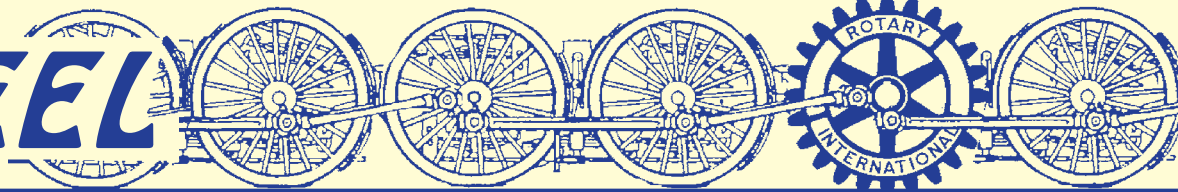


The BIG WHEEL

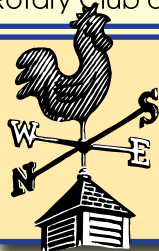


Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons



August 16, 2024

Vol. 76, No. 6

**Editor:
Ryan Lee**

CALL TO ORDER

Amidst the friendly chatter, **President Tom** rang the bell, calling us to order and welcoming Novato Rotarians and guests - twice! He reminded us that Novato Rotary Club personifies "Service over Self" and attested that "We are a club that does not wait, we DO! We don't ask "why," we ask "why not?""

PLEDGE & THOUGHT

Pres. Tom asked **Frank Bruno** to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. **Frank** asked us to place our right hands on our left hearts and began the Pledge after a short spurt of laughter from the club.

Frank's thought for the Day: "...and above all, watch with glittering eyes the whole world around you because the greatest secrets are always hidden in the most unlikely places. Those who do not believe in magic will never find it." He had a second quote: "I am a great admirer of magic. Look at this life - all mystery and Magic." **Harry Houdini**.

He had another quote from **Johnny Mercer**: "That Old Black Magic had me in a spell, that Old Black Magic that you weave so well, icy fingers up and down my spine, the same old witchcraft when your eyes meet mine."

Pres. Tom informed us of the change of plans in regards to our speaker, the magician, who magically disappeared from our agenda due to a case of COVID. **Capt. Sasha D'Amico** from the Novato Police Dept. graciously agreed to fill in at the last minute.

VISITORS AND GUESTS

Visiting us from the Berkeley Rotary club today were **Jocelyn Patel** and **Christy Bruno**, a graduate student at UC Berkeley

and a Social Impact entrepreneur, came to talk about H2O Open Doors. **Patti Hurst**, from the Rotary Club of Athens GA, came to pay her former home club a visit. We were also honored to have Past District Governor and current Area Foundation Coordinator for District 5150, **Brian McLeran** visit our club!

Ross Millerick of the Novato School Board visited us. He is currently running for the College of Marin Board of Directors to help ensure the Indian Valley Campus is properly funded and managed.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Birthdays: **Chuck Hildebrand**, today 8/16 (not present, probably out celebrating his birthday! **Patty Dougherty** on Monday, 8/19.

Anniversaries: **Jeff & Nancy Slavitz** celebrate 34 years of marriage on Sunday!

COMMUNITY CARE REPORTS

Reggie Winner reported that **Moses Jacob** is back! **Peter Pelavin** has returned as well. Nothing else to report!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Peter Pelavin announced that we are planning on doing some work removing docks at Bahia Lagoon on September 14th from 2-4pm. We could use some hands on dock!

Eliza Roesler announced that the District 5150 Interact Kick off will be August 24 (more information and registration at www.Rotary5150.org, but the San Marin club will not be there. Sept. 3 is the first official Rotaract meeting.

Brian McLaren, past District 5150 Governor is here to help! He is visiting various clubs and announced the USS Hornet Foundation Event: "Hope In Action, All Hands On Deck" on Oct. 12 in Alameda. It's during Fleet Week and you'll be able to see the Blue Angels! More information and tickets are at Rotary5150.org

Pres. Tom: Our long awaited T Shirts are not quite here yet. He had predicted they were going to be here yesterday, but alas, they did not arrive. But they are on their way! Tom also announced that we need about 15 people on Sept 14th to assist in Rise Against Hunger at the Druids Hall. Three other clubs will be participating as well from 8 to 11am.

Every Rotarian Every Year is about to kickoff! **Jorg** couldn't be here today, but you can reach out to him or **Brian McLaren** for more information.

