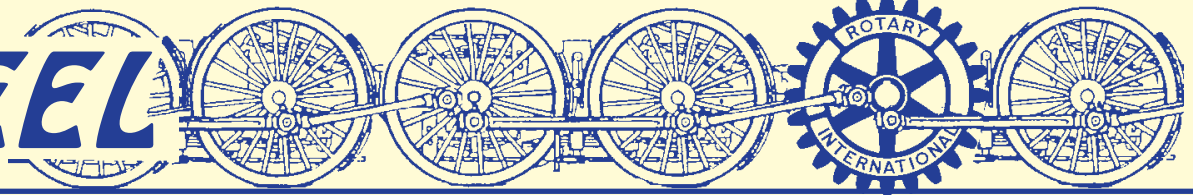


The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons



April 11, 2025
Vol. 76, No. 30

Editor:
Bill Vespa

Call to Order

Prez Tom called us to order and state, "This club personifies service above self. We don't wait, we do. We don't ask why we ask, why not?!"

Pledge and Thought for the Day

The pledge was led by **David Gabriel**. **David** also provided the quote. "To succeed in life, you need 2 things, ignorance and confidence." **Mark Twain**.

Visiting Rotarians

None today.

Guests of Rotarians

PDG Russ Ketron brought his wife, **Kathy**. **John Reuscher** introduced our speaker **Lauren Vuong**. **Jim Botko** brought his beautiful wife, **Kathy**. **P.P. Jim Spilman** introduced his guest **Zoila Garcia**. **Mike Morressey** had two guests, **Evan Blacksea** and **Peter Ivory**.

Celebrations!

Birthdays

We have a birthday table with goodies, compliments of **Reggie Winner**! This past Sunday **Jim Botko** had a birthday. Yesterday was **P.P. Christina Stroeh's**. Today is **Tom Young's**, this coming Sunday **Jim Bates** celebrates and next Saturday is **Suzanne Bales'** birthday.

Anniversaries

No Weddings this week but there are Membership Anniversaries. **Lori Frugoli's**, 8th year anniversary was this past Monday, and this coming Tuesday, **Past President T.J. Neff's** 48th year anniversary.

Announcements

Community Care

Moses Jacob had to go in for a third procedure on his eye.

Western BBQ Questionnaire

Peter Pelavin announced that we are still doing the survey for the Western barbecue. Some people are unable to do it by email, so on the tables he put hard copies along with an pre-addressed, pre-stamped envelope for you to mail it to him.

NPD K9s

Peter changed hats and announced that for a donation of \$40 to Novato Police Canine Foundation, you will receive a stuffed toy K9 as a thank you, while supplies. See **Peter** to make a donation.

VFW Bingo

Eliza Roesler told us about the VFW Auxiliary Bingo this coming Tuesday, April 15th at Trek winery. Proceeds go to the VFW auxiliary to support veterans. Doors open at 5pm. The first draw is at 6:30, a pack to play all the games is \$20 and \$30, if you want to play the special games. Hope to see you there.

Proclamation

Gloria Dunn-Violin requested that we attend the City Council meeting on Tuesday, April 22 at 6pm. The RCN is being honored with a proclamation for the work we did on the 4-Corners beautification project at Reichert and Grant. It took about three full mornings of effort of a lot of people. All the Rotary Clubs in Novato, the Tree Team, which are **Jeanne** and **Patrick McCleamy** and the VFW. It was a real community effort

Earth Day

Gloria also talked about a project on Earth Day. It will be making planter boxes and planting at the North Bay Children's Center on the morning of Saturday, April 19th for their Garden of Eaten. This is where they teach children how to eat healthy by planting fruits and vegetables, which they take home to their parents. RCN initiated this project with a \$4,000 contribution. If you are doing this project you need to register, to help them prepare the jobs that are going to be done. Contact **Gloria** and she will email the form.

ShelterBox

Jim Carriere was excited to share news from his trip to New Orleans, where the 25th Anniversary of ShelterBox was celebrated. The Rotary Club of Novato has just become a gold level Rotary Hero Club, from donations of \$5,000 this year. What's really exciting is that ShelterBox has been nominated for the 3rd time for the Nobel Peace Prize!

Food for those in Need

Larry Mazzotta is looking for those who like a hands-on project. On Tuesday, the 15th food will served to the food insecure at North Marin Community Services Center on North Novato Blvd. from 9:30am till Noon they'll be unpacking a truck with \$5,000 worth of food. And from 1pm to 3pm you can help give food to those in need.

