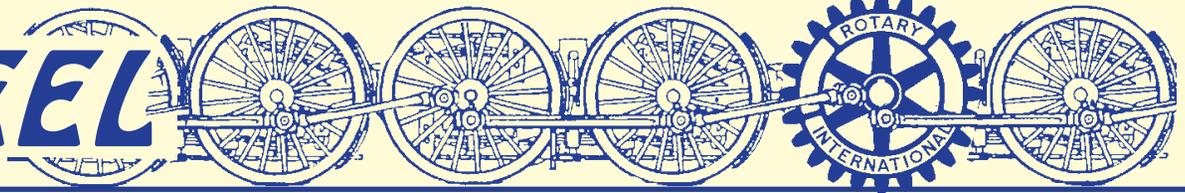


# The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons



**November 14, 2025**  
**Vol. 77, No. 19**  
**Editor:**  
**Suzanne Bales**

## Welcome

Welcome to birthday wonderland. The Jonas center was transformed with festive and colorful balloons, birthday hats, birthday cakes and all types of games to play.

Who doesn't like Twister, Pin The Tail On The Donkey and Tiddly Winks! The occasion of such festivity was the celebration of the November birthdays especially **President Lynn**.

## Pledge & Thought for the Day

The pledge was led by **Kerry Beissmann Bacho**. **Kerry** was in full clown regalia to aid in the birthday celebration. **Kerry** also read the 4-Way Test, commenting on the symbolism of 4. It felt like a **Dan Brown** novel!

## Visitors & Guests

**Russ Ketrion** introduced **Bernardo Wolfson** from the Boca Raton club. **Russ** also hosted **John Walter** while **Larry Harrison** hosted Blue Star Mom and President of the organization **Barb Bochner**.

**Kerry Bacho** hosted **Jeffrey Reeder**. **Jeffrey** is the interim Dean of Math and Science at College of Marin. **Al Angulo** came with **Darlene Purcell**

**Rob Marshall** was back in town briefly to attend to his father in law's funeral.

## Birthdays

Some November birthdays being celebrated are **Grace Wong, Bill Vespa, Bill McDill, Marie Rios, Rene Prado** and **Cindy Milano**. **Holly Axtel** is celebrating her birthday and wedding anniversary on the same day...way to simplify, **Holly!** **Al Angulo's** B'day is on the 30th. **Lowell Smith** is celebrating 35 years of wedded bliss with **Marilyn**.

## Announcements

### Blue Star Moms

**Larry Harrison** reminded us he is collecting Target gift cards for Blue Star Moms. You can also Venmo **Larry** or write a check. The deadline is Dec 5th

### City Hall Brick Laying

**Jim Spilman** was gathering helpers for after the meeting, a laying bricks project at City Hall. You are one VERY busy volunteer **Jim Spilman!**

### A Dinner You Can't Refuse - 2026

**Peter Pelavin**, wearing a birthday hat and two red sponges on the ears, reminded us to organize groups for bidding on the live auction at the February 7th 2026 Novato Rotary Endowment Fundraiser.

### A Simple Gesture

**Marcus** reminded us another Simple Gesture food collection will happen Dec 13th.

### Remembering Our Veterans

**Brad Williams**, in honor of Veterans day, read the heart wrenching poem "In Flanders Field" to remind us all of the ultimate sacrifice made by so many.

### + 1 for the Doughertys

**Patty Dougherty** had happy news to share. She is now an aunt and **Phil** is a grandfather. Her sister just had a baby last week.

## New Member Induction

Next up **Jim Spilman**, a 32 year Rotarian, inducted new member **Edgar Mendoza**. **Lynn Dawson** (who else??) is the sponsor. **Jim** reminded us Rotary is an organization of 1.4 million people worldwide.

## The Rotary Foundation

Next up the master of the Rotary Foundation, **Jorg Pühr Westerheide**. First, **Jorg** praised the work ethic of the team that helped with Loma Verde playground. Thanks to Rotarians the playground went from a muddy mess to being able to use it. Big machinery was involved with the fix. **Jorg** also reminded us of clean water in a Guatemala hospital so kids were no longer dying in the hospital due to bad water.

Our club actively supports the Foundation! The Rotary Foundation awards donations with pins ranging from sapphires to rubies. **Jorg** was very busy awarding many Rotarians! **Beth Rowett, Jim White, David Gabriel, Christopher Mychajluk, Chris DeGabriele, Rob Marshall, Dennis Baldwin, Bill McDill, Sonia Seeman, Larry Mazzotta** and **John Ringgenberg** Thank you for supporting the Foundation!!

**Jorge** also discussed having 71 "Benefactors" in our club. These Rotarians have donated at least \$1,000 to the permanent fund. **Jorge** broke it down to 16 major donors, \$1000 each, 7 donors at \$2500 each, 3 at \$50,000 and one at \$250,000. Way to go Rotary Club of Novato!!!