Maggie Shao was invited up to tell us about RYLA. District 5150 has been running this camp for 38 years! It was previously called Camp Enterprise and began as one weekend, then grew to 5 days and is now known as RYLA. Novato sponsored 5 students. 193 Campers,

Eliza Roesler shared her own experience at RYLA camp, which she attended as a high school junior. She recalls how the personality assessment confirmed her traits as a "peacock" — talkative and outgoing. Through camp activities, she learned that leadership doesn't always mean being in charge but sometimes involves stepping back to let others lead. This lesson was instrumental in her subsequent involvement in leadership roles within the Interact Club, where she served as a Marin County representative. **Eliza** emphasized the long-lasting impact of the camp, noting how the experience deepened her commitment to Rotary's youth programs and expressed a desire to return as a counselor to continue contributing to the development of future leaders.

Alan Dunham shared a heartfelt and emotional story about reconnecting with a former Rotary Scholar he and his wife had mentored. **Alan** recounts how the Rotary Foundation, after World War II, started the Ambassadorial Scholars program to foster international understanding by sending students abroad. **Alan** and his wife were host counselors for a student from Taiwan, **Anita**, who studied music at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Their connection extended beyond her studies, and they visited her in Taiwan in 1989. Recently, after more than three decades, **Anita** visited them while in California, rekindling their friendship. **Alan** reflects on how Rotary has expanded his family across the globe, with connections in Russia, Switzerland, the Philippines, Taiwan, and Australia. This story underscores the enduring bonds and global family Rotary creates, transforming lives through its programs.

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?"



E-MAIL or SNAIL MAIL?

If you would prefer to receive only the emailed version of the Big Wheel, please email Bill Vespa at zip@sonic.net. By going to delivery by email only, you will also lower our Club expenses.

Rotary Big Wheel Sponsor



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Upcoming Programs & Events

August

Aug. 23 **John Eldridge:** President COM

Aug. 30 **No Meeting**

September

Sept. 6 **Andy Pansini:** Fathers of Invention - A Marin Story of Innovation

Sept. 13 **Jeff Saperstein and Dick Spotswood:** Israel

Sept. 20 **Social Event TBA**

Sept. 27 **Julie Cohne:** Sustaining Arts - Rain Forest

October

Oct. 4 **Meeting TBA**

Oct. 11 **No Meeting**

Oct. 18 **Meeting TBA**

Oct. 25 **No Meeting**

ROTARY CLUB OF NOVATO 2024/2025 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Vice President

Peian Harness
Secretary

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Roy Pfeifer & Gloria Dunn-Violin
Environmental Sustainability (NR-CAT)

Holly Axtell
International Service

Jorg Puhr-Westerheide
The Rotary Foundation (TRF)

Eliza Roesler
Youth Service

Jeff Slavitz & Patty Dougherty
Membership

Sonia Seeman
Jonas Center Liaison

Craig Anderson
President, Nova-Ro Corp.

Peter Oser
Chair, Novato Rotary Endowment

Phil Dougherty
Past President

5 Minute Talk

Marcus Combs introduced himself by sharing his background and personal journey. He grew up in Mill Valley, where his family had settled after migrating from Oklahoma. **Marcus** attended College of Marin before moving on to San Diego State and later returning to the Bay Area to be with the woman he loved, whom he married 39 years ago. They have two children: a daughter who is graduating from law school in Sacramento and a son, **Peter**, who has recently embraced his Armenian heritage by changing his last name to **Calgen** after spending time in Armenia. **Peter** now lives in Petaluma and works for Sonoma County. **Marcus** also mentions his granddaughter, who is about to turn one, adding a touching note about the joy of family and the legacy he is building through his involvement in Rotary.

Marcus highlighted his 35-year career with the National Park Service, where he served in various capacities across iconic sites in the San Francisco Bay Area. His work included stints on Alcatraz Island, Ocean Beach, the Cliff House area, the Presidio, Muir Woods, and the Marin Headlands and a brief stint with the Department of Treasury at the Mint. He also supervised volunteer efforts, particularly beach cleanups and other environmental preservation activities. **Marcus** highlights the National Park Service's mission statement, which resonated deeply with him: "To protect and preserve our national treasures for our generation and generations to come." This mission fueled his dedication throughout his career.

Now in retirement, **Marcus** seeks to continue to embody the spirit of service that defined his professional life, emphasizing that service was not just a job, but a core part of his identity. Thus, he joined the Novato Rotary Club.

