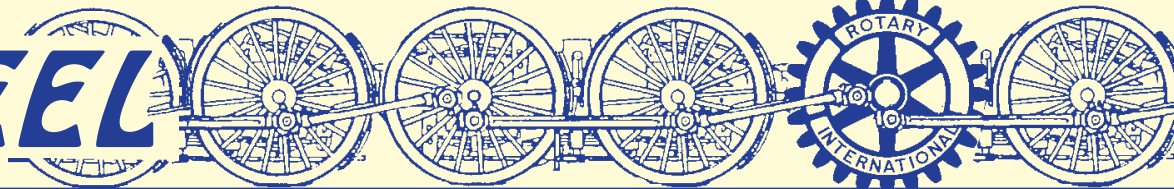


The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons



July 17, 2026
Vol. 78, No. 2
Editor:
Bill Vespa

The Opening Bell

President Peter called us to order and informed us that today, "Everyone Eats" and there is no 25'er.

Pledge and Thought

Past President **Lynn** led us in the pledge. Then she said the Scholarship meeting is one of her favorite meetings and stated, "Someone once said that education is the one thing no one can ever take from you. The wonderful thing about learning is that it never really ends. Today we're seeing students who are beginning the next chapter of their education, but we're also reminded that curiosity, kindness, and a willingness to keep learning are qualities we can all practice, no matter what our age."

Visiting Rotarians

Bob Hermann TRF Legacy Programs Co-Chair was visiting from S.F. #2 and "man of many hats" **John Marshall** visited from Ignacio.

Guests

Rene Prado introduced **Kathy Botko** for **Jim. Russ** had his wife **Kathy** as his guest. **Pam Juckas** had **Shiela Bannon** and her son **Martin Chanel**. **Gary Bramon** had **Greg Mack** and **Chris Niesen** as his guests. **Gary** left **Toni** to be introduced by **Jim Spilman**. **Alan Dunham** brought wife **Roberta** and **Jim Spilman** stepped up again to introduce **Edna Scheller** as a guest of the Club. Again, there were no guests from other planets...

Announcements

Visit Rotary Club #1

John Marshall is helping the District with a trip to Rotary #1 in Evanston, Ill. It will be a 5 day trip with lots of fun activities. Check the District website or contact **John** for details.

Relay for Life

Dean Heffelfinger has raised over \$3,000 for the American Cancer Society's "Relay for Life" which is happening on Saturday July 18th at 11am, at Olive School. If you are a Cancer survivor, come by and take the survivor lap or drop in to the Survivor's Tent which **Marie Rios** said will be stocked with food, crafts, lounge chairs and there will be massages available and drawings for prizes.

Debbie Brusatori Memorial

Larry Mazzatto announced that longtime member **Debbie Brusatori** had passed away last week. Services will be on Thursday at Valley Memorial Park at 10am, followed by a luncheon.

Novato Speaker Series

President Peter made a pitch for the Novato Speakers Series this Thursday the 24th. **Tony Lindsay**, former lead singer for Santana will be performing.

Program

Scholarship Committee Co-Chair **Maggie Shao** opened the program, stating that there were \$110,000 in scholarships presented this year. Maggie then thanked all those committee members that helped review applications and conduct interviews and connect the right candidate to the right scholarship. **Randy Baker**, **Delyn Kies**, **Beth Rowett**, and **Maggie** made up the interview committee. **Jim Spilman**, **Sonia Seeman**, **Larry Mazzotta** and **Randall Lee** also worked on the Scholarship Committee. During the interview nights **Larry Mazzotta**, **Ross Millerick**, **Charlie Strickfaden**, and **Pam Jukas** greeted the students as they came in.

Special Recognition Scholarships

Next, **Maggie** got to handing out the checks. **Maggie** presented the four Rotary Club of Novato Special Recognition Awards, each award is \$500. These recognition awards are special in that they are nominated and selected by the teachers and faculty at Marin Oaks/NOVA

Nathan Wells- This scholarship will help him in the next academic pursuit as he continues his studies at Sonoma State.

Violet Alson - Violet is a creative and passionate student.

Jacob Pelico Bautista was unable to attend. **Jacob** is a kind and thoughtful student who has grown tremendously both academically and personally during his time at Marin Oaks.

Fabrizio Hernandez was unable to attend. - **Fabrizio** has achieved his goals this school year and continues to strive for excellence.

Honorable Mention Scholarships

Next **Maggie** presented the \$500 Rotary Club of Novato Honorable Mention scholarships. These students submitted written applications and came in for interviews.

