'hello,' people say 'hello' back and the volunteers and staff here give it a feeling of family."



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**Lucky McGowan**

Longtime Pacifican Lucky McGowan is the Vice President of the Center's Seniors in Action (SIA) Advisory Council. More on SIA a little further on.

"The services here are great," Lucky said. "The people here are great. The staff is great. The classes, the aerobics, the camaraderie, the friendliness, the Chair Zumba – and the food is so good my husband and I have lunch at the Center quite often, sometimes daily. All of this really makes our Pacifica Senior Services a 5-Star Program. I've been coming here for close to 20 years.

"I'd also like to mention that we have a free, drop-in discussion group called 'Stages,' and you can go in there and talk about whatever is on your mind. This is something everybody needs at every age."



As noted on the City of Pacifica website, "Senior Services programs have been in operation since 1974 and are currently funded by Older American Act grants, San Mateo County grants, City of Pacifica General Fund support, Pacificans Care grants, charitable donations, client donations and in-kind volunteer hours."

"The Senior Center offers seniors, 60+ years of age, nutritious lunch programs (Congregate and Meals on Wheels), transportation in their 20-passenger wheelchair-lift equipped bus, information and referral services, more than 40 weekly classes and clubs, daily activities, entertainment and volunteer opportunities. The "Golden Treasures Gift Shop," featuring homemade items and crafts, is located in the Senior Lounge." P.S. The Pacifica Senior Services bus is available for transportation to and from the Senior Center, Monday through Friday. A \$3 roundtrip donation is suggested. There's so much more here. Visit Pacifica Senior Services online for details, [here](#).

Now, let's talk about meals. Served at 12:00 p.m. – with a \$3.00 suggested donation (non-seniors, guest of seniors, are welcome to lunch for a \$5.00 mandatory fee – here are five of those September 2019 meals as noted on their lunch program which is posted at the Center, online, published in the "Senior Tidings" newsletter and provided to seniors receiving Meals on Wheels at home: chicken cordon bleu, rice pilaf, spinach, mandarin oranges and whole wheat bread; hot pastrami sandwich, wild rice salad, broccoli, banana and whole wheat bun; shrimp louis salad, mandarin oranges and whole wheat roll; French bread pepperoni pizza, Italian mixed veggies, pineapple and chocolate pudding; and pork loin with country gravy, mash sweet potatoes, orange beets, apple sauce and whole wheat bread. The menu changes every month, is prepared onsite and is approved in advance by a registered dietician. The Friday I stopped by in October, seniors enjoyed a tuna melt on whole wheat, cream of spinach chowder, beet salad and mandarin oranges.

What are some of the classes offered? American Line Dancing, Aerobics, Chair Yoga, Mat Yoga, Basic Hula, Zumba, Laughter Yoga, Ancestry DNA, Computer Literacy and so much more. There are also classes, games and groups and they include: Ukulele Class, Bocce Ball, Quilters, Jewelry Making, Stained Glass and Acrylic Painting. The prices on these classes range from \$1.00 to \$5.00. The exceptions are "Big Bucks Bingo" with its \$7 buy-in and "5¢ Bingo" at 5¢ per card.

There are a number of free activities and they include: Mahjong, Pedro, Pacifica Bridge Club, "Stages" Drop-in Discussion Group, Drop-in Grief Support and Ping Pong. And let's not forget the daily coffee/tea lounge, 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., or the library.



Jean Bartlett photo

**Pacifican Dan Marinas, a longtime ping pong aficionado, can be found several times a week in the Center's Game Room ready to play all ping pong skills. "It's fun and it's a great way to meet people."**

## Who's in charge?



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**Senior Services Recreation Manager Jim Lange**

Jim Lange grew up in Pacifica and he is the Recreation Manager of Senior Services.

"I have been with Pacifica Senior Services for nearly 16 years," Jim said. "What inspired me to work with seniors stems from my childhood. My mom worked at the Linda Mar Convalescent Hospital as a Nurses' Aide. I would go to the Hospital on weekends and she would have me visit seniors that did not have anyone to talk with—primarily those that lacked family/friends in the area. I grew an appreciation of listening to their stories and their drive to move forward through difficult situations. Moving forward often meant very unselfish decisions and often centered around helping each other. They were non-materialistic and appreciated what they had. Their work ethics were excellent and they took pride in what they did."

