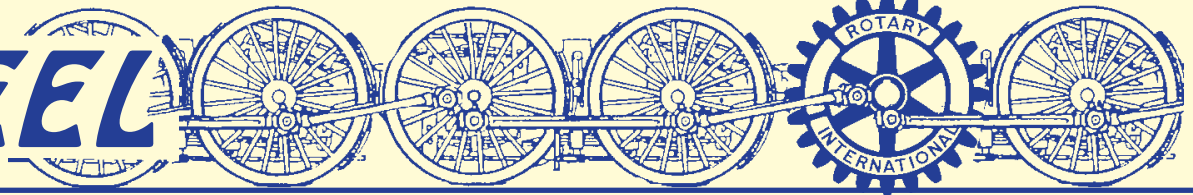


The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons

February 6, 2026
Vol. 77, No. 29
Editor:
Suzanne Bales



Pledge & Thought

Patty Dougherty led us in the pledge while **Mike Morrissey** shared a thought based on our speaker of the day. **Mike's** statement sums up the speaker's presentation "An investment is something you put care into today because you believe it will matter tomorrow. Global Grants reflect that mindset". More on the speaker later.

Visiting Rotarians

From far away Vina del Mar Chile, **Eduardo Lara**. From Pacifica PDG **Steve Wright** and from Oakland Uptown our speaker **Brad Howard** with his wife. **Keith Axtell** volunteered that our visitor **Eduardo Lara** has been active as President of his club and is involved with a long term project of wheelchairs for severely disabled children.

Guests of Rotarians

Kathy with **Russ Ketron** and spouse **Skip Meehan** with **Laura Joss**.

Ice Breaker

Presidents Lynn's icebreaker of the day was, "What was your favorite trip?" Sharing a table with **Mike Morrissey** meant he won for the most interesting destination with no competition! Because there is no meeting February 13th everyone was treated to a small box of candy in advance of Valentines.

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays, anniversaries and celebration of years of being a Rotarian were all noticed. Some plans included **Jim Carriere** taking his wife on a banking trip to Orlando and **Kerry Beissmann-Bacho** having her birthday present be friends helping with our BIG fundraiser. Her husband graciously offered their house for a super bowl party the very next day. Good luck with that one **Kerry!** **Russ Ketron** has been given permission by **Kathy** to celebrate his b'day playing with his poker buddies. Some land marks mentioned: **Penny Hanson** turns 80! Years in Rotary: **Peter Oser** 25, **Burt Hoffmann** 38 and **Moses Jacob** 40 years!

Announcements

Announcements were plentiful involving THE sold out Fundraiser.

Recognitions

PDG **Steve Wright** called up PP **Tom Rickey** and **Jorg Puhr-Westerheide**. **Steve** presented banners and a letter praising our club for Polio Plus donations and meeting the mark of Every Rotarian Every year. Our Club was also in the zone for the per capita donations. Well done Rotary Club of Novato!!

Featured Rotarian

Featured Rotarian was **John Cutrufelli** a long time Rotarian. **John** a contractor not a cook shared a story about chatting with our own **Grace Wong** in the grocery store and she later asking **Paul Scheller** for a referral of a contractor. Took awhile for **Grace** to sort it out but hired **John** for the first of many projects. **John** shared a long and varied list of clients he has done multiple

projects for. **John** of Bay Builders has been an active contractor since the early 70s. He modestly downplayed his volunteer project to install bathroom grab bars for seniors. **John's** skills as a contractor and a pizza maker at our get-togethers is legendary!!!

Speaker

Next up our speaker **Brad Howard**. Past district governor District 5170 and a member of the Board of Directors of Rotary International. I admit when I saw the program was "Return on Investments" I thought ughhhh spreadsheets and numbers. That was not the program at all!!

Brad inspired us as to what being a Rotarian is all about. The introduction by **Mike Morrissey** says it all: "An investment is something you put care into today because you believe it will matter tomorrow. Global Grants reflect that mindset." They bring local knowledge, international partnership, and long term responsibility together so communities don't just receive help, they grow stronger. That kind of impact doesn't fade when the project ends. It keeps working.

The **Ketrons** and **Axtells** have been involved with **Brad's** trips to Ghana. What Rotary did with Rotary grants was take a area that had no medical service at all and build a medical clinic and later a large open air out building. This project was life saving for a huge geographic area. **Brad** emphasized that Rotarians are wired differently. Being socially connected and having a purpose are important.

The Rotary Foundation allows members to dream big and, with the backing of grants, achieve those dreams. **Brad** discussed how Ghana came about with a \$175,000 grant .

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

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**

Captain Gil Rud

From the Prairie to the Pacific: A Blue Angels Journey

Thurs., April 23, 2026
7 pm to 8:30 pm

Captain Gil Rud will share his journey from rural North Dakota to the cockpits of U.S. Navy jet fighters, and ultimately captain of a flagship aircraft carrier, USS Constellation, responsible for the welfare of 5,000+ sailors.

His success as a naval aviator led to the ultimate reward- "Boss" of the world-famous Blue Angels, overseeing their successful transition to the F/A-18 Hornet.

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



Upcoming Programs & Events

February

- 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**
Mar. 13 **Meeting - TBD**
Mar. 20 **Meeting - TBD**
Mar. 27 **Club Social - TBD**

ROTARY CLUB OF NOVATO 2025/2026 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

OFFICERS

Lynn Dawson
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Peter Pelavin
Vice President

Marisa Remak
Secretary

Chris DeGabriele
Treasurer

Francesco Arezzo
R.I. President

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District Governor*

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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

The message is in using the grant system wisely and for great projects each and every Rotarian can dream to make it happen. Our own **Axtells** know this better than anyone.

