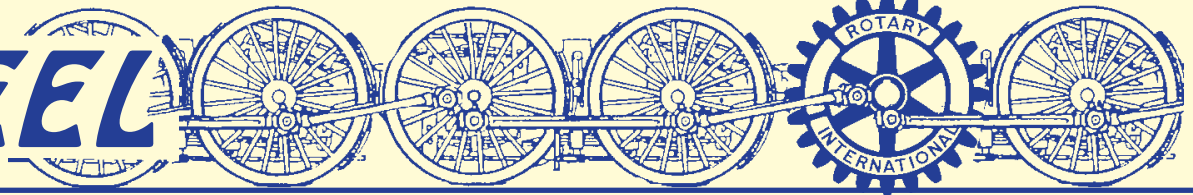


# The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons



**May 1, 2026**  
**Vol. 77, No. 38**  
**Editor:**  
**Ben Dover (Dean H)**

## Call to Order

Prez Lynn rang da bell.

## Pledge

New member **Edgar Mendoza** led us in the pledge and we all proclaimed our commitment to a democracy.

## Thought for the Day

**Bill Vespa** gave us a quote by **Robert Baden-Powell**, founder of the Scout Association and co-founder of the Girl Guides. The Scouting Movement is one of the largest youth organizations in the world with over a million members. "The most worth-while thing is to put happiness into the lives of others." – **Robert Baden-Powell**. **Bill** also shared the Scout Slogan, "Do a good turn daily." Which is to do an act of kindness every day.

## Visiting Rotarians

We had two distinguished visiting Rotarians today:

- Assistant District Governor with the Novato Sunrise Rotary Club, **Judy Johnson**.
- District Governor, from Half Moon Bay Rotary Club, **Mitone Griffiths**.

## Guests of Rotarians

Past Prez **Bill McDill** intro'd his first and only wife, **Vicki**. **Peter Rubens** brought **Paula Marks**, from At Home Caregivers. Prez **Lynn** intro'd **Maddie Walker** a student from San Marin High and **Becca Mark**, a student at Novato High. Prez **Lynn** also intro'd **Tracy Smith**, who is involved in Youth Leadership programs. The lovely **Linda Puhr-Westerheide** was intro'd by hubby, Past Prez **Jorg**.

## Community Care

**Gloria Dunn-Violin** is in chemo now and she's getting better all time and expects to be back by August. **Jim Spilman** was in attendance after knee replacement surgery.

## Happy Anniversary!

Prez **Lynn** announced that our Club Charter Anniversary was last week on April 26, 1954, we're 72 years old!

## Announcements

### Birthdays and Anniversaries

There are a lot of birthdays in May, including my daughter **Heidi**. I didn't take any cookies for her.

There were a number of wedding anniversaries and Club anniversaries and none of them collided.

### Upcoming Debunking

I was standing to make my announcement that I'm recruiting members to participate in the Debunking on Saturday June 27th. Please call me on (415) 446-8994.

## USS Midway

Because I was standing, I didn't get what the other announcements were, except that **Gary Bramon** is organizing a trip to the aircraft carrier Midway, which happens to be in San Diego. Might as well make a two day trip out of it, and go to the San Diego Zoo. The S.F. Giants will be in San Diego, too. Contact **Gary** for details.

## Thank you!

Also, **Jim Spilman** thanked everyone for their support during his recovery from knee surgery.

## Rotarian of the Month

District Governor **Mitone** announce that Big Wheel producer **Bill Vespa** is the District Rotarian of the Month. Congratulations **Bill**. I can't think of anyone better.

## Self Bio/Blue Badge Talk

**Charlie Strickfaden** told us about himself. He had a career with the National Park Service, being stationed all over the country. He truly loved his job. He awarded Junior Ranger Badges at National Parks all over the country. After his talk, I showed him my Golden Age Passport and he told me he delivered hundreds of them across the country, too!

## Program

Prez **Lynn** introduced San Marin High School student **Maddie Walker** and Novato High School student **Becca Mark**.

Both young ladies talked about all of the Youth programs at their schools and in the Novato Community. They talked specifically about

# 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?"



## Tony Lindsay A Soulful Evening with Tony Lindsay

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

Back by popular demand!

Tony and his band wowed us in season one! Join us for an extraordinary evening as we embark on a remarkable musical journey with Tony Lindsay, the legendary lead vocalist of Santana.

Don't miss this exclusive opportunity to witness a true icon in action, captivating audiences with his undeniable talent and unforgettable stage presence.

**Tickets: Adults \$30 • Students \$15**  
[www.novatospeakerseries.com](http://www.novatospeakerseries.com)

## Upcoming Programs & Events

### May

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

## 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 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 Axtel**  
*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*

## Rotary Big Wheel Sponsor



845 Vallejo Avenue, Downtown Novato  
[www.handjtire.com](http://www.handjtire.com)  
[hjtire@vbbn.com](mailto:hjtire@vbbn.com)

Burt Hoffmann  
John Da Silva

(415) 897-1185

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

Youth Leadership Novato. **Prez Lynn**, helped to start a similar program in Colorado and when she moved to Novato saw the need for similar program here. Youth Leadership Novato is supported by the Rotary Club of Novato and is modeled like Leadership Novato (the Novato Chamber Program). **Maddie** and **Becca** are on the steering committee that helped shape the program. **Becca** talked about her involvement in a gardening program at Novato High and how she wanted profits from that program to be used to benefit the community. **Larry Mazzotta** jumped out of his chair and let us know that **Becca** is his Granddaughter and he has a garden that she's never helped him with.

## Raffle

There was no one there with the first number so a second number was pulled and my lovely granddaughter, **Hannah**, won; but she did not share it with me!



At Redwood Blvd. & Olive Ave. artist Heather Lorraine Phelps was painting a utility box which is part of RCN's Community Service Project.

## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:acur8cpa@icloud.com) for meeting location.



*D. G. Mitone Griffiths gets a raffle ticket from Chris DeGabriele.*



*Bill Vespa was presented with the District Rotarian of the Month Award by 5150 District Governor Mitone Griffiths.*



*During his Blue Badge talk, Charlie Strickfaden shared stories about his career with the National Park Service.*



*Frank Bruno speaks from the "Birthday Table".*



*The theme for the month of May is Youth Service. For our program RCN Director of Youth Service, Ross Millerick, spoke about the many Youth Service Projects of the Rotary Club of Novato. The Novato Youth Leadership Project was highlighted during the program by Novato High Student Madison Walker and San Marin High Student Becca Mark.*



*Ross Millerick (l) and John Christman (r) received their Blue Badges from President Lynn Dawson.*



*Madison Walker (l) and Becca Mark (r) spoke about their experience in the newly created Novato Youth Leadership Program and serving on the steering committee to establish the program, with the assistance of the RCN.*



*From left to right: Ross Millerick, Larry Mazzotta, Becca Mark, Madison Walker and Lynn Dawson.*