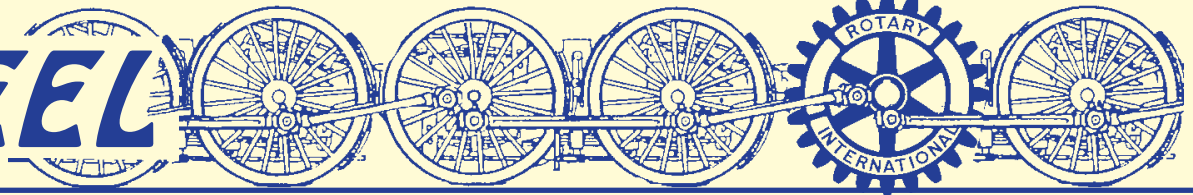


# The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons

**June 12, 2026**  
**Vol. 77, No. 43**  
**Editor:**  
**A Winner**



## The Beginning

**President Lynn** rang the bell, and herding cats, called us to order promptly at 12:15 pm. Leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance as well as giving us the Thought for the Day was Past President **Frank Bruno** following the “Good Old Days” theme.

From **Walt Disney**: “As time passes, it’s the shared moments with friends that stand the test. The good old days become the golden threads woven into the fabric of our memories.”

From **John Lennon**: “Friendship is the timeless melody that makes the soundtrack of our good old days unforgettable.”

From **Mark Twain**: Cherish the laughter, the adventures and the unbreakable bonds. The good old days with friends are the chapters that make our life story extraordinary.” “Ah, the good old days — when my biggest concern was convincing Mom to extend my bedtime curfew.”

## Visitors and Guests

Short-timer **President Lynn** welcomed members and extended an especially warm welcome to Past President **Jean Brown** who had returned after a prolonged absence. There were no Visiting Rotarians, but Past President, Past District governor **Russ Ketron** introduced “his two **Kathys**” - wife **Kathy Ketron** and **Jim Botko**’s wife **Kathy Botko**. Past President **Tom Rickey** introduced

**John Hartman** who is checking out Rotary Clubs. Lastly, Club Treasurer **Chris DeGabriele** introduced his wife **Joni**. Great fun to have a nice crowd for a celebration of the Good Old Days of fellowship, polenta and service! **President Lynn** did point out that several members were missing, but enjoying Rotary Fellowship at the Rotary International Convention in Taipei.

## Community Care

With the room festooned with **Camie Studley**’s wonderful posters from Polenta Feeds past, **President Lynn** called on **Marty Wickenheiser** for a Community Care report. **Marty** announced that **Suzanne Bales** had set-up the annual BBQ dinner at Nova-Ro II on Tuesday evening and then the next morning had shoulder replacement surgery. Cards and calls would be appreciated. **Chris Harrison**. Is progressing wonderfully with her knee replacement surgery.

## Announcements

**Keith Axtell** informed us that our club will be very well-represented on the District Leadership team for the upcoming Rotary year which starts July 1, 2026. The following will be serving: **Lynn Dawson** as AG, **Jeff Slavitz** as District Treasurer, **Keith Axtell** as Global Grant Technical Advisor, **Ron Harness** as District Global Grant Chair, and **Larry Harrison** doing something with the Foundation for the District.

**Jim Spilman** had an announcement about the Ribbon-Cutting ceremony on June 24, 2026 at the Hamilton Transition Center at 4:00 pm. All are invited to help celebrate the culmination of this project to recognize the 180,000+ refugees who transited through here from Southeast Asia in the 1980’s.

**Bill Vespa** made an impassioned plea for Big Wheel Editors for our upcoming Rotary year. He explained that he is working on using AI for this task, but, unless each person speaking, introduces her/himself, AI cannot tell who is speaking — yet! This is a pretty pain-free way to help out the Club, so let’s get those months filled in!

## Featured Rotarian

Kerry Beisseman Bacho

Very cleverly, **Kerry** who manages an Early Literacy program for both Marin and Sonoma counties, read us a wonderful fairy tale entitled the **Kerry Story**. Sadly, your editor has shortened this a bit, which is a good reminder to always show up for meetings!

Once upon a time, in a cozy town nestled among the redwoods called Mill Valley, there lived a little girl named **Kerry**, born to a kind-hearted father named **Ray** and a loving mother named **Nohemi Beissmann**.

**Kerry** possessed a gift: an imagination so powerful that entire worlds sprang to life whenever she played. In the playhouse that her father built her she played for hours on end. To most people, it was wood and paint. But to **Kerry**, it was a magnificent secret playhouse with passageways to adventures for princesses, explorers and brave super heroes.

