

## Bartlett's News Briefs



# NOT JUST ANYBODY

community-sponsored stories

by Pacifican Jean Bartlett, longtime Bay Area News Group writer

**Longtime Pacifican and community volunteer Linda Jonas, leads by her head, her heart and her keen sense of fun**



An interview with community "get 'er done" do-gooder Linda Jonas at the Sharp Park Restaurant, Pacifica, March, 2026. (Jean Bartlett photo.)

"What can I say about Linda Jonas?" said longtime Pacifican, former Pacifica mayor and councilmember, active Rotarian, Pacificans Care board member and retired professor Ginny Jacquith. "Need something done? Got a new community project? Need some help? It's Linda to the rescue! From the time I first met her as a checker at Pedro Point Safeway to today, Linda has been the consummate community volunteer, taking on projects that make a difference in the community and, she does it with a positive attitude, lots of

energy, personal generosity, and lots of hugs and heart! She is the best! I know Pacifica would not be the same without her."

"Linda Jonas is innovative, super generous, hardworking and always with a good sense of humor," said longtime Pacifican and Pacifica Historical Society mover and shaker Kathleen Manning. "We worked together on the Pacifica Historical Society's Pacifica Jack Cheese contests and she made it so much fun. When we are able to do it again, I am going to remind her that her "Winner's Apron Award" idea is a must-do!"

Digging into Linda's background before our interview, revealed a lot of awards for her volunteer work and just a few are listed here. Let's begin with Beta Sigma Phi. First off, what is Beta Sigma Phi?

BSP is a non-collegiate, service-oriented sorority, "dedicated to helping women enrich their lives through service to others." The Pacifica BSP chapter fundraises for local organizations such as Pacificans Care and the Pacifica Historical Society, and they are additionally involved with fundraising for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, the Lupus Foundation of Northern California and the Kidney Research/Scleroderma Foundation.

Linda is the recipient of two BSP Founder's awards, the most recent received in 2025 in acknowledgement of her "extraordinary commitment to her Beta Sigma Phi Convention." In addition, she has served two terms as BSP state president, been selected as BSP Woman of the Year by her chapter nine times, and has held every BSP office and committee chairmanship at her chapter level, at the city/area council level, and at the California State Area Council level. Linda is also the recipient of the BSP International Award of Distinction. This is the service oriented sorority's highest honor. The award recognizes members for their outstanding service, leadership, and contributions to the sorority.

In 2018, California State Senator Jerry Hill (in office December 3, 2012 – November 30, 2020) presented Linda with a Community Hero Award. Linda was nominated for the award at a Pacifica City Council meeting by Police Chief Dan Steidle. Linda's Community Hero Award recognized her "dedicated service to the Pacifica community through her tireless volunteer efforts with the Pacifica Rotary Club, Pacifica Police Department, Pacifica Library Foundation, Pacifica Historical Society, Fog Fest Organizing Group and Beta Sigma Phi." Senator Hill noted that Linda has left an indelible mark on Pacifica and thanked her for her energy and hard work and her, "Outstanding service to the community and especially to the Rotary Club of Pacifica."

"I'm not an idle kind of person," Linda smiled in understatement when presented with this research. "If there is some way I can be useful and help other people, I'll do it. It feels good doing good for others. I highly recommend everyone try it at least once. See what you think. Volunteering does keep people out of mischief, although it seems like I still get into it anyway." Linda let go of one of her famous guffaws!

Linda was born and raised in Oroville, California. Her parents were Kenneth and Velma (Peters) Loyd and she was the fourth of their seven children: Annie, Carolyn, Duke, Linda, Sally, Louise and Kenny Lee.

"Sally is 18 months younger than I am and we are the only two left. When we were kids, my mother used to send Sally with me whenever my class had a ballgame or a dance at school. My mother's thinking was together we wouldn't get into any mischief. There's that word again! With seven children, five of them daughters, my mother's motto was, 'Five girls married before pregnant!' But haha! I was the only one who stayed a virgin until I was at least engaged to be married!"

