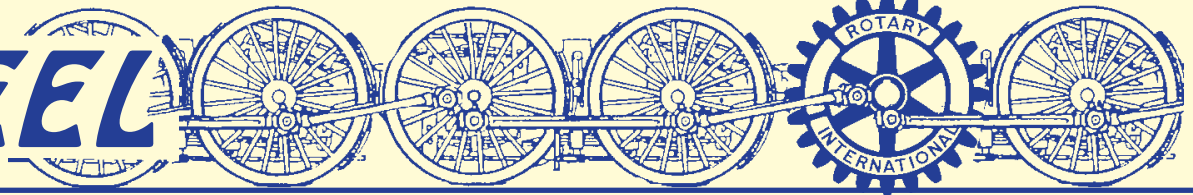


The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons



March 13, 2026
Vol. 77, No. 33
Editor:
Maggie Shao

In the Beginning

Madame President Lynn called our meeting to order. After the pledge **Chris Siefkas** gave the thought for the day from the **Dalai Lama**. “Man surprised me most about humanity. Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived.”

Guests and Visitors

Jeff Slavitz introduced Rotary Club of Viña del Mar Norte of Chile Foundation Chair, **John McVeigh** who also brought his daughter **Tasha McVeigh**. Sister club to Viña del Mar Norte is the Rotary Club of Sausalito with member **Bruce Huff** attending today. A joint project for a school for physically disabled students in Chile, **John** has just submitted a Global Grant awaiting approval. **Jorg Puhr-Westerheide** introduced his wife **Linda**, **Patty Dougherty** introduced Novato native **Jackson Roberts**, **Tom Rickey** introduced **Jay Magtibay** who has applied to our club for membership, and **Peter Oser** introduced **Joe Bartl**.

Ice Breaker

Icebreaker topic for today’s lunch “What is the best advice that you ever received?” **Prez Lynn** followed up with her experience last weekend with **Peter Pelavin**

our President Elect at PELS, President Elect Learning Seminar, With over 300 attendees and awesome training her perspective afterwards is we have a great club.

Community Cares/Sunshine Report

Marty Wickenheiser updated us on **Jim Spilman** after his knee replacement surgery, that he is recovering, not moving as fast but he’s got his phone. Call or send a card to wish him a rapid recovery. **Prez Lynn** updated us talking with **Gloria Dunn-Violin** a few days ago that she is getting better

Announcements

Birthdays & Anniversaries

The first meeting of the month we always acknowledge birthdays and anniversaries. However, the birthday table was empty. A few folks celebrating birthdays were sitting amongst us including **Brad Williams** will be turning 78 on March 16, celebrating his 1000 class attendance at Orange Theory gym. He will also celebrate with a Sunday brunch and kids and grandkids will help celebrate. **Joy Fillman** will celebrate her birthday with family with an urban safari to Windsor. Notable anniversaries include **Ben** and **Frances Borok** celebrating 72 years, and. **Vicki** and **Bill McDill** celebrating 63 years.

Utility Box Painting

Randy Baker with an impressive **Jim Spilman** like “Whoop” invited members to check on sign-up genius (see pg 2) to volunteer to Prep and Prime utility boxes in Novato. Last year was a great success and we are supporting the City of Novato again starting March 30 at 9am meet at Redwood and Olive for training and then will disperse to the different locations to Prep & Prime, will need service volunteers from March 30-April 3.

City Hall Bricks

Marcus Combs asked for volunteers on Tuesday April 7th at 1:30pm to install brick pavers at City Hall.

Food Packing

Larry Harrison asked for volunteers for March 31 at 9:00am to help with packing and distribution of food for 270 needy families at North Marin Community Center, 1907 Novato Blvd. Shifts are 9-11:30 for unloading food and packaging, 1:30-3pm for distributing food.

District Assembly

Russ Ketron challenged our club to beat the record of 44 members attending District 5150 Assembly this coming March 21. In addition to cheering in our President Elect **Peter Pealvin** there are great breakout sessions, lunch, and a special guest, **Ramesh Ferris**, who will be speaking at 12:30pm, an amazing polio survivor afflicted at 6 months old, then after surgeries and years of rehab, he’s a dedicated Rotarian since 2009, **Ramesh** is best known for his 2008 “Cycle to Walk” campaign, where he hand-cycled 7,140 kilometres across Canada. He is District Governor of 5370 that includes the Yukon, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and Northwest Territories.

Haiti on the Rise

Jackie Lee invited everyone to the Haiti On The Rise Gala on Saturday April 11, 2026 5pm at St Mary’s Cathedral in SF. There will be delicious food and showcase the good work going on in Haiti. Proceeds from this gala will help complete construction of the second floor and roof of a high school and provide scholarships to 150 students. Please support this wonderful organization led by **Jackie Lee**. <https://haitiontherise.org/>

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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?"

NEW MEMBER NOTICE

The application for membership of the following was (were) approved by the Board of Directors and the Membership Committee:

- **Jay Magtibay: General Contractor**
- **Susan Siefkas: Treasury Management Services, Retired**

If there are no objections by:

Thursday, March 27

he/she/they will be inducted on or about:

Friday, April 3

Marisa Remak
Secretary

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

March

- Mar. 20 **Meeting** - Eames Institute
Mar. 27 **Club Social** - Adobe Creek Brewing

April

- Apr. 3 **No Meeting**
Apr. 10 **CAT/Environmental Sustainability**
- Randy Baker
Apr. 17 **Novato Sustainability** - Gretchen Shubeck
Apr. 23 **Novato Speaker Series**
Apr. 24 **No Meeting**

May

- May 1 **Youth Services** - Ross Millerick
May 8 **Teacher Recognitions**
May 15 **Meeting at Jonas**
May 22 **Social at Nova-Ro**

UTILITY BOX Painting

Help prepare and prime 11 utility boxes in Novato during the week **March 30 - April 3rd**. The City already has 28 artist applications. March 30th is in about two weeks so we need to get Club members to help and sign up as soon as possible.