Rotary provides a framework to makes us better. We do for others but also gain with ourselves.

Definitely an inspirational message and definitely not a lecture on the ins and outs of spread sheets!

25er

\$25 won by **Jim “hup” Spilman**

Rotary Big Wheel Sponsor



845 Vallejo Avenue, Downtown Novato
www.handjtire.com
hjtire@vbn.com

Burt Hoffmann
John Da Silva

(415) 897-1185

- Tires
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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

The Rotary Club of Novato's Monthly Board and Committee Meetings

Membership

First Tuesday of the Month at 5:00 p.m.

Contact Patty Dougherty at pattydou97@gmail.com for meeting location.

World Community Service

First Wednesday of the Month at 5:30 p.m.

Contact chair Holly Axtell axtell@aol.com for meeting location.

Youth Service

First Thursday of the Month at 5:30 p.m.

Contact chair Ross Millerick at ross.millerick@gmail.com for meeting location.

Vocational Service

First Thursday of the Month at 6:00 p.m.

Contact chair David Gabriel at dhgabriel@gmail.com for meeting location.

Environmental Sustainability

Second Tuesday of the Month at 6:00 p.m.

Contact chair Randy Baker at gloriaviolin@yahoo.com for meeting location.

RCN Board

Third Tuesday of the Month at 5:30 p.m.

Contact President Lynn Dawson at lynnldawson@comcast.net for meeting location.

Community Service

Third Wednesday of the Month at 5:30 p.m.

Contact chair Jim Spilman at james_v_spilman@msn.com for meeting location.

Nova-Ro Board

Third Thursday of the Month at 8:30 a.m.

Contact chair Peter Oser at peteroser205@gmail.com for meeting location.

PR/Communications Committee

Fourth Tuesday of the Month at 5:00 p.m.

Contact chair Joy Filman at joyphd@gmail.com for meeting location.

Novato Rotary Endowment

Quarterly (Jul., Oct., Jan. Apr.) on the Fourth Thursday of the Month at 8:30 a.m.

Contact chair Brad Williams at acur8cpa@icloud.com for meeting location.



Mike Morrissey gave us the thought for the day.



Rotarian Eduardo Lara was visiting from Chile.



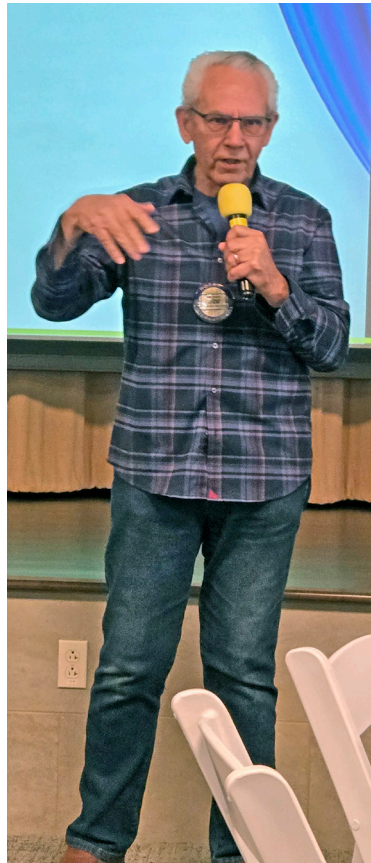
PDG Steve Wright recognized our Club for 2024-25 Polio-Plus and EREY contributions.



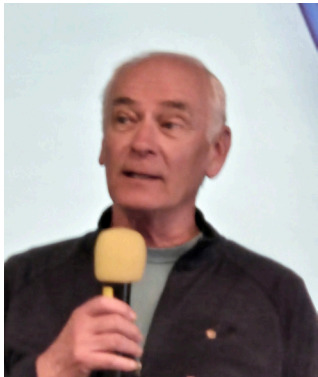
Foundation Chair Jorg Westerheide (l) and Past President Tom Rickey (r) were recognized by PDG Steve Wright for our Clubs contributions in 2024-25.



Peter Pelavin asks for ADYCR auction bids.



Jim Spilman asks for ADYCR event registrations.



Chris DeGabriele says the Superbowl Board is full.

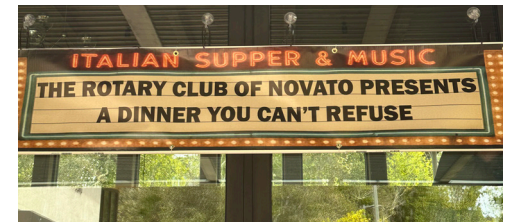


Frank Bruno describes the Speak Easy at the ADYCR event.

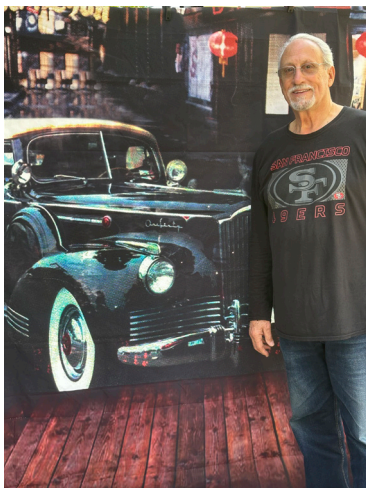


Our Speaker Rotarian Brad Howard.

A Dinner You Can't Refuse - Saturday Set-up



These photos captured some of the members who helped set up for our event. There were many more, than shown here, working from around 10am until after 1pm. Thank you to everyone who helped make this happen!



Rotary Club of Novato's "A Dinner You Can't Refuse" 2026