"My mom did not work outside of the home – well she did briefly work part-time as a waitress at a coffee shop near where we lived when I was maybe in second grade – but with seven children, she pretty much worked 24/7. The only alone time she and my father had was on Sunday, when they sent us to Sunday school!

"My dad was a tunnel construction superintendent. It was hard and dangerous work. At one point when I was out of high school, he was digging tunnels for the California State Water Project in Southern California and I moved with my folks for a short time to Newhall/Saugus. I remember he told me that when he was younger, he was working on this tunneling job when all of a sudden, he had this gut feeling. He didn't feel they were safe. He said, "Everybody, I don't think this is safe. Get out! Get out!" They barely got all the people and all the equipment out and the whole damn thing came crashing down. Somebody up there was looking out for him and he listened."

Linda went to Thermalito Elementary School, Central Middle School and Oroville High School. She spent a lot of time at the library, and remains to this day, a voracious reader.

"My mom was strict about us coming home after school and doing our homework, but the library was okay. As to dates, she had her rules. She used to say, 'If a boy doesn't ask you two weeks in advance for a date – if he asks you just two or three days in advance – he is not being respectful.' But, if I was asked two weeks ahead of time, she would say, 'Well, we'll have to see how you behave.' She wouldn't let me tell him until the day before. So, I read like crazy because she wouldn't let me go out on dates.

Linda was able to do things through the Methodist Church in Oroville.

"When I was in middle school, our preacher had a son that was a year older than me, so the preacher got very active in doing things for the youth, like Halloween parties, and taking us on a school bus over to Yuba City to go ice skating and roller skating. I remember he took us on a big hiking trip on South Table Mountain. It's a flat top mountain that has a big O on it that was put up there by Oroville High School alumni in 1929.

"I definitely grew up with a lot of love and did plenty of kid things, as long as they were at home, like jump rope and hopscotch. When I was little, we had neighbors who had a huge orange orchard across the street from where we lived then, and at the end of the season every year, they'd let us come over and get oranges. We loved that!"

Linda got along great with her siblings and she remembers admiring her sister Carolyn's musical talents.

"She was very good. She eventually became first chair on clarinet at Oroville High School. She also played guitar quite well and she could sing."

At Thermalito Elementary, Linda played clarinet from third through fifth grade.

"When I was in sixth grade and we moved across the street from Oroville High School, I went to the middle school and asked the band teacher, what do I have to do to join the band? And he said, 'Well, do this, this and that.' I thought about it for three or four days and went back to talk to him about joining and he told me he had given me an 'F' every one of those days for not showing up. I said, 'I didn't say I was going to join up. I was just asking about it.' So I never played clarinet again.

"I am a very nice person but I can say no. I have my boundaries and am not one for taking s---, which is what that band teacher was handing out. I think I get that from my dad!"

"Oroville was a good place to grow up," Linda emphasized. "And, as I mentioned, I was very involved with our church as a kid. When I was in third grade, I learned the Beatitudes, (the eight blessings spoken by Jesus which mark the opening of the Sermon on the Mount). Because I learned them by heart I got to go to the big church service and receive my own bible. I'll never forget that. That was a big deal because I earned it, and it left a lifelong impression. It is the foundation of what I call my life's mantra, 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.' You live by that rule and pretty much everything else falls into place."

Linda had jobs as a teen outside of her home: babysitting and ironing, for instance, and she had chores at home as well. She didn't mind any of it. "It teaches you responsibility," she noted.

She learned how to sew. Her dad found an old pedal sewing machine at a rummage sale and bought it for her. That summer he bought it, she sewed all summer long. She made summer shifts for herself. She liked sewing and still has that sewing machine but hasn't used it in decades. "Once you start working, get married and have kids, and start volunteering, who has time? But that old sewing machine still means something to me."

Linda studied hard in high school and she was an involved student. She took Latin her freshman and sophomore years. "Vita, Scientia, Amicitia (Life, Learning and Friendship)," she proclaimed with gusto. "That's all I remember off the top of my head!" She noted it is also the motto of Beta Sigma Phi International, which might aid in her "off-the-top-of-my-head" memories. She took Spanish junior and senior years. She was a member of GAA (Girls Athletic Association) at her high school, all four years. She was in the Racquet Club, her third and fourth years, and she worked as stage crew for the class play, also her final two years. She was Student Body Historian in her senior year and also was part of Student Council.

