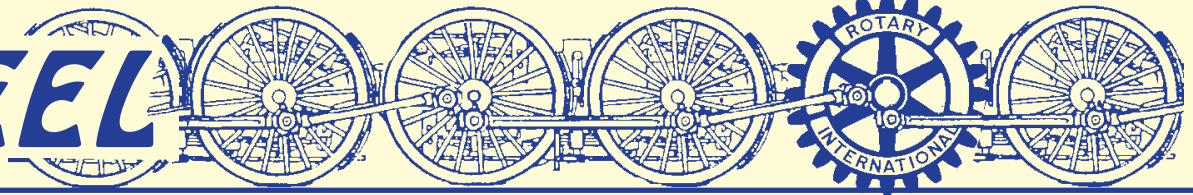


The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons

August 14, 2026
Vol. 78, No. 5
Editor:
A Winner



The Call, Pledge & Thought

Herding cats, **President Peter**, called the meeting to order at 12:15 and called on **Penny Hansen** to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance and give us a Thought for the Day: The dog days are traditionally the hottest stretch of summer and take their name from Sirius, the Dog Star. The Roman's associated Sirius with oppressive heat, lethargy, illness and generally troublesome behavior. In other words, blaming bad decisions on the dog days has a respectable pedigree of roughly 2000 years. (Ed. Note: baseball players have often used the Dog Days as a reason for a slump.)

Visiting Rotarians

Peter then asked Visiting Rotarians to introduce themselves. **Kim McClure**, recent inductee to the Rotary Club of Mission San Rafael introduced herself. Effervescent, **Melissa Prandi**, our speaker for the meeting, popped up and let us know that she was also from the Rotary Club of Mission San Rafael and **Kim's** sponsor.

Guests

Moving on to guests of Rotarians, **Rene Prado** introduced **Jim Botko's** wife **Kathy**, a perennial favorite, **Alan Dunham** had brought along his wife **Roberta** and **Sadie Remak**, accompanied her mother, **Marissa**.

Announcements

Sunset Cruise

Melissa Prandi, making sure that our social calendar had lots of options, invited us along on the Rotary club of Mission San Rafael's fundraiser, Full Moon, Sunset Cruise on the San Francisco Bay, Friday, August 28, 6:30-8:30 pm. Pack a picnic dinner and dine on the bay with fellow Rotarians, family and friends. This private ferry is chartered exclusively for our group and leaves from the Tiburon Ferry Terminal. Contact **Melissa** at prandiprop@gmail.com for tickets or more info.

Tacos & Tunes Tuesdays

Also sponsored by her club, **Melissa** invited us to Tacos & Tunes Tuesdays with live music at the Red Oak Craft Bar at the Embassy Suites, San Rafael, from 6-8:00pm, on Tuesday evenings in August.

Trivia

Aiming to fill the club coffers and impart a bit of trivial wisdom, **President Peter** proceeded to ask a series of trivia questions on a range of topics tied to the August 7 date. Members who gave incorrect answers were asked to pony up

\$5. What island group became independent from Great Britain on this date? Answer: the Maldives. Who created compound interest day on August 7? Ans: **Warren Buffet**. What year, within two years, was the wiffleball created? Ans. 1953 by **David Mulaney**. August 7 is World Lizard Day, what special power do lizards have which allows them to elude predators? Ans: They can lose their tails and grow one back. For Pakistan Liberation Day on this date, what do the letters of the name stand for? Ans: P: Punjab, A: Afganistán, K: Kashmir, I: added for ease of pronunciation, S: Sindh and T: Tan, Baluchistan.

Speaker

Rene Prado, who is our club's Membership chair this year, introduced our speaker, the district membership chair for Marin County, **Melissa Prandi**. **Melissa** is a Marin Native and CEO of Prandi Property Management, a Board member for Hospice and Project Amigo and 2023 San Rafael Citizen of the Year, as well as being a very active Rotarian for over 15 years. She also has her own non-profit, The Melissa Prandi Children's Foundation in Kampala Uganda. She sees a good leader as one who moves people and that she does!

More than five years ago, she headed up Membership for the entire District, but this time around would only agree to cover the 17 clubs in Marin, adding a club in Marin City this Fall.

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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Contact Bill Vespa: zip@sonic.net

Upcoming Programs & Events

August

Aug 21	A Simple Gesture - Mark Martindale
Aug 28	Offsite Social

September

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

ROTARY CLUB OF NOVATO

2025/2026 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

OFFICERS	DIRECTORS
Peter Pelavin <i>President</i>	John Reuscher <i>Logistics & Facilities</i>
Rene Prado <i>Vice President</i>	Joy Fillman <i>Public Image & Awareness</i>
Marisa Remak <i>Secretary</i>	Marcus Combs <i>Community Service</i>
Chris DeGabriele <i>Treasurer</i>	Randy Baker <i>Environmental Sustainability (NR-CAT)</i>
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YuHui Chen <i>District Governor</i>	Jorg Puhrr-Westerheide <i>The Rotary Foundation (TRF)</i>
Judy Johnson <i>Assistant District Governor</i>	Ross Millerick <i>Youth Service</i>
	Rene Prado <i>Membership</i>
	Sonia Seeman <i>Jonas Center Liaison</i>
	Jim Carriere <i>President, Nova-Ro Corp.</i>
	Jeff Slavitz <i>Chair, Novato Rotary Endowment</i>
	Lynn Dawson <i>Past President</i>

She advised us that growing membership is like planting seeds. You do not really have to sell it, one only needs to talk about it and dispel myths, like it is an organization for stuffy, old white males, or they have strict attendance rules.

