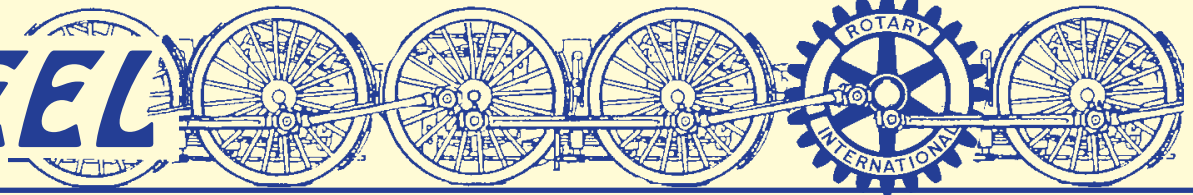


# The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons



**October 3, 2025**  
**Vol. 77, No. 14**  
**Editor:**  
**Bill Vespa**

## Call to Order

**Prez Lynn** called the meeting to order. The food wasn't ready yet, but we proceeded anyway to keep the meeting on time.

## Pledge, History & Inspiration

**Larry Mazzotta** led us in the pledge.

### History and Inspiration

**Larry** gave us a history of the Four-Way Test. It was not developed by Rotary, it was **Herbert J. Taylor** who wrote the Four-Way Test as a method to correct the company culture and save Club Aluminum Products from bankruptcy in 1932. It worked to save Club Aluminum. In the 1940's **Herbert** was a Rotary International Director and offered it to Rotary. Rotary International adopted its use as a central part of Rotary's structure. In 1954, **Herbert** gave the Copyright to Rotary International, while retaining the right to use the Four-Way Test for his own use.

**Past President Bill McDill** provided an inspirational thought about today's theme, Community Service. Rotary is Community Service! The RCN has many successful local community service projects. **Bill** has more of an interest in International Service, which we tend to think of as distant global projects. Yes, Rotary sends people and resources around the globe. But **Bill** reminded us that International Projects are local community service projects for those receiving the help.

## Visiting Rotarians

**Carol Joy** and **Bill Davis** visited us from Novato Sunrise. They were appropriately dressed in their Tracht as they proceeded to pitch the upcoming Oktober Fest fundraiser on October 18th. Help support Rotary and do a little "Chicken Dance". **Susie Linn** was also a visiting Rotarian from Clayton.

## Guests of Rotarians

**Mike Morrissey** brought **Evan Blacksea** as a guest for the last time. **Evan** will be inducted next week. **P.P. Jim Spilman** hosted his son **Grant** and the "Love of His Life", **Diane**. **President Lynn** introduced soon to be new members, **Laura Joss** and **Mary Jane Waxler**. **Jim Carriere** had former Novato Sunrise Rotarian **Richard De Ramon** as his guest. **Jim Spilman** stood a second time to introduce **Homa Rassouli's** guest, **Bing Gu**. **Bing** has potential service projects for our Club.

## Announcements

### Community Care

**P.P. Chris DeGabriele** announced that former member **George Martinez** passed away. His wife **Ingrid** is also a former member of our Club and owns Changing Seasons in downtown Novato. There will be a celebration of life for **George** at San Rafael Yacht Club on October 18th. **P.P. Marty W.** reported that **John Ringgenberg** is doing great after hip replacement surgery.

### Sponsorship Opportunity

**Chris D.** also reminded us that there is sponsor space available in the Big Wheel. Contact **Bill Vespa** for details.

### NAMI Walk

**Jeff Slavitz** made a last announcement about the NAMI walk on Saturday, October 4th.

## Volunteers Needed

**Ross Millerick** told us of two upcoming volunteer opportunities. Next Friday's meeting on October 10th is offsite at Homeward Bound because the NUSD Empower event is taking place at the Jonas Center. **Ross** needs a couple of volunteers for the NUSD event, please contact him. Also, on Saturday October 11th is COM's 100th Centennial at IVC. Contact **Lynn Dawson** to volunteer for that event.

## Flood Control

**Jim Spilman** needs people to help with the Loma Verde School flood control project. It takes place October 18th & 19th, 9am, contact **Jim**.

## Non-Spaghetti

**President Lynn** announced the Non-Spaghetti Feed at the McDill's is coming up on October 24th. The starting time is 5pm, not 6pm as previously published.

## Blue Badge

**President Lynn** presented **Beth Rowett** with her Blue Badge. **Beth** agreed to make a contribution to **Lynn's** "Good News" bucket (which goes to the Endowment).