Here's the Sign Up Genius link:
<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050A49ADAB2BA75-62867558-novato>

All volunteers will meet at the utility box located at Redwood & Olive Avenue at 9am Monday, March 30th for a quick training and team selection.

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 Pühr-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

Reader's Choice Award

Prez Lynn congratulated the Club for Marin IJ 10th Anniversary Reader's Choice awarding Rotary Club of Novato Best Service Club.

NRE Annual Distributions

Prez Lynn also announced after thorough discussion with Board and Endowment Committee that there is an increase to 5% from 4% from the Endowment funds for our service projects.

New Member Induction

Tom Rickey welcomed our newest member, Randall Lee, who is sponsored by his wife Jackie Lee (who has been a member for 2 years). Tom mentioned he was very impressed with Randall's application, mentioning "Service Above Self" as an important value he has practiced throughout his life and will continue as a Rotary member. Randall applies the 4 Way Test for his business as well as an incoming Rotarian.

Featured Rotarian

Evan Blacksea's work is as a Digital Surrogate, someone who digitizes photos, videos and not surprisingly, his interest in data preservation and history has roots back in high school, with the memorabilia shop he opened and managed with his father. Evan has had interesting work in the past including a foreclosure business. Evan mentioned he had 7 grandparents and spoke of one, his paternal grandmother who moved from Israel and moved to Queens, New York. Evan has spearheaded getting RCN a non-profit Google Account (usually businesses with large data storage is expensive) that has a large amount of memory, and has digitized many of the archival photos that have been stored in NovaRo III.

Program

Michael Morrissey's biography is a life of full of adventure, with travel to 110 countries, documenting with beautiful photography, and living abroad

first driving the Magic Bus to Kathmandu, living in Malaysia, Japan, Thailand, organizing refugee camps in Thailand and settling in Marin in 2008, however, he still keeps his passport and camera ready for more adventures. Today's talk summarized his West African Project Fairs he attended last year in Togo (not the sandwich shop) and Ghana two years ago. He mentioned he has gone on three trips to West Africa - Nigeria, Ghana, and Togo organized by Brad Howard (Brad has been District Governor for 5170, we were fortunate to have Brad speak to our club about a month ago) who is also the keynote speaker for our upcoming 5150 District Assembly. Togo is a former German colony that then was colonized by Britain and France from WWI until independence in 1960. Togo is sandwiched between Ghana, Burkina Faso and Benin. Togo has 75 miles of coastline that with this Rotary trip, members planted coconut trees along a beach that has suffered erosion. Culturally markets are gatherings not only for commerce and buying food, but social networking and exchanges of news and information (think of Twitter, Google, Costco combined while buying bananas or fish at the market). The group also visited a school with over 300 students and no running water and only two pit latrines. Definitely a need for sanitation and hygiene where Rotary clubs can perhaps help. The trip also highlighted that malaria is the #1 biggest health problem. Prevention of a disease, polio vaccination were done by members at a local health center. The Project Faire itself had over 50 booths showcasing projects from Rotary clubs throughout Western Africa, one project included using ship containers to build libraries. Mike's talk ended with an update from a Ghana health center that was built with Rotary assistance with nurses' dormitory and clinic in a rural village, far from urban health facilities. The health center needed more space and Rotary helped build a roof covered open pavilion where patients, mothers with children could be seen and treated.

25'er

\$25 Raffle Winner this week, Linda Puhr-Westerheide

Volunteers Needed! Help Pack Easter Dinners with North Marin Community Services

On March 31, 2026, join us to help pack food for 270 families so they can enjoy an Easter Dinner!

We need six volunteers to help pack the food in individual bags beginning at 9:00a.m. and ending about 11:30a.m. We will need the same number of folks to hand out the dinners to the families at 1:30p.m. the same day. If you can sign up for one of the times needed, great. If you can help both times, even better. Please contact me if you have any questions and if you would like to help on March 31.

Larry Harrison
415 250 5099
Lharrison1636@gmail.com

Rotary Big Wheel Sponsor



- Tires
- Brakes
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- Oil Changes
- Tuneup

845 Valjejo Avenue, Downtown Novato
www.handjtire.com
hjtire@vbbn.com

Burt Hoffmann
John Da Silva

(415) 897-1185



Patty Dougherty (c) introduces her guest, Novato native, Jackson Roberts.

Visiting from the Rotary Club of Viña del Mar Norte in Chile, Foundation Chair, John McVeigh and his daughter Tasha McVeigh.



Ice Breaker: Russ Ketron with the best advice he ever got.



Evan Blacksea gave his 5-Minute Talk.



Marty Wickenheiser Reported on Community Care.



President Elect Peter Pelavin, works with Membership Co-Chair Sonia Seeman, prior to the meeting.



President Lynn welcomes new member Randall Lee. Randall's wife Jackie (r) is his sponsor.



Mike Morrissey was our speaker. Mike spoke about his trip with Jaqueline to Togo, Africa. They participated in service projects, like planting coconut palm trees on the beach, vaccinating against polio, and project faires They also and experienced the local culture including tuk tuk auto rickshaws and local tire shops.