Elias Lacy - **Elias** has chosen to get certification in HVAC - we all need our air conditioning and he plans to run his own business.

Jack Carroll - Academically **Jack** excelled as a leader. **Jack** is attending University of Nevada Reno to become a Physical Therapist, combining his desire to help others and his passion for sports.

Moriel Abisdreis - **Moriel** will be attending UC Santa Cruz with her goal of becoming a veterinarian.

RCN Scholarships

Our next presenter was Past President **Lynn Dawson**. She presented the Rotary Club of Novato scholarships which are funded by the NRE. These support students

Continued on page 3

The BIG WHEEL

P.O. Box 657
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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?"

In Memoriam Debbie Brusatori

March 31, 1955 – July 10, 2026

TGIF

Friday July 24th • 5:00 - 7:00 pm



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1301 Grant Ave., Novato

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Upcoming Programs & Events

July

- July 23 **Novato Speaker Series** - Tony Lindsay
July 24 **President Peter's 1st Social** - Henhouse Brewing Novato
July 31 **Storytime - Listening, Legacy & Purpose** - Andrew Couch , Founder of Sound Legacy

August

- Aug 7 **Meeting at Jonas**
Aug 14 **Meeting at Jonas**
Aug 21 **Meeting at Jonas**
Aug 28 **Meeting at Jonas**

ROTARY CLUB OF NOVATO 2025/2026 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Membership

Sonia Seeman
Jonas Center Liaison

Jim Carriere
President, Nova-Ro Corp.

Chris DeGabriele
Chair, Novato Rotary Endowment

Lynn Dawson
Past President

who've attended Novato's public high schools. They're one-time awards for candidates who demonstrate exemplary citizenship and are active in community service. The awards are \$1,000 each.

Annelise McMickin - **Annelise** had a GPA of 4.28, and will be attending Purdue University on a pre-med track to become a doctor.

Ernesto Guadalupe Gonzalez Melendez - **Ernesto** hopes to continue to help less fortunate and low-income families as he enters the College of Marin studying mechanical engineering. His life's goal is to work in the aviation industry as a mechanic.

Jocelyn Cepeda - Time management, leadership, and organizational skills learned as a backstage crew member for theater shows at San Marin High will serve Jocelyn well as she pursues studies at Dominican University to become an athletic trainer.

Lisbeth De La Cruz - **Lisbeth** volunteered with the Police Explorer Program and Sheriff's Youth Academy through her involvement with AVID, Advancement via Individual Determination Program at Novato High. She will first attend Santa Rosa Junior College, then will transfer to Sacramento State to become a juvenile probation officer.

Sky Smulewitz was unable to attend. **Sky** will be attending UC Santa Cruz with a double major in sociology and political science.

Valentina Gudino, was also unable to attend. **Valentina's** goal is to become an attorney, beginning her studies at Santa Barbara City College.

Past Presidents Scholarship

Our next presenter was Past President **Phil Dougherty**. **Phil** explained that he was going to award the new Past Presidents Scholarship. **Phil** described what being a Past President represents, the dedication to leadership and historical legacy of our Club's past presidents. This scholarship has a unique purpose. It was inspired by the memory of **Paul Scheller**, a past president who passed away in 2024, and a club member since 1966. **Paul** was a contractor in Novato, and built much of Novato, and had a great appreciation for the trades and the hard working people who built this town. This scholarship will be awarded to those who are seeking a career in the skilled trades, or taking a path that requires specialized

training or vocational schooling, or where the trades have made a profound impact in their life. In addition, the ideal candidate is a student who demonstrates the commitment to continue their education, is active in their community and has a financial need. The Rotary Club of Novato Past Presidents' Scholarships are three awards of \$2000 each to individuals enrolled in a trade school program.

Chrystal Torres Garcia - **Chrystal** will be attending College of Marin to become a Dental Hygienist and hopes to use her time and skills to help people in lower-income communities access dental and health care.

Mateo Garza - **Mateo** plans to go to Cal State Fullerton and become an Electrical Engineer.

Dennis Lovo - **Dennis** will be attending College of Marin to become a mechanic and one day hopes to own his own shop.