SPEAKER

Capt. Sasha D'Amico - Topic: Senior Fraud

President Tom introduced **Captain Sasha D'Amico**, who has recently taken on a significant role. Sasha started her career as a police officer in the NPD in 2000 and has held various positions over the past 25 years, including field training officer, school resource officer, and crisis negotiator. She was promoted to sergeant in 2011, where her duties involved hiring and training, peer support coordination, and crisis negotiation. In 2019, she was promoted to lieutenant, overseeing responsibilities as a patrol watch commander, SWAT commander, and K-9 program manager. In 2021, she achieved her current rank of captain, where she manages administrative services such as investigations, dispatch, evidence, and training. Besides her

police work, **Sasha** is also pursuing a master's degree in public administration and recently graduated from the California Peace Officer Standards Program. She is active in her community, serving on the advisory board of the San Rafael Salvation Army and volunteering as a tour docent at the Jack London Historical State Park. **Sasha** lives in Sonoma County with her husband, **Jerry**, and their four children.

Captain D'Amico began her presentation by clarifying that while she is not an expert in fraud investigation, her 25 years in the police department have provided her with some knowledge on the subject. Her aim was to provide valuable information on how individuals can protect themselves from fraud. She emphasized the importance of pausing to consider the legitimacy of a situation before acting, as fraud can happen to anyone, even those trained in it. The goal of her presentation was to help prevent us from becoming victims of fraud by teaching us to recognize the signs.

Captain D'Amico outlined four key signs that could indicate a scam: the scammer pretends to be from an organization the victim knows, they create a sense of urgency or present a problem, they pressure the victim to act immediately, and they request payment in an unusual way. She shared examples such as receiving texts from the U.S. Postal Service about failed deliveries or calls from Amazon claiming there is an issue with an account. She also mentioned the government impersonation scam, where someone pretends to be from the sheriff's office, claiming the victim has a warrant and must pay immediately to avoid arrest. She clarified that legal matters like warrants are handled through official notices or in person by law enforcement, not through urgent phone calls demanding payment.

Captain D'Amico provided some excellent advice on how to avoid falling victim to these scams. She stressed the importance of not clicking on suspicious links and instead directly contacting the company or service in question. She also suggested blocking unknown callers on cell phones to avoid scam calls, emphasizing that legitimate businesses will not pressure individuals into immediate action. She also encouraged people to hang up on suspicious calls and to use phone settings to filter unknown senders.

Reporting fraud is another critical aspect discussed. **Captain D'Amico** explained the importance of reporting scams to local authorities to alert the community and prevent others from falling victim. They also mention the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) as a resource for reporting fraud, highlighting its simple online form and the value of contributing to larger investigations. Additionally, the speaker recommends AARP's Watchdog Alerts (www.aarp.org/watchdogalerts) as a resource for staying informed about the latest scams.

Captain D'Amico emphasized the importance, yet again, of pausing and consulting with someone else, such as a trusted family member, banker, or even the police, when unsure about a potential scam. This pause can help individuals recognize fraudulent attempts before any damage is done.

Frank Bruno shared a personal experience about an elderly client whose husband was scammed into spending significant amounts of money on fake sweepstakes. The scam escalated to the point where the scammer arranged for a limousine to take the husband to the bank to withdraw more money. The police were involved, but by then, \$35,000 had already been lost. **Frank** noted that these scams often involve untraceable cash cards, making it difficult to recover the stolen funds.

Frank concluded with a positive example of local Rite Aid store employees intervening to prevent an elderly woman from wiring money in a suspected scam. Despite the store's closure, **Frank** praises the employees for their vigilance and protective customer service.

Gloria Dunn-Violin shared an experience she had with HP support and feeling like she was being led into a scam via the support chat.

Captain D'Amico reminded us in response that scammers pose as legitimate companies to gain access to computers, and emails that appear to be from trusted companies but are actually attempts to steal personal information.

Rene Prado explained to us that when searching for a legitimate company, skip the "sponsored" advertisements to ensure we're going to their real website and use 2-Factor authentication when possible when logging into apps and websites.

We are also reminded that you can lock your credit reports and pull your credit reports every three months from www.freecreditreport.com.

CLOSING

President Tom thanked our speakers, guests and members for attending, and announced that our speaker next week is **Jonathan Eldridge**, current President of the College of Marin. He also reminded us of our picnic at Miwok Park August 30th at 12:15 and our two September 14th work events, Rise Against Hunger and the Bahia Lagoon project and MAYBE we'll have T-Shirts next week. Maybe.

25'er!

I don't know who won the 25'er!



President Tom Rickey.



Marcus Combs 5 minute bio.



Eliza Roesler.



Alan Dunham



Maggie Shao describes RYLA.



Speaker, Captain Sasha D'Amico on internet crime.



Greetings from Amsterdam

Marty Wickenheiser with PDG Gary Chow and Foundation Chair Barbara Cressy on the Rotary Foundation 2024 Cruise, a fundraiser for the Eradication of Polio.