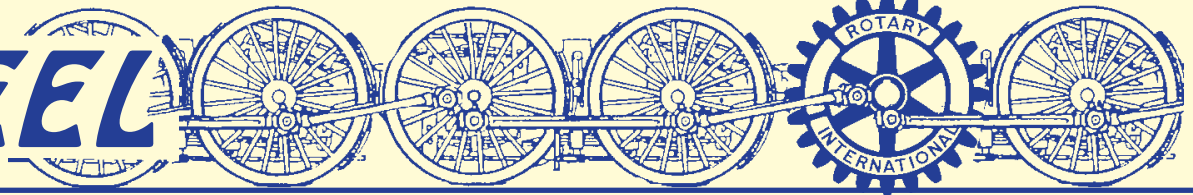


# The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons

**April 10, 2026**  
**Vol. 77, No. 36**  
**Editor:**  
**Mr. Bill**  
**(Vespa)**



## Announcements

### Community Care Report

**Jim Spilman** is walking better, he's getting physical therapy. **Gloria Dunn-Violin** is getting chemo, and she said she's doing okay.

### Birthdays & Anniversaries

Those in attendance to celebrate birthdays were, **Mike Morrissey's** who is traveling to New York. **Phil Dougherty's** birthday is on the 21st, but he is waiting until the 23rd to celebrate at the Novato Speaker Series. **Moses Jacob** and **Judy** have birthdays close together and are going to Maui, to celebrate!

There are several wedding anniversaries this month. **Ross Millerick** and **Linda**, 49 years. **Burt Hoffmann** and **Jan**, 43 years, **Jim White** and **Vicki**, 41 years, **Rene Prado** and **Leslie**, 20 years and **Jim Bates** and **Sandra**, 11 years.

Membership anniversaries include **T.J. Neff**, 49 years, **Bill McDill** and **Craig McCurdy**, 45 years, and **Lori Frugoli**, 9 years.

### Utility Boxes

**Randy Baker** acknowledged those who came out last week for prepping and priming the utility boxes. **Mark Bosch**, **Jay Magtibay**, **Marty Wickenheiser**, **Ed Ross** and **Charlie Strickfadden** were there. Plus four employees of the City and **Larry Curtis** from Ignacio Rotary.

### Odyssey of the Mind

**Larry Harrison** announced for **Roy Pfeiffer** about the Loma Verde Elementary "Odyssey of the Mind" competition team. There are five young girls who have qualified for the World Finals, in Iowa for this problem-solving competition. They need airfare, board, and food. Their goal is \$17,600. If you can help these kids out, Roy would appreciate it.

### Food Packing

**Larry** shifted projects and thanked those that helped with the food packing at the North Marin Community Services. **Marsha Molloy**, **Charlie Strickfadden**, **Marty Wickenheiser**, **Sonia Seeman**, **Reggie Winner** and **Holly Axtell** were there. The project used \$5,000 from the community service DDF funds and were able to provide 250 meals for families in our local community. The people were very appreciative of the food for their Easter dinner. **Larry** reminded us that the DDF funds come from donations to the Rotary Foundation, which returns a portion of those donations to our Club for projects.

### City Hall Bricklaying

**Marcus Combs** reported on the brick laying project last Tuesday. He thanked everyone that helped and said we will be doing bricklaying again sometime in the next month or so for the city.

### Upcoming Events

**President Lynn** reminded us that we are not meeting Friday, April 17th. On April 23rd we have the Novato Speaker Series, with **Gil Rudd**. Commander of the Blue Angels. We are meeting on the 24th, the meeting is located at the farm at IVC. **Gretchen Schubach**, coordinator of sustainability for the City of Novato, is our speaker.

### Four Club Social

On Saturday April 25th there is going to be a four Rotary Club social at the Jonas Center, from 4pm to 7pm. There will be classic cars and some electric vehicles to check out. There will also be live music by the Miracle Mules. It's going to be a potluck. So, if your last name starts with A - K, you bring an appetizer; L - O, bring a salad; and P - Z, bring a dessert. Please RSVP!

## Pledge

**President Lynn** asked **Charlie Strickfadden** to lead us in the pledge. **Charlie** then invited us to recite four-way test.

## Visiting Rotarians

We had **Daniela Rodas** visiting from the Rotary Club of Washington, D.C.

## Guests

**Delyn Kies** introduced her friend **Pam Juckas**. **Alan Dunham** brought his son, **Craig**, visiting from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. **Kathy** was the guest of husband **Russ Ketron**, and **Tom Rickey** introduced his guest for the last time **Jay Magtibay**.