The first time she volunteered she was 16.

"My Uncle Leonard, my dad's brother, got me into fundraising. He was in charge of the Western United States, including Hawaii, for the March of Dimes. Incidental on my uncle, when he first came home from the Second World War he played for a time with Buck Owens and the Boys in Bakersfield. Uncle Leonard always had a little country-western band. Anyway, he had me be the March of Dimes Youth Chair for our county. I was the daughter he never had! I had to attend this large March of Dimes meeting and then run an event. I remember I put this huge strip of tape down the main drag of Oroville, and then I gathered my bunch of volunteers and we would ask people to give us money out of their pocket as they drove down that street. We raised several hundred dollars."

Linda's first thought on her parents regarding volunteering, was that they didn't have time to volunteer. Her mom was too busy with kids and her dad not only worked a 40-hour week, but a great amount of overtime as well. But as she thought on it over our breakfast-interview, she realized that her dad was a Master Shriner.

A Master Shriner is someone who is a Master Mason in his membership with Freemasonry. The world's oldest and largest nonreligious, nonpolitical fraternal organization, Freemasonry's focus is on building character, fostering brotherhood, community service and promoting charity among its members. A Master Mason is the highest degree in Freemasonry and only those that are Master Masons are qualified to join the Shriners, an appendant body of Freemasonry. Shriners are members of a specialized Masonic fraternity dedicated to supporting Shriners Children's, a network of 22 pediatric hospitals across North America specializing in burns, orthopedic conditions, spinal cord injuries, cleft lips and cleft palates, and other complex medical conditions.

"My little brother, Kenny Lee, ended up in Shriners Hospital when he was pretty young, age 4. That was when the hospital was in San Francisco, in the Sunset District. Then he ended up in UCSF on Parnassus. They finally figured out he had some sort of sleeping sickness, caused by a mosquito bite (epidemic encephalitis). It's a sleeping sickness that can create the opposite of the normal sleep-wake cycle. In Kenny's case, he couldn't get to sleep which is very unusual. They gave him a drug which fixed that, but the drug caused damage to his hearing, so he had to wearing hearing aids for the rest of his life. I never really realized that my father's volunteer work with the Shriners probably saved Kenny Lee's life. As a kid, you are not always aware of all the extras your parents do. But I do know my parents were wonderful people and wonderful parents, and both of them had the same wish for all of us, to be good human beings, and of course to not get pregnant before marriage! Haha!"

Following high school, Linda headed off to Santa Rosa Junior College with her best friend Lynette. The two have been best friends since sixth grade, and still are. When Lynette got sick and had to move back home (she is long since fine), Linda moved with her folks to Southern California. While she was there, she got her certification in dry cleaning and worked at a drycleaners, doing alterations. She had some famous customers, including actor Lee Marvin (won an Oscar for "Cat Ballou") and actor Marlon Brando's sister. Eventually she decided it was time for a change of pace and moved to San Francisco.

"I went to work for Safeway in 1973, at the old Safeway store on Monterey Boulevard in San Francisco. I met my future husband Tom there. He was their brand new assistant manager and I was their brand new checker."

A little time went by and the couple married in November of 1974. They bought the home they still live in, in 1976.

"We discovered Pacifica in our search for a home and we love it here."

"So, I began as a Safeway checker and then went on to become, what they called then, 'Head Booth Girl.' It was like an office manager job."

Besides working at the Safeway store on Monterey, Linda would go on to work at three Safeways in Pacifica: the one that was in Pedro Point, the one that was in Park Mall and Safeway Linda Mar. Tom would go on to work at the main office of Safeway Stores, Incorporated in Walnut Creek. He worked in their tech department doing computer programming. Linda stayed with Safeway from 1973 until 1991.

"I worked for Safeway when it was Safeway Stores, Incorporated and back then we used to have a Safeway Employees Association."

The Association was a volunteer organization where its members put .25 cents a week, from their weekly check, into a special account for members – and this is when Linda's journey of volunteerism began. She was the President of the local Safeway Employees Association.