Five years later, a wonderful blessing arrived. **Kerry**’s little sister, **Rebeca**, was born. From that day on, the sisters became the best of companions. Both girls loved swimming so much that their parents thought it best to move to a warmer area into a house with a pool. That is when they ventured up North to Novato, where their mother, **Nohemi** lives to this day. The sisters attended San Marin High School.

*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?"



You are cordially invited to attend the

## Rotary Club of Novato 2026

### Celebration of Lynn's Year

AKA "The Debunking"

Saturday, June 27, 2026

Bill and Adele Jonas Center

No Host Cocktails & Appetizers: 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. Buffet Dinner: 6:30 p.m.

Debunking: 7:30

**Reservations Required! NO Tickets Sold at Door!**

**RSVP Deadline June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

\$75.00 per person

Guests Welcome

Please contact Marsha Molloy with your reservations:

(415) 328-7745 or email: [mjmolloy@pacbell.net](mailto:mjmolloy@pacbell.net)

**Choice of Entree:**

- Chicken Marsala
- Fresh Oven Broiled Salmon
- Polenta Marinara (Vegan and Gluten Free)



Pay with Square

Pay with Square QR and contact Marsha with your menu choice OR tear off

and mail with your payment to:

Marsha Molloy, 308 Becky Court, Novato, CA 94949

Make check payable to: Rotary Club of Novato

Please indicate your  
choice of Entree:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Quantity

Chicken \_\_\_\_\_

Salmon \_\_\_\_\_

Polenta \_\_\_\_\_

R.S.V.P. to Marsha Molloy: (415) 328-7745 or [mjmolloy@pacbell.net](mailto:mjmolloy@pacbell.net)

## 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

### June

- June 12 **Meeting at Jonas** - The Good Old Days: Polenta Feed! Polish your Boots!!
- June 19 **No Meeting** - Campus Holiday
- June 26 **Meeting at Jonas** - Farewell to 2025-26 & Induction 2026-27
- June 27 **Debunking**

### July

- July 3 **No Meeting** - July 4th Holiday
- July 10 **Meeting at Jonas**
- July 17 **Scholarships**
- July 23 **Novato Speaker Series** - Tony Lindsay
- July 31 **Meeting at Jonas**

## 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 Puhw-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  
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- Oil Changes
- Tuneup

But every fairytale has moments of darkness.

In 1985, a great sadness came upon the family when **Kerry's** beloved father, **Ray**, passed away. It felt as though time itself had stopped. The bright path ahead seemed hidden beneath heavy clouds, and for a while, life stood still. Yet deep within **Kerry** lived the courage she had practiced for years in her playhouse adventures.

When the time came, **Kerry** set off for college. There she discovered new challenges and new strengths. She dove into the waters as a fierce water polo player, learning teamwork, resilience, and determination. Then she found another adventure: the demanding quest of the triathlon.

And so **Kerry's** story continued—not as a princess waiting to be rescued, but as a heroine creating opportunities, spreading kindness, and helping others discover their own magic.

One day, she met a kind and caring man named **Steve**. He already had a young son, and **Kerry's** heart was big enough to welcome him into her story. Before long, **Kerry** and **Steve** discovered that they were meant to journey through life together.

As if that weren't enough magic, **Kerry** watched her mother find love again as well. Seeing her mother happy brought another layer of joy to the growing family story.

**Kerry** and **Steve** married in a celebration that would be remembered throughout the kingdom for years to come.

Soon afterward, **Kerry's** lifelong wish came true.

As a little girl, she had always dreamed of having three children. Through love, marriage, and family, that dream became reality. She gained a son and then welcomed two more children into the world. Her heart was full.

The years flew by like pages turning in a favorite book.

**Kerry** and **Steve** raised their children with love, encouragement, and just the right amount of adventure.

The children inherited the family's athletic spirit and competitive drive. They ran, swam, played sports, chased dreams, and learned that hard work and determination could take them anywhere.

One by one, they attended college and set off on adventures of their own.

Soon they were building families, careers, and beautiful lives. And then came perhaps the greatest surprise of all. Granddaughters. Four beautiful granddaughters! To **Kerry** and **Steve**, these little princesses are pure magic.

Looking around at the bustling holiday tables, the grandchildren running through the house, and the smiles that fill every room, **Kerry** often pauses to reflect. The little girl from Mill Valley who once spent hours imagining happy endings in her dollhouse could never have imagined a life this rich with blessings.

She found love. She built a family. She helped countless children and families through her work. She became a mother. She became a grandmother. And most importantly, she created a life filled with purpose, connection, and joy.

As she looks toward the next chapter, **Kerry's** heart is filled with gratitude. So many of her dreams have become reality, and she knows the greatest treasures in life are not castles or crowns, but the people we love and the memories we create together.