## Ice Breaker

Environmental Services is the theme for the month of April. **President Lynn's** icebreaker was, "What's the most green thing you've done and the least green thing you'll admit to?" After some discussion at each table, **President Lynn** surveyed the room for answers. Green things included removing a swimming pool to plant a garden, riding a bike to work, composting, installing solar and electric or plug-in cars. The least green was flying airplanes.

# 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?"

## Ground Breaking Hamilton Natural Play Area

Saturday, April 18th, 9am - 2pm

Please join us for the ground breaking for the long awaited Natural Play Area at Hamilton Meadow Park School. Our Climate Action Team has been working with Sustainable Marin Schools to get this going.

Lunch will be provided by the Marin Covenant church.

Please let Randy Baker know if you can help out. Email is best at [vernalfalls1@gmail.com](mailto:vernalfalls1@gmail.com)

## 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](http://www.novatospeakerseries.com)



## Earth Day Project 56th Anniversary!

Sunday, April 19th, 9am -12pm

An Earth Day project is planned at McInnis Park where four Rotary Club's (Novato, Novato Sunrise, Ignacio, and Terra Linda) will volunteer to pull weeds, plant drought resistant shrubs, and spread bark.

Please help celebrate the 56th anniversary of Earth Day (actually on April 22nd) and make the planet healthier!

Contact Randy Baker for Details  
[vernalfalls1@gmail.com](mailto:vernalfalls1@gmail.com)

## Upcoming Programs & Events

### April

- Apr. 17 **No Meeting**
- Apr. 23 **Novato Speaker Series**
- Apr. 24 **IVC Farm** - Gretchen Shubeck (Novato Sustainability Coordinator)
- Apr. 25 **4 - Club Social**

### May

- May 1 **Youth Services** - Ross Millerick
- May 8 **Teacher Recognitions**
- May 15 **Meeting at Jonas**
- May 22 **Social at Nova-Ro**
- May 29 **No Meeting**

## 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*

## District Celebration 2026

On May 2nd, Rotary District 5150 is doing a one-day celebration, recognizing high achieving Clubs in the District. RCN is up for Best Club, so come support and celebrate! The event is going to be at the Westin Hotel at SFO.

## New Member Induction

**President Lynn** then called up **Past President Russ Ketron, Jay Magtibay** and his sponsor **Tom Rickey** for an induction. **Russ** told **Jay**, who is a general contractor, about the several past members of the RCN with construction and engineering backgrounds that completed many wonderful projects including the award winning Nova-Ro Senior housing projects. **Russ** suggested **Jay** reach out to **Jim Spilman**, to find out how to get involved with community service projects, and to **Brad Williams** to learn about how our Novato Rotary Endowment funds projects. **Russ** suggested **Jay** find his passion; seek out advice, and dig in, because he will find he'll get back far more than what he gives.

## Featured Rotarian

Our Featured Rotarian is new member, **Matt Chiang**. **Matt's** family runs the Days Inn in Novato. **Matt** was born in S.F. and grew up in Marin, mostly in Novato and graduated from San Marin High. He went to UC Riverside for a year then transferred to USC. He performed in the USC Marching band, was on TV and performed with Fleetwood Mac, **Will Ferrell** and **Chad Smith**.

After **Matt** graduated from USC he became a New Product Introduction Engineering Project Manager for Foxconn, maker of laptop hardware like laptop hard cases. **Matt** says he basically was a "glorified" QA person.

**Matt** is currently a first lieutenant in the Air Force. He was an USAF pilot but now is a logistics officer. Piloting is a huge part of **Matt's** life. He holds a private pilot rating, instrument rating, and

commercial rating. He encourages anyone to become a pilot. It is a very cool, you can do things like view Crater Lake or 4th of July fireworks from the air! **Matt** is a certified ground instructor, and going to be a certified flight instructor soon. So if you are interested in learning about flight, ask him.

**Matt** has been happily married for 3 years now. He met **Alane** in high school in 2010 at a summer program at Stanford. They have a family of three cats, and they are expecting their first child! Their daughter is due on September 22nd. Her name is **Zhenya**, pronounced "Jen-ya".

When he is not flying, **Matt** does play a few sports like badminton, hockey, curling and wake boarding. Great to learn about **Matt!**

## Speaker

**Randy Baker** is co-chair, along with **Gloria Dunn-Violin**, of the RCN's Environmental Sustainability Committee — known as the Climate Action Team (CAT Team). **Gloria** helped the Rotary Club of Novato become one of the first Rotary Clubs to have a CAT Team. **Randy** gave us a committee update.

**Randy** opened by reminding us that environmental sustainability is one of Rotary International's seven official areas of focus, encompassing everything from protecting natural resources to advocating for sustainable consumption.