Jim said he is constantly wowed by the support Senior Services receives from its community.

"The dedication from our volunteers for Pacifica Senior Services is immeasurable. We could not offer all of our services, classes/activities and social opportunities without their commitment to help others. We are truly the community focal point for the aging. As our tagline says, 'Seniors Matter.'

"The public support for our services is amazing. The fiscal support received goes directly to programs to benefit our seniors and community. Pacificans Care and other community groups are primarily made up of residents of Pacifica that care about people in our community. Their tireless volunteer efforts to raise funds and distribute amongst community groups in efforts to support community needs is remarkable. Our local merchants work tireless and often times are tapped by community groups for donations—yet reach deeper in their pockets and help out.

"Our City leaders are often criticized, but we should remind ourselves they have supported fiscal decisions that address our efforts to move forward with addressing aging issues. Many of the senior services and programs we offer are not fiscally supported by neighboring cities within our County. The leadership has shown compassion for community. Essentially, the outpour of community members helping community **is** Pacifica."



Recently Pacifica's Senior Services was the recipient of a most unexpected thank you from one of its seniors. Sirkka Niukkanen, 1944-2018, bequeathed all of her real and personal property to the Parks, Beaches & Recreation Department of the City of Pacifica, for the sole purpose of supporting Senior Services at 540 Crespi Drive.

Jim Lange made it his mission to ensure he used good financial stewardship to identify a program that Sirkka would be proud of – a program that will allow her legacy of \$2 million to serve Pacifica's senior community for a long time. As such, he established the Connect a Ride (CaR) program.

The CaR Program is defined as an alternative to driving that is affordable and available 24/7 for Pacifica residents 65+ years old. It begins in November of 2019.



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**Sirkka Niukkanen, 2013, Pacifica, California.**

Briefly, CaR rides are provided by Serra Yellow Cab, within defined parameters, at \$5 per ride, tip optional. Those parameters are: any location in Pacifica, to/or from Colma Bart Station, hospitals between Seton Medical Center and Mills/Peninsula, and dialysis centers within Daly City and Burlingame boundaries. Rides must begin or end in Pacifica. CaR participants will receive 8-monthly partially subsidized one-way trips loaded on their "Rider Card." Read more about CaR [here](#).



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**Horace Hinshaw**

Recently elected as President of the Center's Seniors in Action (SIA) Advisory Council, longtime Pacifican and *Pacifica Tribune* Contributing Editor Horace Hinshaw is a huge proponent of Pacifica's Senior Services as well as SIA membership. The latter, available yearly at \$25 per senior (60+), has numerous benefits which include: "a subscription to the Senior Tidings newsletter; a parking placard for Crespi Lot C; a 'Seniors Matter' lanyard; and discounts on classes, activities and special events at the Pacifica Senior Center." (Note SIA membership is not required to use Senior Services.)

Horace was originally introduced to Senior Services when he served on the Parks, Beaches and Recreation Commission in the late 1980s-1990s.

"I was honored to be a member of the Commission when the Community Center was completed and dedicated in 1988, shortly afterward having Senior Services occupy the facility," Horace said. "Two years ago, as I decreased my time writing for the *Pacifica Tribune*, my wife Marian and I began volunteering for the Meals on Wheels program."

Horace said the community Senior Services program is incredibly important to our seniors.

"Just ask those 604 seniors who joined SIA in a recent two-week period, how much they enjoy participating in the many weekly programs and services at the Center. You then add more than 150 active volunteers assisting with the programs and services and you have a fine-tuned machine.

"I want to be involved at the Center as much as possible. I enjoy dropping in at the Center and talking with our members and working with Recreation Manager Jim Lange and his staff, and I invite our seniors to join us at our monthly SIA meetings, to share their visions of enhancing our programs and senior services."

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