Inspiration Break

Then **Maggie** stepped in to pause the awards and introduce the 2023 Bill & Adele Jonas Scholarship winner **Riley Geraghty**. **Riley** gave an inspirational talk about his path from high school to USC. His changes in Major, which led him from Business Administration to a dual major adding Biopharmaceutical Marketing and getting both his masters and bachelors degrees. **Riley** stated, "You can do it! Take every opportunity presented to you, whether that is a research position, whether that is an opportunity to be a part of a club, volunteer, extra credit, be a TA, whatever that is. Take every opportunity presented to you. You should be so proud of yourselves for getting to where you are, and I hope that you continue this momentum for the next steps on your journey. If you ever wanna talk more, I am available. Connect with me on LinkedIn. Find me after this meeting. You guys are gonna do great. Thank you for letting me be here today, and thank you to everyone in Rotary. Thank you."

Morrissey Scholarships

Next up, presenter **Randy Baker**. **Randy** presented four scholarships. The first three were \$2000 Morrissey Scholarships for students who may begin their academic career first at a community college or go directly to vocational or trade school. The awards go to individuals committed to continuing their education, are active in community service, and have financial need.

Alan Mejia Vicente was unable to attend. **Alan** wants to be the first in his family to go to and graduate from college and plans to go to Santa Rosa Junior College and become an Electrician in the union.

Anthony Valverde was unable to attend - **Anthony** won an internship with Kaiser Permanente Launch Program for IT, and will attend Santa Rosa Junior College in the Fall with a goal of working in Healthcare Cybersecurity.

Gisele Del Carmen Gonzalez was unable to attend. **Gisele's** goal is to become a Nurse Practitioner beginning her studies at Santa Rosa Junior College.

Delyn Kies Scholarship

The fourth scholarship **Randy** presented was the Delyn Kies Scholarship - \$4,000 award. For a student active in community service and the ability to balance community service and extracurricular activities with academic achievement. The scholarship is awarded to a student with an interest in a career in environmental science, environmental engineering, or environmental studies.

Conan Munter was unable to attend. **Conan** will be attending UC Davis to become an Environmental Engineer.

Peter Fulchiron Community Scholarships

Our next presenter **Yvonne Fulchiron Schmidt** presenting the Peter Fulchiron Community Scholarships. Each of these award winners are receiving a \$3000 scholarship in memory of **Peter Fulchiron**, longtime Rotary Club of Novato member and a Past President, who served on the Novato Community Hospital Foundation Board and Marin Community Health Board. The awards are for students who are active in the community, worked a part-time job or had an internship, and are planning a career in a medical or healthcare profession.

Reese Cordero - **Reese** graduated from San Marin High and is going to Gonzaga University - first to become a nurse, then continue her education while working as a nurse to become a pediatric nurse practitioner.

Seanna Madsen - **Seanna "Cici"** graduated from Novato High and is going to UC Santa Barbara. Her first goal is passing the National Registry Exam for EMTs and working part-time as a paramedic to help pay for tuition during her four years studying Biology for a pre-med track.

Nina Schweigkofler – **Nina** graduated from San Marin High and is going to Dominican University studying to become a nurse and then eventually a nurse practitioner.

Studley Family Scholarships

Our next presenter was **Beth Rowett**, who stated that she was honored to be involved in this “amazing” process. **Beth** presented the Studley Family Scholarships which are four \$8000 Awards. **Jim Studley** was a member of the Rotary Club of Novato for 55 years including serving as President. **Jim** met his wife **Camie** at College of Marin and they were married for 61 years. The **Studley** family have deep roots here in the Novato community and these scholarships are to support those individuals dedicated and committed to finishing college with a preference for Novato and San Marin High students.

Layton Tashjian - **Layton** has been an Interact Club member for 3 years and President during his junior year at San Marin High. **Layton** has volunteered in several service projects He hopes to volunteer with kids to foster the love of space exploration that has propelled him towards the Colorado School of Mines and to one day work for NASA and design materials for spacecraft.

Olivia Ru - **Olivia** served as Vice President of the Interact Club at San Marin High. **Olivia** will be attending Purdue University to study mechanical engineering.

Bella Cifuentes Reyes was unable to attend. **Bella** will be the first in her family to go to college, at UC Santa Cruz, with the goal of becoming a registered nurse.

Maya Waldorf was also unable to attend. **Maya** will pursue her studies at UC Santa Barbara College of Creative Studies studying biotechnology and biochemistry with emphasis on regenerative medicine.

Bill and Adele Jonas Memorial Scholarships

The next presenter was **Sonia Seeman**, presenting The Bill and Adele Jonas Memorial Scholarships. The **Jonas** Family have been supporters of the Rotary Club of Novato and the Novato community for decades. The building we are in was funded in large part by **Bill** and **Adele Jonas**. Their daughter **Barbara** continues her support of Rotary with funding for scholarships for students who have successfully overcome adversity on their path through school and show a strong desire to continue their education.