"If we wanted to put on an event for our members, we had to present a requisition form and pick out foods, paper products, whatever, for the event and I had 15 stores in my district. I did an event, every single month, including the month after my first child was born. But this is really where I began hands-on volunteering."

Linda and Tom became parents to Jocelyn and then Logan. Linda continued with Safeway part-time, when her kids headed off to school.

"When they were in elementary school, I was a very active volunteer. I was working part-time at the old Safeway in the Back of the Valley. I went on every single field trip with my kids. I was the 'Room Mom.'"

Here is a more broken out list of what Linda did at her kids' schools. It is pulled from a presentation where Linda was honored at a Pacific Coast Television "Stars" event.

"As her children began school in 1980, Linda Jonas became actively involved first with Ortega Elementary and then Terra Nova High School: Books and Beyond program, field trips, Home School Club, Terra Nova Boosters Club, school newsletter, Snack Bar Chair, and Tiger Café." In addition, when Linda's children were at Ortega, teacher Ingrid B. Lacy (namesake of Pacifica's middle school) asked Linda to work with her on "Project Pride," which Linda did. The project was the recipient of a San Mateo County award. Linda was also proud to be the recipient of an Elna Flynn Outstanding Volunteer Award. The award recognizes individuals who volunteer countless hours in support of education. Currently individuals are nominated and chosen from each Pacifica school. Back then, there were more than 10 elementary schools in what was then called, the Laguna Salada Union Elementary School District (now the Pacifica School District) and representatives from each school chose just one person to be the overall recipient. Linda Jonas was that person.

It should also be noted that Linda, now the grandmother of six, continued her school volunteerism with her grandchildren, which included a number of field trip drives. Additionally, Linda is also a many-time participant in school Read Aloud Days. She has also served as a Community Evaluator for the annual Oceana High School Senior Exhibition.

"My two children are lovely people," Linda reflected. "A lot of that they did on their own, and do on their own, but I like to think Tom and I were good instigators of good. I always taught them that it is what is in your head and what is in your heart – that's what counts."

What Linda taught her children, is exactly what she lived, not only working in their schools but joining giving volunteer organizations; the first when they were toddlers.

"I joined Beta Sigma Phi in 1978. Why did I join? Diane Rehn asked me to. Diane and I worked together at Safeway out at Pedro Point and in Linda Mar. I had heard about Beta Sigma Phi from Diane and it sounded like something I wanted to be a part of."

Linda also managed to attend Skyline College when her kids were little. Between Santa Rosa and Skyline Colleges, Linda earned the following Certificates: Secretary/Administrative Assistant, Word/Information Processing, Accounting, Office Management and Supervision, and Accounting. She retired from "regular" jobs in 2008 and that included the 17 years she did bookkeeping/accounting for the Pacifica School District (1991 through 2008).

As to her community volunteerism path, it just continued to grow. She has been a volunteer records clerk with the Pacifica Police Department for 13 years. That work includes helping with the indexing of police reports, citations and warrants into databases, and assisting with front-desk inquiries.

Linda was one of the founders of the Fog Fest Organizing Group in 2000. Why the group came into being is explained in the "About Us" section of The Pacific Coast Fog Fest's website: "The Pacific Coast Fog Fest was originally produced by a professional festival planner under the auspices of the City of Pacifica. After eight years, the City relinquished their production rights to a coalition of individuals from local non-profit organizations who formed the production company Pacifica Festivals, Inc. They produced the Fog Fest for six years before deciding to disband. At that point, a group of community-minded citizens who didn't want to see the Fog Fest die, came together to form the Fog Fest Organizing Group (FFOG)."

"The Pacific Coast Fog Fest is celebrating its 39th year, this year on September 26 and 27," Linda championed with gusto. "It is such a wonderful event and if you are reading this, and you never heard about it, you need to go! And of course if you have gone, I know I'll see you there!"

Linda worked as a FFOG volunteer for 18 years. In 2010, while she was with Beta Sigma Phi and FFOG, she joined the Pacifica Library Foundation Board.

"With all the reading I did as a child, and frankly still do, of course I love libraries!"

