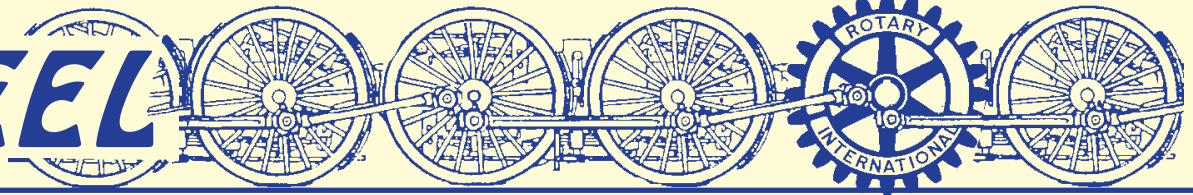


The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons



July 31, 2026
Vol. 78, No. 3
Editor:
Bill Vespa

Editor's Note: I was unable to attend this meeting. This issue of the Big Wheel is based on the audio transcript from the zoom recording. There may be unusual errors or omissions.

Call to order

Prez Peter called the group to order.

Pledge and Thought

Larry Harrison led us in the pledge of allegiance and gave a thought for the day.

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthday and anniversary celebrations for several members were announced, including **TJ Neff**, **Burt Hoffmann**, **Jeff Slavitz**, **Pam Juckas**, **Marsha Molloy**, and **Charlie Strickfaden**.

Announcements

RISE

Past President Lynn announced the sign up for the RISE meal packaging event on August 22nd using the link in **Phil's** Wednesday Bulletin or see the flyer in this issue.

Brick Laying

Jim Spilman asked for people to attend the brick-laying party at City Hall at 2 o'clock today.

Creek Clean-up & Natural Play Area

Randy Baker asked us to keep September 19th in

mind for the Novato Creeks cleanup event with the Ignacio Club and the Sunrise Club. He also thanked **Jim Spilman** and **John Cutrufelli** for their work on the Hamilton natural play area which was covered by the Marin IJ.

Next Season of NSS

Phil Dougherty reminded us to purchase tickets for the Novato Speaker Series starting October 22nd, either via the QR code or by writing a check to Novato Speaker Series for \$100 for all four events.

EREY

Andy Czajkowski said to be on the look out for the personalized letters regarding EREY Rotary Foundation contributions to be mailed out in a couple of weeks.

Relay for Life

Marty Wickenheiser announced that **Dean Heffelfinger** and his group raised, so far, \$4,240, for Relay for Life and they're still accepting checks.

Major Donor

Larry Harrison was recognized as a major donor who contributed over \$10,000 to the Rotary Foundation, with **Steve Wright** presenting him an award.

Blue Badges

Blue Badges were presented to **Joy Fillman** and **Melinda Durfee**.

Speaker

Ron Harness came up to introduce our speaker, **Andrew Couch**, who has spent the past decade helping people tell their stories as an author, podcast host, and audiobook producer. But long before that, Andrew was collecting stories of his own through a lifetime of unique experiences and adventures. From working in an Egyptian-owned catfish restaurant in Mississippi,

to selling souvenirs at Graceland, to answering calls on the 57th floor of the Empire State Building. He's walked across deserts, cycled across the country, and driven from Alaska to Costa Rica. Andrew has always been drawn to interesting people and the journeys they take. Discovering along the way that everyone has a story worth telling, especially those closest to us. Today, **Andrew** is passionate about helping families preserve the voices, memories, and life lessons that might otherwise be lost.

Andrew Couch shared his journey into storytelling, inspired by his experience creating a podcast and later recording his dying uncle's life story. He emphasized the importance of listening and capturing details accurately to preserve family stories and memories. **Andrew** outlined key elements for effective archiving, including interview techniques, building story arcs, deep listening, using modern recording devices, and defining a clear purpose for the project. The discussion highlighted how storytelling can enhance the impact of Rotary members' work and the value of preserving personal and family histories.

Andrew presented on the importance of capturing and preserving personal stories, discussing techniques for conducting interviews, recording methods, and the value of archiving family histories. He emphasized the significance of asking open-ended questions, being patient during emotional moments, and using technology effectively to ensure stories are preserved for future generations. The discussion included questions about camera recommendations, formatting final products, and working with those who have voice difficulties, with **Andrew** sharing practical advice and experiences from his work in this field.

President Peter thanked **Andrew** for a great speech and presented him with note cards, made by **Alan Dunham**.

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?"

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- Tires
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Upcoming Programs & Events

August

Aug 7	Water Reliability - Tony Williams from NMWD
Aug 14	Rotary Membership - Melissa Prandi
Aug 21	Meeting at Jonas
Aug 28	Offsite Social

September

Sept 4	NPD
Sept 11	Meeting at Jonas
Sept 18	Meeting at Jonas
Sept 25	Offsite Social

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Chair, Novato Rotary Endowment

Lynn Dawson
Past President

25^{er}

Congratulations, to **John Reuscher!**

Next Meeting

Next week we'll be hearing from, **Evan Blacksea**. He's going to try and explain a little bit about the technology that's available and how things will work in the future regarding our Club photos.

Closing

President Peter said he would like everyone to go away and do something nice for the world or yourself, then rang the bell to close the meeting.

Rotaplast International



Bring Smiles to Children Around the World Bocce Ball Tournament and BBQ

Reservations or Tickets can be obtained below, at the event, or
by calling Peter Lagarias (415) 902-6208

Sunday – August 23, 2026

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

**A Benefit Supporting Our Mission to Nagamangala, India
Our Twentieth-Second Year of Bocce Tournaments**

Marin Bocce Ball Court
550 "B" Street, San Rafael

Take Hwy. 101 to the Central San Rafael exit – proceed
west on 3rd then south on B

Registration Form

(\$48 per person includes lunch and drinks)

Name: _____

Email: _____

Telephone: _____

Rotary Club: _____

Number tickets: _____

Additional Donation: _____

Rise Against Hunger

Meal Packing Volunteer Opportunity!!



**ARE YOU
READY
FOR
YOUR
HUNGER
RELIEF
EXPERIENCE?**

Date: August 22, 2026

Place: druids hall, 801 grant ave., novato, ca

Time: set-up: 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Volunteer shift: 8:30 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Cleanup: 10:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Registration: <https://act.riseagainsthunger.org/event/e817321>

Contact Sue Royce w/ questions:
510/220-7744 – sue@royceprinting.com

**Sponsored by the Rotary Clubs of
Novato, Ignacio, Novato Sunrise and Novato**





*Larry Harrison was recognized as a Major Donor to the Rotary Foundation.
L to R: Steve Wright, Larry Harrison, Andy Czajkowski and Jorg Westerheide.*



*Live Auction Lobster Dinner sponsors
Brad Williams and Lou Batmale.*



Winning bidders of the "A Dinner You Can't Refuse" Lobster Dinner Live Auction Item on February 7, 2026, enjoyed a wonderful Lobster dinner on July 25th at the home of Kathie and Brad Williams.