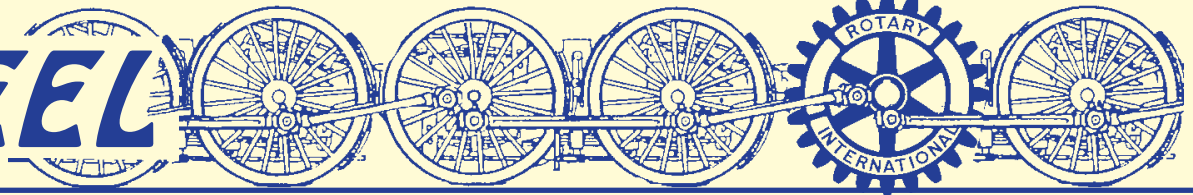


The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons

April 24, 2026
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Editor:
Maggie Shao



In the Beginning

We met at the COM IVC Organic Farm building to finish up the month's theme of the Environment. **Hannah Simon** led us in the Pledge of Allegiance and **Laura Joss** read an appropriate quote on environmental stewardship from author **Terry Tempest Williams** "The eyes of the future are looking back at us and they are praying for us to see beyond our own time. They are kneeling with hands clasped that we might act with restraint and that we might leave room for the life that is destined to come".

Guests and Visitors

Chris DeGabriele brought his wife **Joni**, who also helped greet members, **Delyn Kies** introduced **Pam Jukas**, and **Pam's** application for membership has been approved, and **Sonia Seeman** introduced landscaper **Joe Bartl**.

Icebreaker

The last Friday in April is National Arbor Day, in 1972 **Sterling Morton** started Arbor Day in Nebraska when 1 million trees were planted that day, and the tradition hopefully continues. Icebreaker topic for today's lunch "Why Should We Plant Trees?" Many offered great answers and the "committee" decided on the best answers awarding bamboo utensils to the following: **Pat Eklund** as they provide the oxygen we breathe;

Hannah Simon as they are key component of our ecosystem, **Keith Axtell** commented that trees offer shade in hot environments, and **Pam Jukas** trees are great for CO2 processing/sequestration.

Community Cares/Sunshine Report

President Lynn updated us that **Jim Spilman** came to the previous night's Speaker Series, testing out his new knee. Partway through our meeting **President Lynn** left to attend to her husband **Carl**, who was sent to Emergency. Please hold healing thoughts for **Carl**.

Featured Rotarian

Hannah Simon born at Marin General and except for her college years at UC Irvine majoring in English. **Hannah** has spent most of her time in Marin. She works for a winery in Australia and lucky enough to travel there recently. She highlighted a Belle Halloween costume her talented grandmother, **Jo Hefflinger**, sewed. Her home life includes hobbies of Interior Design, caring for her dog, a Lagotto Romagnolo a special breed used for truffle hunting, and come recent attempts at golfing. **Hannah** also is a big sports fan of our local teams. One of her favorite books in Anne of Green Gables and the saying "Tomorrow is always fresh, with no mistakes in it yet" and also **Jane Austen** is a favorite author. She challenges anyone to Gilmore Girls trivia, as **Hannah** said there is no reason to watch anything else on TV.

Announcements

Endowment Board

Jeff Slavitz announced that the Endowment Board

has two openings for members to join, please contact **Jeff** or **Brad Williams** to provide service to the club by joining the Endowment Committee that meets quarterly.

Earth Day Thanks

Randy Baker wanted to acknowledge other members who helped out with Earth Day Events the past weekend, **Laura Joss** and her husband **Chip**, **Maggie Shao** for helping on Saturday April 18 with City of Novato and Sustainability Coordinator **Gretchen Schubeck** leading other neighborhood volunteers with weeding, laying weed cloth, and mulching street islands on Wilson Ave. that will reduce weeds and improve visibility for crosswalks across this busy road. **Randy** also thanked **Tom Rickey** for helping on Sunday, April 19, Earth Day event at McInnis Park with other Rotary clubs attending.

Upcoming Events

Four Novato Rotary Club Social on Saturday April 25 at the Jonas Center. **Prez Lynn** reminded us to come out for this fun event with Classic Cars and music and meeting fellow Rotarians from 4pm to 7pm. Other upcoming reminders is the Teacher Recognition lunch on May 8, and May 22 meeting will be at NovaRo II - especially for newer members to see one of Rotary Club of Novato's great legacy projects.

Program

Two speakers today. First Organic Farm manager, **Tealy Gapinski**, came into the classroom and gave us updates on the farm. There is 5 acres allocated for the farm and currently 2 1/2 acres is under cultivation. Potential expansion is perhaps to include chickens and coop. Today happened to be plant

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Tribal Girls School India

I am writing this “thank-you note and update” from Rotary Club of Burlingame-Hillsborough, because the Novato Rotary Club (along with 14 other clubs and our District!) are some of the most generous donors to our adventurous project helping to transform the lives of 2,000 Tribal Girls in India through state of the art digital learning tools to escape the vicious cycle of poverty, forced early marriages and lifelong servitude. These girls are the “poorest of the poor” in the world. And you are instrumental in making all this work!