As a Library Foundation volunteer, Linda worked toward the development of a new sustainable library for Pacifica. She worked on fundraising events. She served as treasurer. She was one of the big helpers behind the "Treasurers and Trivia" event, a real crowd pleaser noted for its pure sense of fun! She stayed with the Foundation until it disbanded in 2023. (In 2016, a library bond measure was placed on the ballot to bring a 21st century library to the community of Pacifica. The vote fell slightly short of the two-thirds needed to pass the measure. Subsequently the City Council established the LAC, Library Advisory Committee, to continue working on the task. In 2023, the Foundation decided they needed to find a new strategy so they transferred their funds to the San Mateo County Libraries Foundation to, at some point, be used for the planning and construction of a new Pacifica Library.)

In 2010, Linda, apparently of the belief that she did not have enough to do, also joined the Rotary Club of Pacifica.

The Rotary Club of Pacifica is a nonpolitical service organization of Pacifica professionals who enjoy working together to make a difference in our community and around the world. Through their fundraising and work parties, Rotary Club of Pacifica works to beautify our community, provide dictionaries to our third graders, and support programs for those in need in Pacifica. They additionally support Rotary International's campaign to end polio worldwide, to help women in Central America with microcredit loans and they have helped build a clean water system for a village in Guatemala.

Since Linda joined Rotary, some of her volunteer positions have included: President, Club Treasurer, Membership Chair and Beautification Project Chair. Members of our local Rotary additionally noted the following "Linda" do-isms. "During her tenure as President, Linda instituted a strict 'Hugs and Kisses' policy for all members, increased club membership, pioneered successful evening club meetings on the First Tuesday of each month and recognized club members with a 'Rotarian of the Month' Award."

"I am just a big-mouth volunteer," Linda laughed in response to hearing the lineup of compliments from her fellow volunteers. "That's pretty much it."

Linda is currently serving her third term on Pacifica's Beautification Advisory Committee.

"Rotary is committed to: Rotary Plaza at the Sanchez Art Center, the Grace McCarthy Overlook on Sharp Park Road, parts of Oceana Boulevard and parts of Palmetto.

"When you volunteer, you get a much bigger view of the world. It opens up your heart and your mind to other people's wants and needs. It's good to know what other people want and need, not just you."

Linda is also a volunteer serving on the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee for the Jefferson Union High School District. "That meets once a year and it also meets, occasionally as needed, to review bond proceeds for voter-approved projects."

Linda's volunteer work has additionally included serving as volunteer-treasurer for several Pacifica City Council campaigns: Mary Ann Nihart; Eric Ruchames; Sue Beckmeyer and Susan Vellone.

What are her plans for tonight? "Oh, I have a Rotary Club Meeting."

What is she doing tomorrow morning? She will be volunteering at the Pacifica Police Department.

What is she doing, tomorrow night? She has to check her calendar but she believes she has a Beautification Advisory Committee meeting.

Somehow Linda still has plenty of time to visit with family, visit with friends and go for walks with Tom along the Sharp Park Berm or in San Pedro Valley Park.

"Tom and I used to hike and backpack in state and national parks a great deal. One of our really big hikes was when I was 59 and he was 63. We did the Redwood Sky Walk in Sequoia Park which has all these suspension bridges. That's one for all you hikers out there to investigate! When we were both still those ages, we hiked to the summit of Mt. Whitney one weekend (Whitney is the highest peak in the contiguous United States) and Kearsarge Pass the next weekend (another high elevation peak at 11,709 feet).

"In regards to my husband Tom, let me just say I made the right choice when I married that man. He's a keeper!"

"I'm a people person," Linda chuckled, as she stated the obvious. "But that's why I do all that I do. I like to work with people, and as far as I am concerned, anything that you can do that is doing good in the world, that is a good thing.

"Will I ever stop volunteering? Not unless I physically have to but then I'm sure I'll volunteer in whatever comes after this life. 'Oh, Mom, you're here, let me help you! Haha!'"

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**By Jean Bartlett** (March 12, 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](http://www.bartlettbiographies.com). This story was sponsored by Pacifican Sue Beckmeyer.*