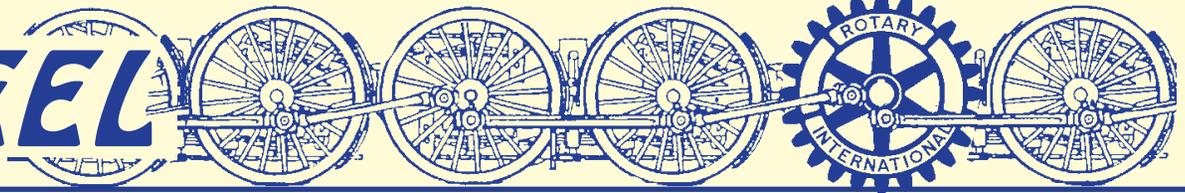


The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons



January 9, 2026
Vol. 77, No. 25
Editor:
Jan U-Airee (Dean H.)

Call to Order

Prez Lynn rang in a "Happy New Year" to all of us. She even showed a cartoon.

The Pledge

Past Prez Alan Dunham led us in the pledge which we all committed to.

Thought For the Day

Beth Rowett gave us the thought for the day.

THE CIRCLE OF KINDNESS

Every act of kindness starts a circle...

One that comes back around, stronger and wider than before.

In Rotary, we don't serve for money or recognition; we serve to connect hearts and minds.

Each time we choose kindness, we transcend borders.

We build a bridge...

between strangers, between generations, across cultures and beliefs.

A bridge between hope and action.

Kindness is the quiet power of "Service Above Self".

By Beth Rowett

Visiting Rotarians

There were two visiting Rotarians, both from Novato Evening. They're Dave Estes (George's Brother) and April Sorensen.

Guests of Rotarians

Wild Bill Vespa brought his lovely wife, Michele. Past Prez Bill McDill intro'd us to his first, second, third, Always! wife Vicki. Past Prez Ben Borok intro'd his very lovely daughter Donna Borok-Moss. And last but not least Toni Bramon was intro'd by her Past Prez Hubby, Gary Bramon.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

There were a number of January Birthdays. Number one is Past Prez Ben Borok born on January 1st. They have a parade for him on the 1st in Pasadena with thousands of roses for each of his years! Also celebrating January birthdays in attendance at our meeting were Roy Pfeifer, Past Prez Marty Wickenheiser, Sasha D'Amico, Dr. Larry Mazzotta, Marisa Remak and Mark Bosch.

Wedding Anniversaries

PDG Russ & Kathy Ketron celebrated 50+ years of bliss and marriage, too by not coming to the meeting today. Whereas Past Prez Peian and Past Prez Ron Harness celebrated many happy years.

Club Anniversaries

PDG Holly Axtel, Kyle Frazier and Jim White celebrated their years in Rotary. We also had members of the 50+ Club (Years in Rotary). Past Prez Ben Borok has 50 years as a Rotarian while Past Prez Alan Dunham celebrated 52 years! Both Ben and Alan were given plaques honoring their many years of service in Rotary.

Announcements

A Dinner You Can't Refuse

Peter Pelavin advised us that we need credit cards for each of us who paid by check to use for future "A Dinner You Can't Refuse" purchases. Grazie!

Prez Lynn announced to invite people to our "A Dinner You Can't Refuse" fundraiser for the Endowment.

Novato Rotarian Biography

Past Prez Peter Oser told us he was born in San Francisco and raised in Marin County. Peter told us he graduated from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. After graduation, he tried several businesses before choosing Insurance. He was a member of the Rotary Club of San Francisco #2 before joining our Club. Peter served as our Club President 2008-2009.

Program

Brad Williams introduced the Novato Rotary Endowment Board (including me!). Brad then explained how money flowed through the Endowment to our Club projects.

They care for the Jonas Community Fund which still has \$950,000. This money was donated by the Bill Jonas Family as well as the Jim and Camie Studley Family and other Rotarians.

Brad told us that the primary strategy of the Endowment Committee is to preserve the Permanent Fund. They also handle the Scholarship Funds we distribute each year. The Permanent Fund, Jonas Community Fund and Scholarship Fund are managed by Stifel (pronounced Sfi-fel).

Raffle

The raffle was won by "Lucky" John Reuscher who took home the five pictures of Abe Lincoln, our 16th President.

The BIG WHEEL

P.O. Box 657
Novato, CA 94948

The Four-Way Test

"Of the things we think, say or do:

1. Is it the TRUTH?
2. Is it FAIR to all concerned?
3. Will it build GOODWILL and BETTER FRIENDSHIPS?
4. Will it be BENEFICIAL to all concerned?"

Rotary Big Wheel Sponsor

Limited Sponsor Opportunity!

Show your support of the RCN and target people that share your commitment to supporting Rotary.

Limit of two sponsors!

Size: 1/4 column

Frequency of publication: 3x or 4x per month

Distribution: Over 130 like minded recipients

Open Rate: 68%

Cost \$600 per year, \$15 per issue (Prev. 3yr avg.)