To kick off the presentation, **Randy** distributed a short multiple-choice quiz designed to prompt members to think critically about the terms "sustainability" and "climate change" and their connection to Rotary's mission. He then framed the broader challenge with a striking statistic: the global population has doubled from 4 billion to 8.3 billion in just 51 years, placing enormous pressure on the 30% of Earth's surface that must sustain all human life.

On the project front, **Randy** highlighted four active projects. The Club has contributed nearly \$5,000 in District Designated Funds to an agri-forest regeneration project in Ecuador, training farmers

in sustainable practices across 110 farms. Locally, the committee is partnering with Sustainable Marin Schools to break ground on a natural play area at Hamilton School — built entirely from natural materials and designed to serve as an outdoor classroom and potential model for Marin County. In honor of Earth Day's 56th anniversary on April 22nd, the club is participating in two volunteer events on April 18th: mulching the Wilson Avenue medians where the club previously planted trees, and joining other Marin Rotary clubs at McInnis Park to plant shrubs. The committee is also working with the City of Novato on a planned pollinator garden on Olive Avenue.

**Randy** closed with a historical footnote — a 1912 New Zealand newspaper article that accurately warned of rising CO2 levels and their potential warming effect — and a practical consumer tip: compostable bags sold in Marin County cannot actually be composted here, as Recology lacks the commercial composting infrastructure required and the products' residual plastic content would compromise certified organic compost. He encouraged members to reconsider their purchasing habits, promising the CAT Team will continue sharing similar actionable tips

## Raffle

**Chuck Hildebrand**, congratulations!

**Rotary Big Wheel Sponsor**



845 Vallejo Avenue, Downtown Novato  
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Burt Hoffmann  
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City Hall Brick Laying April 7, 2026



Maggie Shao, Delyn Kies, Sonia Seeman, and Melissa Rinck (Ignacio) promoted Rotary Club of Novato Scholarships, Rotary Club of Ignacio Scholarships, District 5150 RYLA (Rotary Youth Leadership Academy). They brought pizza and talked with San Marin High, Novato High, and Marin Oaks teens.



From Degraded Land to Living Systems

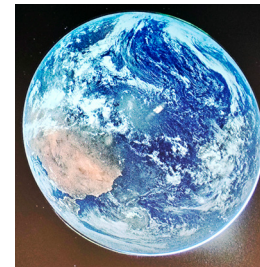
By the end of 2026, we plan to convert approximately 50 acres of degraded land across 110 farms into diverse agroforestry systems, led and managed by participating farmers. These areas currently face erosion, low soil fertility, poor water infiltration, drought, and heavy agrochemical use. Through regenerative management, farmers will reduce chemical inputs while restore soil biology, improve water regulation, and build healthy productive agroecosystems.



Scaling up Farmer Led Regeneration

Our model places farmers at the center of regeneration by building local leadership and long-term capacity within their communities. With your support, we are scaling an approach that restores land, strengthens the social fabric, and creates lasting alternatives to chemical intensive monocultures and overgrazing.

Thank you for your support and please stay tuned for more updates!



@regenerationfieldinstitute www.buildcarbon.com/agroforestry @regenerationfieldinstitute5016

**Matthew Chiang**

USAF

USC

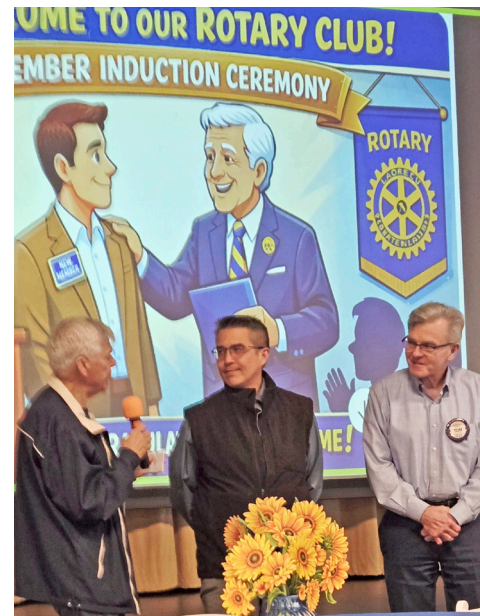
TGMBITHOTU

Hardwired to hate all things UCLA

Performed with:

- Slash Guns n Roses
- Fleetwood Mac
- Jason Derulo
- Willi Ferrell
- Jimmy Fallon
- Red Hot Chili Peppers (Chad Smith mostly)

Our Featured Rotarian was Matt Chiang.



Russ Ketron inducts Jay Magtibay. Jay's sponsor is Tom Rickey.



Our speaker was Environmental Sustainability/Climate Action Team Co-Chair Randy Baker. He spoke about global warming and projects supported by CAT, like agri-forest regeneration in Ecuador and building a Natural Play area at Hamilton School.