## Good News Bucket

**President Lynn** then called upon **Past President Phil Dougherty** to talk about some notable family events in the last year. **Phil** said it was a memorable year; his father passed away, there was a family trip to Japan, **Phil** turned 65, he and **Laurie** celebrated 35 years of marriage, he will be a great grandfather, daughter **Patty** returned from her trip to Portugal where she got engaged to **Grant**. **Phil** and **Laurie** thought that season tickets to the Novato Speaker Series was a great congratulatory gift for **Patty** and **Grant**. **Phil** then plugged the upcoming NSS event on October 23 with **Mike Robbins**. **Phil** capped all this off with a \$250 contribution to **Lynn's** bucket.

# 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?"

## Annual Non Spaghetti Feed



*Note Time Correction*

**Friday, October 24th, 5:00 PM**  
**at The McDills'**  
**18 San Luis Court, Novato**

Vicki and Bill McDill will be opening their home for the Annual Non Spaghetti Feed. Everyone should bring a finger-food to serve 4-6 people and their good humor, so we can enjoy the fellowship and celebrate Spring. Spouses and significant others are encouraged to come and join in the fun.

**Hosted by Bill & Vicki McDill**

## Mike Robbins

### Embracing Change: Thriving Through Uncertainty

**Thurs., October 23, 2025**  
**7 pm to 8:30 pm**

Join Mike Robbins, sought after keynote speaker and bestselling author, for a thoughtful, engaging, and interactive talk on how to navigate change and achieve deeper trust, better collaboration, and greater results.

With decades of experience from pro baseball to Silicon Valley, and an expert in teamwork, leadership, and emotional intelligence, Mike's clients include Google, Microsoft, Genentech, eBay, the NBA, Charles Schwab, Wells Fargo, GAP, and the San Francisco Giants

**Tickets: Adults \$30 • Students \$15**  
**[www.novatospeakerseries.com](http://www.novatospeakerseries.com)**



## Upcoming Programs & Events

### October

Oct. 10	Homeward Bound - Off-Site Meeting
Oct. 17	World Photography - Jim Codington
Oct. 23	Novato Speaker Series - Mike Robbins
Oct. 24	Non-Spaghetti Feed- at the McDill's Home
Oct. 31	No Meeting

### November

Nov. 7	Guide Dogs for the Blind -
Nov. 14	TBD
Nov. 21	Club Social
Nov. 28	No Meeting

## 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%

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Contact Bill Vespa: [zip@sonic.net](mailto:zip@sonic.net)

## ROTARY CLUB OF NOVATO 2025/2026 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

### OFFICERS

**Lynn Dawson**  
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**Peter Pelavin**  
*Vice President*

**Marisa Remak**  
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*Treasurer*

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**Mitone Griffiths**  
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*Assistant District Governor*

### DIRECTORS

**John Reuscher**  
*Logistics & Facilities*

**Phil Dougherty**  
*Public Image & Awareness*

**Marcus Combs**  
*Community Service*

**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*

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

Those in attendance with October birthdays or anniversaries included: **P.P. Dean Heffelfinger**, **Ed Ross**, almost member **Laura Joss** celebrating birthdays. Wedded bliss was celebrated by **Zennetta** and **Mark Bosch**, and **Sara & David Gabriel**, **Joni** and **Chris DeGabriele**, **Michele** and **Bill Vespa**. **Ed Ross** celebrated his Rotary Anniversary this month.

## Bylaws Update

**President Lynn** reported that after sending the proposed Bylaws to the membership for review there were changes suggested. In addition to the changes included in the proposed Bylaws emailed on August 30th, **Lynn** noted that Vocational Service had been under the Youth Service Director, but is now its own avenue of service. **David Gabriel** will be the Vocational Service Director. **Lynn** called for discussion, there was none. **Dean Heffelfinger** made the motion to approve, the motion was seconded by **David Gabriel**. The proposed Bylaws were unanimously approved by voice vote.

## Featured Rotarians with a

### Community Service Theme

**Marcus Combs** was the first Featured Rotarian. Using a powerpoint presentation **Marcus** told us he was born in Oklahoma, moved to Mill Valley, California at age 5. Attended COM and worked for WhistleStop Wheels where he met **Diane**. They were married in 1985. In a couple of years **Marcus** went to work for the U.S. Park Service. He wanted to go to Yosemite, but **Diane** thought that would be a long commute. So, **Marcus** stayed in the Bay Area working at the GGNRA, Alcatraz, Ocean Beach and many other offices around the Bay. **Marcus** is proud to have provided public service as a member of the U.S. Park service where the mission is to "Preserve & Protect National Treasures for the People of our Nation."