So, “Thank you!” Our Global Grant has now been submitted to The Rotary Foundation (a month ago!) (Evanston, Illinois); we hope to have the global grant approved in May. We begin project implementation very quickly after that and hope to complete the project by early December.

We want the 1,000 girls in each school to be able to begin computer classes and STEM courses before the end of September. Some of our funding is for infrastructure and that will include the solar panels for continuous power supply, 24x7 internet, Wi-Fi, and significant upgrades to the shower rooms, the rest rooms, and the kitchen and the eating facilities (all of which are what we would recognize as primitive).

The bottom line is that because of you and Rotary clubs in both India and the USA, these 2,000 girls in two schools and 2 junior colleges, grades 5 to 12 will become part of the “miracle of India” with 4,000 students being educated at a level to attend undergraduate colleges and secure careers of service, dignity and stability. May you find joy, as we do also, that all of the families of these children, who have been stuck in poverty and semi-illiteracy, have a whole new and far more pleasing future ahead of them. Thank you!

A great thing is happening, and you and The Rotary Club in Andhra Pradesh are a part of the foundation that makes it all possible!

With Rotary Spirit—Cordially Yours,

Paul Watermulder and the International Services Committee
of Burlingame-Hillsborough Rotary Club

Upcoming Programs & Events

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

June

June 5	International Services - Holly Axtel
June 12	Meeting at Jonas
June 19	No Meeting - Campus Holiday
June 26	Meeting at Jonas - Farewell to 2025-26 & Induction 2026-27
June 27	Debunking

ROTARY CLUB OF NOVATO 2025/2026 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Peter Pelavin
Vice President

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Secretary

Chris DeGabriele
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Marcus Combs
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Gloria Dunn-Violin & Randy Baker
*Environmental Sustainability
(NR-CAT)*

Holly Axtel
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

sale day for the public with veggie seedlings and other outreach programs include CSA, Community Supported Agriculture, subscription for folks to pay upfront and receive weekly veggie boxes harvested throughout the season. There is the Saturday Farmstand weekly during harvest season where folks can come and buy seasonal vegetables. May through October, the farm supplies a FREE food pantry for College of Marin students. **Tealy** opened up the floor, and answered questions including “deficit irrigation” using the minimal amount of water for plants to grow, soil enrichment through cover crops of legumes (buckwheat, peas) during the winter to prevent soil erosion as well as fix nitrogen into the soil. Other questions on weed management include deprivation - blocking out sunlight with tarp so weeds cannot photosynthesize and proliferate.

Randy Baker introduced our second speaker, **Gretchen Schubeck**, Novato’s first Sustainability Coordinator position hired in 2017, **Gretchen** has an impressive career resume as a first year student at City College of SF starting a recycling program to working 11 years in New Zealand West Auckland Resource Center. **Gretchen** started her talk with “Earth Rise” taken from lunar orbit by astronaut **William Anders** on December 24, 1968, This photo of our earth, this blue marble is such a precious marble, where borders, conflicts are imperceptible, but the beauty of the thin blue atmosphere that sustains us is remarkable. Many folks feel that changing our warming climate, our pollution is too big a task and **Gretchen** reminded and supports that Local Action matters. **Gretchen** looks forward to working with our Rotary Climate Action Team chair, **Randy Baker**, on joint local events that can make a difference like the past weekend Earth Day events. We can encourage pollinator gardens in our landscape, educate and engage our community. How change is being measured, Emission Reduction graphs are showing that we are in a good trend with popularity of electric cars and awareness that we can save our thin blue line of atmosphere that sustains us all.

Raffle

\$25 Raffle Winner this week, **Laura Joss**.

Update on Four Novato Rotary Club event.

Although cloudy skies threatened rain, it was a great day for classic cars parked outside the Jonas Center, I got a personal introduction to **TJ Neff’s** 1964 Red Porsche. Thanks to all the folks who brought their classic cars. Live music with Swampytonk band Miracle Mule band providing a lot of toe tapping and thigh slapping beats. Lots of great food and drinks and all four presidents of the clubs joined the fun. Our **President Lynn** was there and updated us that **Carl** is still in the hospital and their son was with him, while **Lynn** took a short break to attend the event.

NEW MEMBER NOTICE

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

- **Pam Jukas: Property Management**
- **P.J. Nave: Social Media Consultant**

If there are no objections by:

Thursday, May 15

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

Friday, May 16

Marisa Remak
Secretary

Rotary Big Wheel Sponsor



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

Burt Hoffmann
John Da Silva

(415) 897-1185

- Tires
- Brakes
- Alignment
- Shocks
- Oil Changes
- Tuneup



- 5-2 Andy Czajkowski
- 5-4 Randy Baker
- 5-5 Veronica Pietras
- 5-8 David Hernandez
- 5-15 Kathy & Dennis Baldwin
- 5-17 Joanna & Kyle Frazier
- 5-18 Linda & Jorg Puhr-Westerheide
- 5-21 Beth Rowett
- 5-22 Camille & Robert Marshall
- 5-23 Lisa Read & John Christman
- 5-25 Linda & Darrell Scott
- 5-27 Robin & Frank Bruno
- 5-27 Katie Chase
- 5-27 Raye-Lee & George Estes
- 5-27 Reggie Winner
- 5-31 Frank Bruno



**Four Club
Social
4-25-2026**