And so, surrounded by family, laughter, and four precious granddaughters, **Kerry** and **Steve** continue living their happily ever after.

The End... for now.

## Rotary Test

**President Lynn** then proceeded with a 12-question test about

Rotary in which each table participated. It was easy, and lots of people won. This editor did not get what the prizes were, as she did not receive one - she may have misled her table about the number of Rotarians world-wide!

## Program

To follow-up on the theme, which did include polenta for lunch and pie for dessert, **President Lynn** assembled a panel of long-time members, dare I say OLD? — well, except for **Bill Vespa**, to reminisce about said Days! All great fun! The panel was made up of **Bill Vespa**, **Dean Heffelfinger**, **Jean Brown**, **Bill McDill**, **Jim Spilman** and **Russ Ketron**. With some old pictures and interesting questions, **President Lynn** elicited many great memories for many of us - what kind of technology issues were present in “your day”? When did you join and who was your sponsor, what was your strongest impression of Rotary when you joined - **Russ Ketron's** was that there were nothing but men!

**McDill** gave a history of The Polenta Feed which was started when he was president of the Club. He felt the necessity to give Past President **Dave Milano** something to do so asked him to develop a fundraiser for the nascent Novato Rotary Endowment. **Lynn** asked what the tie was between the Western theme and Italian polenta. Well, **Dave** “knew these guys” who would produce a meal — polenta with beef stew — for \$12/head and thus was born the Polenta Feed.

Lots of memories and laughter later, the program closed with **Jean Brown** remembering how her husband Past President **Phil** eased the club into an which included female Rotarians starting in 1987. Hint, not all members were in favor of the inclusion, but a SCOTUS decision gave Rotary International no choice!

No meeting at Jonas next week, all assemble for **President Lynn's** last meeting on Friday, June 26, 2026 and the debunking/roast of **President Lynn** and her Rotary year.

## Raffle

**John Cutrufelli** was pleased that his raffle ticket won the 25er! Have a great weekend.



For our Good Old Days meeting theme, Polenta Feed decor, pie and Cowboy attire.



Kerry Beissmann-Bacho was our Featured Rotarian. She read us her fairy tale life story in which her family is living happily ever after.



Frank Bruno with the Thought for the Day.



Lynn Dawson called for announcements.



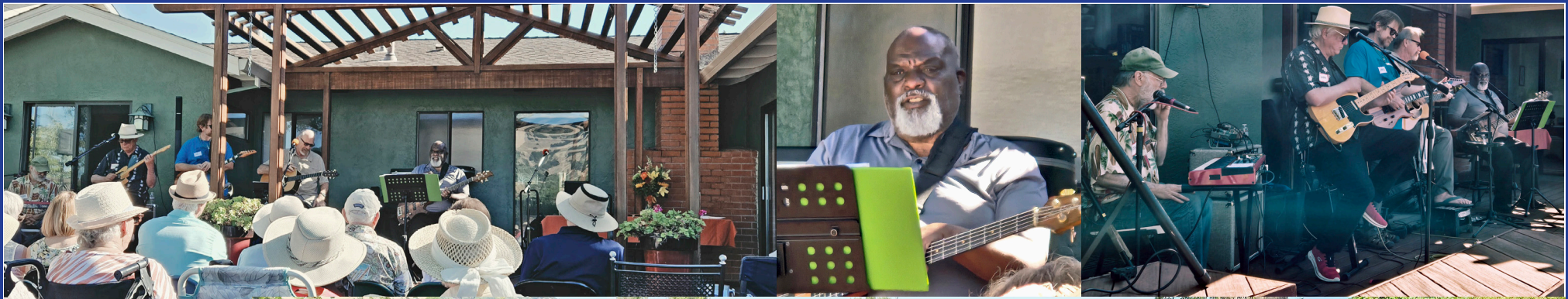
Bill Vespa asks for Big Wheel writing help for the upcoming Rotary Year



Keith Axtell announced that the RCN is a significant role in the District Leadership for the new Rotary year.



President Lynn led a "Good Old Days" panel which talked Club history and the history of the Polenta Feed as our Endowment Fundraiser.



## June 14, 2026 Tony Saunders at the Bramon's Oasis

**The winning bidders at the ADYCR Novato Rotary Endowment Fundraising Live Auction, were treated to an amazing music and storytelling performance by Bassist, Tony Saunders. The event was hosted by Toni and Gary Bramon. The weather was great and Bramon's backyard was the perfect venue, complemented by wonderful Hors d'oeuvres, drinks and people.**

**Thank you, Toni & Gary**