Contact Bill Vespa: zip@sonic.net

Christian Thwaites Driving Ukraine

Thurs., January 22, 2026
7 pm to 8:30 pm

Christian has volunteered to deliver front line vehicles to Ukrainian military and aid organizations the last two years.

In his talk, Christian will share his volunteer mission insights, life in Ukraine, personal stories about the Ukrainians and volunteers he met, Ukraine's resilience amid war scenarios, and thoughts about Russia/Ukraine economy and their journey towards peace.

Tickets: Adults \$30 • Students \$15
www.novatospeakerseries.com



Upcoming Programs & Events

January

- Jan. 16 **Club Assembly**
- Jan. 22 **Novato Speaker Series** - Christian Thwaites
- Jan. 23 **Club Social** - Music at the Harness' home.
- Jan. 30 **Mental Health & Rotary**

February

- Feb. 6 **Brad Howard**
- Feb. 7 **A Dinner You Can't Refuse**
- Feb. 13 **No Meeting**
- Feb. 20 **First Responder Therapy Dogs**
Michelle Detrick
- Feb. 27 **Prof. Andrew Reddie**

March

- Mar. 6 **Meeting at City Hall** - City Leaders Panel

Rotary



Club of Novato

YES, BIG WHEEL EDITORS ARE STILL NEEDED

Support the most interesting
Rotary Club ever!

Help share our meetings
with family, friends
and members unable to attend.

All you need to do is supply typed
notes of the meeting. NO Formatting!

Contact Bill Vespa at
zip@sonic.net

ROTARY CLUB OF NOVATO 2025/2026 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Lynn Dawson
President

Peter Pelavin
Vice President

Marisa Remak
Secretary

Chris DeGabriele
Treasurer

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Mitone Griffiths
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Gloria Dunn-Violin & Randy Baker
*Environmental Sustainability
(NR-CAT)*

Holly Axtell
International Service

Jorg Puhr-Westerheide
The Rotary Foundation (TRF)

Ross Millerick
Youth Service

Patty Dougherty & Sonia Seeman
Membership

Sonia Seeman
Jonas Center Liaison

Peter Oser
President, Nova-Ro Corp.

Brad Williams
Chair, Novato Rotary Endowment

Tom Rickey
Past President

TGIF

with Live Music

Friday January 23rd • 5:30pm 'til...



At the home of Peian and Ron Harness
449 Fieldstone Dr., Novato



*Drinks provided by the Club
Food is Pot-Luck, please bring a dish to share.*



*Live background Piano music provided
by Peian and two other pianists!*

**A Great time to mingle
and mix with Rotarians!**

**Parking is easy on street but there will be several
steps up to the party house
(If you can make it up, it will all be worth it)**

Rotary Big Wheel Sponsor



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ITALIAN SUPPER & MUSIC

**THE ROTARY CLUB OF NOVATO PRESENTS
A DINNER YOU CAN'T REFUSE**

Bill & Adele Jonas Center • 1800 Ignacio Blvd., Novato

Saturday, February 7, 2026

5:30-6:30 Purchase Signature Cocktails
6:30 Dinner
Auctions through the Evening
Cocktail Attire Encouraged!

Silent Auction

Live Auctions

**Live Entertainment,
Music & Dancing
Featuring
"Frank Sinatra"!**

**NO Tickets
at the Door!**

Event tickets are \$100
subject to availability,
purchase before Jan. 30, 2026

Rotary Club of Novato

**THE NOVATO ROTARY ENDOWMENT IS A 501(C)(3)
ALL PROCEEDS SUPPORT COMMUNITY,
YOUTH, ENVIRONMENTAL, VOCATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS.**



President Lynn gave us a Happy New Year welcome.



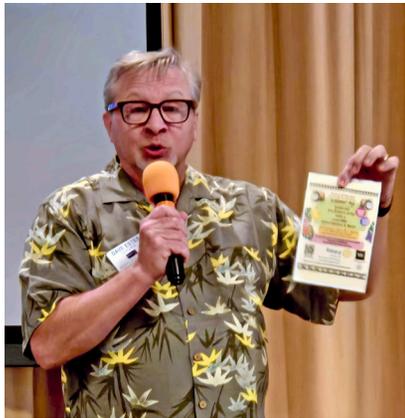
Chris DeGabriele announced that the Super Bowl Board is almost full.



Reggie Winner asked for homemade desserts for the "A Dinner You Can't Refuse" auction.



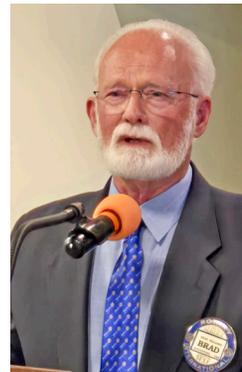
Marty Wickenheiser was recognized for her January Birthday.



Dave Estes from Novato Evening Rotary invites us to their fundraiser.



Brad raises our new height adjustable lectern.



Brad Williams gave a presentation on the Novato Rotary Endowment.



"Companion Cut-Outs" on the stage.



Larry Harrison talked about projects needing more funds distributed from the NRE.



Gary Bramon spoke on the origin and purpose of the Novato Rotary Endowment.



Peter Oser was our Featured Rotarian this week.