Mia Ornellas \$3000 award - **Mia** plans to attend Chapman College and major in Environmental Studies.

Biana Toussaint \$8000 award - **Biana** is going to UC Irvine to study Political Science and hopes to go on to become a lawyer.

Abby Kagin \$8000 award - **Abby** was unable to attend. Her passion for singing combined with her experience in “Peer Mentoring” (working with peers with special needs such as cognitive and physical disabilities) has helped her learn more about human connection through music and art and is the foundation of her studies at UC Davis to become a Music Therapist.

Rotary Pitch #1

Then **Maggie** called up **Delyn Kies** to help with checks before introducing our next presenter **Russ Ketron**. Never one to miss an opportunity to pitch Rotary, **Russ** began by telling the recipients to look for Rotaract (Rotary clubs for 18-30 yr olds) while in college. He then got on to presenting scholarships.

John Stuber Memorial Scholarship

First up was the Stuber Memorial Scholarship - \$4,000 Award. **John Stuber** was described as “the kind of person who does so much for others but remains in the background so that many people are not aware of his contributions”. A long-time Rotary member, his contributions included developing and raising funds for Miwok Park and the Novato Youth Center Building. Students considered are those pursuing school at community or junior college, active in community service, and with financial need.

Alison Chi Ortiz was unable to attend. **Alison** plans to go to Santa Rosa Junior College and then transfer to a 4-year university with the goal of becoming an industrial-organizational psychologist, specializing in applying research.

Okay, just one more...

Russ saw another opportunity to pitch Rotary and the Eradication of Polio worldwide through a fund matching partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. By Rotary working internationally with UNICEF and the World Health Organization we are down to 14 wild cases of Polio globally.

Russ & Kathy Ketron Scholarship

Russ’ next presentation was the Russ & Kathy Ketron Scholarship - \$5,000 Award. The **Ketrons** have dedicated much of their life to Rotary, including **Russ** serving as President of Novato Rotary Club, District Governor for 5150, and champion for Rotary’s mission to eradicate polio around the world. This award is for students with exceptional commitment to community service and interest in a career in the business field.

Adam Gurrola – **Adam** will be studying business and real estate at Cal Poly Pomona.

Ken Berg Memorial Scholarship

The last presentation for **Russ** was the Ken Berg Memorial Scholarship - \$16,000 Award. **Ken Berg** was deeply committed to service, serving in the U.S. Navy, member of the Masons, supporter of Marin Council for Boy Scouts. This award is for a student demonstrating exceptional commitment to community service, an ability to integrate service with their academic and professional goals, and conveying a deep understanding of service and how it relates to community and larger social issues.

Lily Devol – **Lily** hopes to study abroad her Junior Year and one day start a coffee shop of her own. Her goal is to graduate from Cal Poly with a degree in Industrial Technology and Packaging.

And that concluded the Rotary Club of Novato Scholarship presentation.

Closing Bell

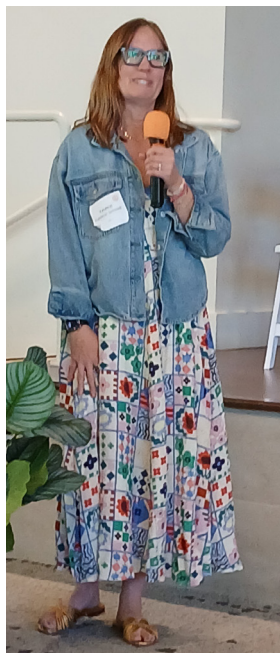
President Peter thanked **Maggie** and presented a thank you gift. **Peter** also reminded us that we have no meeting next Friday, but a social at Henhouse Brewing in Novato. Since there was no 25’er, Peter rang the bell and that was the end of the meeting.



2023 Jonas Scholarship winner Riley Geraghty gave an inspirational message.



Our 2026 Scholarship winners in attendance.



Yvonne Fulchiron-Schmidt presented the Peter Fulchiron Community Scholarships



2026 Scholarship Committee. Left to right back row- Delyn Kies, Sonia Seeman, Beth Rowett, Maggie Shao, Randall Lee, Marie Rios, Randy Baker. Seated - Maggie Shao and Peter Pelavin.



Giving Thanks - Adam Gurolla, Ketron Scholar; Nina Schweigkofler, Fulchiron Scholar; Reese Cordero, Fulchiron Scholar



Scholarship presentations always make a full house.