She asked “How many of you are in Rotary today because someone invited you personally. Many raised their hands. **Holly Axtell** spoke for those intrepid souls who found it on their own saying she had seen something in the newspaper and followed it up, bringing husband **Keith** along with her.

President Peter told of his journey to Rotary. Post-Covid, he wanted to get more involved in the community, so called the Lions and left a message and no one got back to him. He called the number for our Rotary club and **Sonia Seeman** got right back to him and invited him to lunch. Past Club Treasurer **Al Shirley** had done pro bono accounting work for the San Francisco #2 Rotary Club and when he moved to Marin some 40 years ago, checked back with SF to see how he might join a club in Marin, and thus became a member of Marin Evening.

Melissa then said that past District Governor **Brian McCleran**, kept after her for 10 years, before she joined Mission San Rafael. Rotary grows one conversation, one invitation one relationship at a time.

Our biggest membership myth is that we do not have a membership problem, we have an invitation problem. Most people have just never been asked! They may not know that Rotary exists, what we do, or that they are exactly the kind of person we are looking for.

Most people join for the possibilities and stay for the connection — friendship, purpose service, professional connections, a place to belong. Service

often gets them interested and relationships keep them.

She told the tale of Past District Governor **Steve Wright**, who inherited a house in North Carolina that needed a lot of work. He knew no one in the area to help him out. He thought of Rotary and began contacting contractors/workers in the area that had ties to Rotary. He soon had reliable, efficient help to do all he needed to do.

She had her fellow member from Mission San Rafael, **Kim McClure**, relate how she had been recruited into her club. **Kim** was attending the Light Parade at the San Rafael Yacht Club with a group of friends and noticed another group, obviously have a great time. Intrigued, she went over to introduce herself and **Melissa** was a member of the fun group. The rest is history!

Melissa looks forward to her club meeting every week. Rotary is her family and is a place to belong. She touted international projects and the annual international convention as a way to entice people to join.

She talked about being a doctor of Rotary Membership and having a good bedside manner. She personally has sponsored 44 new members because she asks! “I simple invited good people to experience something I loved.” Not all of these have stayed in her club but have often stayed in rotary and are happy Rotarians.

She encouraged us to look for people who enjoy helping others, who care about community, who like meeting people, who are emerging leaders and who fit into your club culture. Her challenge to us is to invite just one person to a club lunch this month. People join because someone makes them feel welcome before they ever become a member.

She also emphasized that membership retention begins on Day One. Recruitment without engagement is like pouring water into a sieve. Make a friend, someone who notices when they are missing. Give a new member meaningful involvement, a reason to care and return. Find a job for them, a way for them to contribute. Hand out meaningful recognition, proof that their efforts matter. And give them the opportunity and space to grow, learn and lead. Welcome the person, not just count the number!

She finished by, once again, reminding us that membership is not just the chair’s job, it’s everyone’s job.

Peter thanked **Melissa** for her enthusiastic presentation and gifted her with a sweet of note cards designed by our very own **Alan Dunham**.

25'er

Mama Marissa won the 25er!

Next Speaker

Mark Bosch reminded us that our speaker next week is **Mark Martindale** from A Simple Gesture, an effort to help feed those in need.

Darting Thought

Peter sent us off with the admonition to “Go away and do something nice for yourself or the world!”

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
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FRIDAY, AUGUST 28 | 6:30 – 8:30 PM

A FUN & FRIENDSHIP SOCIAL HOSTED BY MISSION SAN RAFAEL ROTARY

Enjoy breathtaking views from the water, including Tiburon, Belvedere, Sausalito, San Francisco, the Golden Gate Bridge, Angel Island, and surrounding areas.

Pack a picnic dinner and dine on the Bay with fellow Rotarians, family, and friends. This private ferry is chartered exclusively for our group.

Bay evenings can be chilly—bring a jacket!

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BOARDING
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DEPARTURE
7:00 PM



RETURN
8:30 PM

ADULTS	UNIVERSITY STUDENTS	CHILDREN 12 AND UNDER
\$50.00	\$30.00	\$25.00
PER PERSON	PER PERSON Valid student ID required	PER CHILD

★ Note: A donation to Zeffy is optional.



Questions: Melissa Prandi
prandiprop@gmail.com



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Sunday – August 23, 2026

9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

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Registration Form

(\$48 per person includes lunch and drinks)

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Telephone: _____
Rotary Club: _____
Number tickets: _____
Additional Donation: _____