Reminders!

Prez Tom's reminders included, the Novato Speaker Series is on April 24th. April 27th is the Car Wash. **John Cutrufelli** says shifts are pretty well staffed, but if you haven't signed up yet, please do so, and also try to get your checks in for the tickets. Remember that you can, selling them or giving them away for friends. Also, the District Conference is coming on May 16th through 18th in Santa Rosa. President Tom also gave an overview of the upcoming calendar of meetings and events as his Rotary year comes to an end on June 30th.

Induction

Past President Jim Spilman was called on to induct two new members. **Beth Rowett** and her substitute sponsor, **Past President Peian Harness** came up. **Linda Morgan** was attending via zoom from her home in Lassen County, and her sponsor is **President Tom** who also came up. **Linda** has been doing Pro Bono bookkeeping for RCN for the last five years. **Linda** loves gardening. As soon as **Beth Rowett** learned about Rotary, she could not wait to join our Club. **Beth** is a retired Hospital Executive; she also served as a past president from the Women's

Continued on page 3

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?"

Eric Schmitt

A New World Order Under Donald Trump

The Bill and Adele Jonas Center
Thurs., April 24, 2025 • 7 pm to 8:30 pm

Eric Schmitt is a senior correspondent for The New York Times who covers national security issues. He is co-author of "Counterstrike: The Untold Story of America's Secret Campaign Against Al Qaeda." For more than three decades, he has covered military and national security affairs for The Times, and has made two dozen reporting trips to West Africa, Pakistan, Iraq & Afghanistan. He has a bachelor's degree from Williams College and attended Harvard University's Executive Program on National and International Security. He earned a Knight Journalism Fellowship at Stanford University.

Mr. Schmitt has shared four Pulitzer Prizes. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Reared in the San Francisco Bay area, Mr. Schmitt now lives with his family in Fairfax, Va.

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



Rotary Big Wheel Sponsor



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Upcoming Programs & Events

April

April 18 **No Meeting**
April 24 **Novato Speaker's Series:** Eric Schmitt - A New World Order Under Donald Trump
April 25 **Meeting:** The IVC Farm
April 27 **Car Wash:** Teacher's Fundraiser

May

May 2 **Cinco de Mayo Celebration & Int'l Projects**
May 9 **Social Event TBD**
May 14 **Board Meeting at Jonas Center**
May 16 **No Meeting** - District Conference
May 23 **Teacher Recognitions**
May 30 **Tribal Girls' School in India**

June

June 6 **J. Clark PhD** - Sustainable Marin Schools
June 11 **Board Meeting at Jonas Center**
June 13 **Claire Hartman** - City of Novato

ROTARY CLUB OF NOVATO 2024/2025 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Sonia Seeman
Jonas Center Liaison
Dean Heffelfinger
President, Nova-Ro Corp.
Peter Oser
Chair, Novato Rotary Endowment
Phil Dougherty
Past President

Club, and served on the Grand Jury. **Lynn Dawson** is her official sponsor. **Beth** and **Linda** were welcomed with a standing ovation!

Red to Blue Badges

Past President Ron Harness presented **Jeff Slavitz** and **Marcus Combs** with their Blue Badges. **Marcus** described the Red Badge process as being enjoyable and similar to General Ed classes in college, which allows you to learn about many different things and help find where your interests lie. **Jeff** said he loved being a red badge member, because everybody thinks you're new and energetic, even if it has been two years! **Jeff** has also enjoyed the Red Badge process and meeting all the members.

5 Minute Talk

Delyn Kies completed another step towards her Blue Badge by doing her Five Minute talk. **Delyn** has been retired for about 6 years from a career in garbage and recycling. She worked in Oregon managing recycling programs and landfills as well as getting state wide legislation passed to require recycling throughout the State of Oregon. In 1994 she came to Novato and worked with Harding, Lawson, and Associates in environmental consulting throughout the Western United States, Hawaii and Saipan. She also worked Shea Homes during the redevelopment of Hamilton AFB. In 2001 **Delyn** got laid off from Harding, Lawson but her husband also had been laid off from his job the week before, so he helped set up a consulting business, so she could finish the environmental projects still in process. She has been active in a lot of different organizations throughout her life. Most recently **Delyn** started fostering dogs for Guide Dogs for the Blind. She loves meeting new people, learning new things and keeping busy. So rotary has been the "perfect fit" for her!