# 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

## In Memoriam

### Phil Brown

May 13, 1931 – November 5, 2025

Service at Valley Memorial Park  
Friday, November 21st at 10:00 a.m.

## Christian Thwaites

### Driving Ukraine

Thurs., January 26, 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

### November

Nov. 21 **Pet Friendly Club Social** - Golden Gate Bistro  
Nov. 28 **No Meeting**

### December

Dec. 5 **Center for Domestic Peace** -  
Dec. 12 **Annual Meeting & Speaker** - Melissa Prandi  
Dec. 19 **Unwrapping AI: The Gift That Keeps on Learning**  
Dec. 21 **Holiday Brunch** - Marin Country Club  
Dec. 26 **No Meeting**

### January

Jan. 2 **No Meeting**  
Jan. 9 **Novato Rotary Endowment Presentation**  
Jan. 16 **Club Assembly**  
Jan. 22 **Novato Speaker Series** - Christian Thwaites

# 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*

**Francesco Arezzo**  
*R.I. President*

**Mitone Griffiths**  
*District Governor*

**Judy Johnson**  
*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 Puhrr-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*

## Featured Rotarian Al Angulo

What a story! **Al** stated he is very old at 97 on November 30th. When he joined Rotary a number of our members had not yet been born! **Al**, as an orphan of 16, immigrated from warm Columbia to cold and snowy New York. He arrived in December 1945 wearing shorts and a T-shirt. Having a student visa he immediately found work in a sausage factory. At 18, **Al** entered the Army. He served 29 years in the infantry. While deployed in Europe he met a gal from Sacramento. After three months he asked her to marry...no. Three months later asked again and got a yes! **Al** and **Eleanor** were married for 62 years before she passed on. Their three sons were born in Frankfurt; Tacoma, Washington and San Francisco. **Al** had promised his oldest son he would retire when he entered high school and **Al** did!

**Al** at the time, with his pharmaceutical background, was working at Fort Baker and had orders to go to Hamilton.

In 1969, they purchased a house in Novato. Their three sons attended Novato and San Marin High. **Al** is very proud of how well his sons have done with their science based careers.

The circle goes on and on. **Al** joined Rotary in 1978, sponsored by past president **Dave Milano**. In 1992, **Al** served as President. He also served as Assistant District Governor

**Al** sponsored our current president **Lynn Dawson**. And to close the circle **Larry Mazzotta** introduced **Darlene Purcell** to **Al**!!

Not a bad story for a penniless orphan who at age 16 showed up in New York, during a snow storm, wearing shorts and a T-shirt!

**President Lynn** ended the meeting with light hearted games....Two Truths and a Dare and Rotary Bingo. Had to be at the meeting!!

## Next Friday Reminder

See you at the social Friday the 21st Bring your well behaved furry friend!

## The 25'er

Guess who won the 25er? Well deserved **Al Angulo**!!!

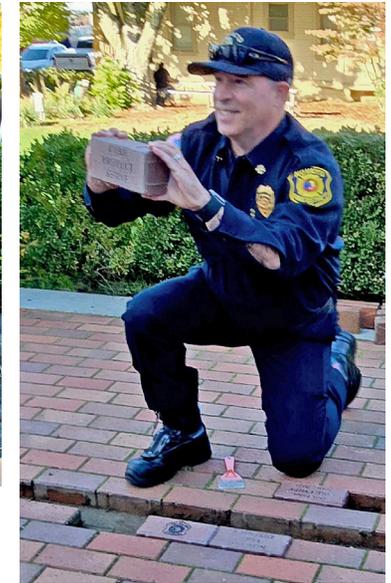
# Pet Friendly TGIF

**Golden Gate Bistro**  
7380 Redwood Blvd, Novato

**Friday, November 21st**  
**5:00p.m. Social Hour**  
**No Host Bar, Food Provided**

**Share your training secrets or why you own that rare breed.**  
**Bring those puppy snapshots!**

## City Hall Brick Laying November 14, 2025





*It was a Birthday Bash, celebrating all of the members with November birthdays.*



*Edgar Mendoza was pinned by his sponsor, Lynn Dawson.*



*Jim Spilman inducts our newest member, Edgar Mendoza.*



*Chair of RCN's new Italian Supper Club Fundraiser, Peter Pelavin, asks members to build bidding teams for the upcoming Live Auctions.*



*Jorg, The Club Rotary Foundation Chair, recognized members for their recent contributions.*

## CAR WASH FUNDRAISER FOR NOVATO TEACHERS NOVEMBER 16, 2025

John Cutrufelli made pizza after Marisa showed him how to work his new pizza oven. The pizza was great! Great teamwork and camaraderie. The rain held off until 3:45 PM. Another successful event. Please get your checks in for the car wash tickets.