Next **Marcus**, our Community Service Director, talked about and showed pictures of our Rotary Club of Novato community service projects. The projects included getting seven drab and graffiti covered

utility boxes in downtown Novato artistically painted; placing City Hall Commemorative Bricks; Pianos on Grant Ave., 4th of July Parade, Student Scholarships, Teacher Recognitions for 17 teachers, and the Car Wash fundraiser.

The Community Service Committee meets at Round Table Pizza in Novato on the 3rd Wednesday of the month. Show up at 5pm to socialize, the meeting starts at 5:30.

Our next Featured Rotarian was **Jim Spilman**. **Jim** was born in Burbank, CA, went to a Seventh Day Adventist School from the 3rd to 11th grade, because his mom thought that would be better than public school. That kind of backfired, since the classes didn't match up when he transferred back to public school. **Jim** went to live in Kansas with his uncles who farmed cattle and sheep. One was an auctioneer, HUP! **Jim** loved working the farm and driving the tractors in the fields. In his senior year, he fell for a girl that turned out to be his second-cousin. Needless to say that did not work out. After High School, **Jim** worked for Pacific Bell. He put in 24 years and retired at 48 years old. He still collects that pension. **Jim** then became an independent computer consultant. He has his Masters in Computer Science. He later worked at Autodesk and retired from there about 7 years ago. Rotary is **Jim's** life/family. In 2007 he was the President of RCN. That same year he was diagnosed with cancer. Rotarians stepped up to support **Jim** and his family, providing transportation for **Jim** to and from appointments and cancer treatments. Rotarians helped with meals for **Jim** and his family. **Jim** has been cancer free since then. He has four children, seven grand children and one great grandchild.

**Jim** then moved on to presenting the financial side of RCN Community Service. The budget for Community Service projects that comes from our Endowment is \$19,171. Some of the projects have costs, some do not. For example, we may only provide labor/support. There is another \$8,437 spent on projects which came from District 5150 as District Designated Funds. **Jim** showed photos of some of our projects like the Bahia Lagoon and Babe Silva Field Bleacher refurbishing.

## Service Project Reports

### NMCS Food Project

Next up to speak was **Larry Mazzotta**. **Larry** talked specifically about the North Marin Community Services food project, which was started during COVID in 2020. This year our Club partnered with **Eric Flick**, owner of the Grocery Outlet Novato to provide \$8,500 worth of groceries for a cost of \$5,000 to our Club. This was enough food to help over 250 families this year.

### 3rd Grade Dictionaries

**Marty Wickenheiser** talked about the Dictionary Project. Every year we provide 350-400 dictionaries to 3rd grade students at six Novato Schools. There has been some discussion about whether this project is worth doing now that students are getting ChromeBooks in the 3rd grade. It turns out that not only do the students enjoy learning from the books, many of the students have ESL parents who get help learning English by these dictionaries being in their home.

### On The Rise Sculpture

**Mike Morrissey** gave the final report of the day. RCN's project to install a symbolic sculpture along the 4th of July Parade route in downtown Novato, near WestAmerica Bank at Grant Ave. & Redwood Blvd. It will be a "First Responders Installation" with signage about first responders and signage about the symbolism of the sculpture. The metal sculpture, designed by **Matthew Rapalyea**, is approximately 12 ft tall and was inspired by the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks. The base of the sculpture is a sphere, which represents Earth; On top of the sphere are two vertical bars, representing the Twin Towers; On top of those two bars is a ring on edge which represents unity; On top of the ring is a profile of stairs, which represents returning to recovery; On top of the stairs is grouping of stars and stripes which represents the U.S. Flag. The renderings look great.

## Raffle

Our newest Blue Badge recipient, **Beth Rowett**, took home the cash!





*President Lynn presents Beth Rowett with her Blue Badge.*



*Our Community Service Director Marcus Combs spoke about the many local service projects of the Rotary Club of Novato.*



*Larry Mazzotta spoke about the Marin Community Services Food Project.*

*"I conceived of the idea by the way responders, fire fighters, police officers, government employees and nonprofits joined together in support of those lost, and their families."*

Matthew Rapalyea, Sculptor



*Proposed Grant Ave. installation.*



*Matt with his "On The Rise" sculpture.*



*Marcus was also a Featured Rotarian. On the left is a picture of Marcus with his family. On the right is a picture of Marcus during his career with the U.S. Park Service in San Francisco.*



*Marty W. spoke about the Dictionary Project.*



*Jim Spilman was also a Featured Rotarian. Jim is pictured here with his wife Diane and son Grant.*



*Jim describes a photo of the Bahia Clean-up. He is pointing out a rope that Penny Hansen bravely descended to take photos of the project.*