Program

Tom introduced our speaker **Lauren Vuong**, a native of Vietnam, and a naturalized US citizen. At the age of 8, with her family as post-war refugees, she immigrated to the US. She's a graduate of UC Berkeley and USF and remains a practicing attorney. She wrote an international award winning documentary about her experience as a refugee called "Finding the Virgo".

Lauren tearfully recounted the emotional story of leaving Vietnam at seven years of age in an open boat with her

family and about 60 other refugees. It was a physically and emotionally demanding experience punctuated by seasickness, starvation, dehydration, living in human waste and the fear of imminent death. After 10 days they were rescued by a passing ship (**Lauren** later learned they were passed by 120 others). **Lauren** and her family immigrated to the US, where **Lauren** attend college and eventually became a lawyer. In the process of looking for scholarships she wondered about finding "that ship". In 1991, before the internet, the search was very laborious, but she kept at it. In 2007, in a conversation with her mother she noticed her mom mispronounced the name of a street and realized she had been looking for the wrong ship. Her mother had also been mispronouncing the ship's name. The ship was named the "LNG Virgo". Now with the internet, Google and her best friend in the world, who's an incredible researcher it was easy to locate the Virgo. Finding the crew was a different story. That search took another nine years. But she eventually found the Captains widow and some of the crew. She also learned that the refugees were transferred to a Naval ship. She tracked down that ship's captain who, it turns out had been wondering about what happened to the refugees he had helped rescue. There was a reunion of the remaining crews and **Lauren's** family so they could say thank you!

In closing, **Lauren** says she has all the benefits of both parents, an education, children, a career thanks to, "The compassion of Americans, the compassion of mariners, just good people". Then she showed a three minute trailer of her award winning documentary film, "Finding the Virgo". You can watch the trailer or rent the full length film at www.findingthevirgo.com.

President Tom thanked our speaker for a great program and presented her with a set of **Alan Dunham** note cards.

The Raffle

President Tom asked **Lauren** to draw the winning number. **Larry Mazzotta** was the winner.

SUPPORT NOVATO TEACHERS

Rotary Club of Novato

Pre-Paid Donation
\$10 per Ticket
Good for
Drive-Thru Express Wash
\$16 Value

Annual CAR WASH

Sunday, April 27th
8 a.m. to 4 p.m.


NOVATO CAR WASH
(across from Marin Community Clinic
and Marin County Ford)
6981 Redwood Blvd.

All Proceeds
Support Novato Teachers

Visit novatorotary.org or use
this QR Code below
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Rotary CALGARY 2025



MAGIC ALL AROUND

21-25 JUNE 2025 • CALGARY, CANADA

Register today at
convention.rotary.org





Past President Jim Spilman and newly inducted member Linda Morgan (via zoom) look on as Past President Peian Harness pins new member, Beth Rowett.



Past President Ron Harness presents Marcus Combs and Jeff Slavitz with Blue Badges.



Our speaker, Lauren Vuong, Vietnam Refugee.



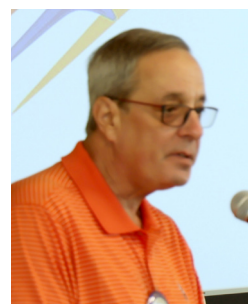
Suzanne Bales, Jim and Kathy Botko at the Birthday Table covered with Reggie's cookies.



Rene Prado sets up for the zoom attendees. Mike Morrissey (l) and John Reuscher look on.



Delyn Kies gives her five minute talk.



Jim Carriere had ShelterBox news..



Peter Pelavin raising funds for NPD K9s.



Eliza Roesler invites us to VFW Bingo fundraiser..

“Let me clarify this...”

Luther Heggs, The Ghost and Mr. Chicken

Editor's Clarification:

Robert Marshall announced at the April 4th meeting that Beanies for Babies has placed 1,395 beanies on babies in the Escuintla Hospital due to the money raised by Rotary Club of Novato. **Robert** thanked all the club members for their participation and he looks forward to their continued support for the future on this project.



ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2024

1,395

BABY BEANIES SEWN BY OUR ARTISANS AND
DELIVERED TO NEWBORNS IN NEED



Food for Those in Need

The Rotary Club of Novato Community Service Committee Chaired by Jim Spilman, shopping coordinator Larry Mazzotta.

John Cutrufelli provided a large truck for food with driver Eric, who also helped with loading and unloading.

Mike Morrissey and Penny Hansen also unloaded and packed 270 bags joined by NMCS volunteers.

The Rotary afternoon members helped with distribution.

Our Community Service Committee donated \$5,000 for the groceries

