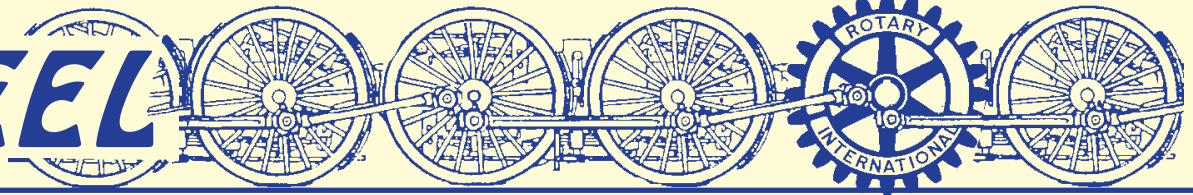


The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons



August 7, 2026
Vol. 78, No. 4
Editor:
A Winner

Call to Order

President Peter opened up the Friday meeting, ringing the bell and calling us to order promptly at 12:15 pm.

Visitors & Guests

President Peter asked for Visiting Rotarians to introduce themselves and **Mike Spalding** from Ignacio answered the call. He then asked members to introduce their guests and **DeLyn Kies** promptly jumped up and proudly introduced her sister **Karen Ellmers**, **Laura Joss** introduced her husband **Skip Meehan** and Club Treasurer **Chris DeGabile** introduced our speaker **Tony Williams**.

Pledge & Thought

Leading us in the Pledge of Allegiance was your current bulletin editor **Reggie Winner**. She followed up with a Thought for the Day in the spirit of Membership Month: Rotary membership isn't really about how many names are on our roster. It's about how many people feel they belong.

People may join Rotary because they want to serve their community, make connections, or simple get out of the house for lunch. They stay because of friendships they make and the feeling that their presence matters.

So perhaps the best membership strategy isn't just asking, "Who can we invite to Rotary?" It's also asking, "What are we doing to make people glad they came?"

A strong club doesn't just recruit members, it gives them a reason to come back!

Birthdays & Anniversaries

President Peter took the time to extend best wishes to all the August Birthday, Anniversary and Club Anniversary celebrants. After inquiring as to **Noemi Beisseman-Mason's** plans to celebrate we discovered that though she would really like to jump out of a plane, her family frowns upon that idea! **Randall Lee** is eagerly awaiting bride **Jackie's** return from a family visit to South Carolina. **Chuck Hildebrand** is planning a fishing trip to Whidby Island for his birthday and **Patty Avalon** will be cheering on the SF Valkeries for her celebration. **Larry Harrison** will be dining at the Buckeye for his birthday and, lucky **Peian Harness** is not expecting candy or flowers, but will be attending the Rotary Club of Central Marin for her festive dinner!

Red Letter Day! Long-time Novato Rotarian **Tom Bales** was in attendance and was recognized for his 50 years in Rotary — with perfect attendance the first two years! **Jim Carriere** was recognized for 42 years in Rotary, though not all with our club! **Penny Hansen** was feted for 11 years as a Rotarian with our club and thanked us all "for saving her life."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Novato Speaker Series' Upcomming Season

Gary Bramon announced the line-up for the 2026-27 Novato Speakers Series: October 22, Tennis Great and San Francisco native **Rosie Casals**; January 28, Master Illusionist and comedian **Patrick Martin**; April 22, National Inventors Hall of Fame inductee **Kerrie Holly** who will speak on AI; and, **Elisabeth Leamy**, 13-time Emmy award winner! Nice line-up committee! Season tickets are currently available for \$100/series and will be for two months. Then the price goes up to \$125/season and individual tickets will be available at \$35 each.

Rotary Club of Ignacio Fundraiser

Michael Spalding encouraged us all to attend the Rotary Club of Ignacio's annual fundraiser which will held here at The Jonas Center on Saturday, September 12 at 5:30 pm. They have updated the food and entertainment, so the tickets are a bargain at \$125 each!

Emergency Preparedness

Keith Axtell generously shared handouts from a recent presentation that he and **Holly** had attended about Emergency procedures and precautions. He urged all to sign up for Alert Marin on your cell phone at AlertMarin.org or visit ReadyMarin.org

Rise Against Hunger

Chris Siefkas made another request for a few more volunteers for the Saturday morning Rise Against Hunger project, on August 22 at Druids Hall. This is something that only takes a couple of hours, can be done sitting down, does not take a rocket scientist and will be very rewarding! You will be helping produce 10,000 meals for hunger relief! Sign up at <https://act.riseagainsthunger.org/evente817321> or contact **Chris Siefkas**. **Chris** did say it is so much fun that **Mark Bosch** even signed up twice!

Scholarship Thank You

Maggie Shao thanked all who attended the meeting to present over \$100K in scholarships to deserving Novato graduates.

RYLA

Maggie continued on to wax rhapsodic about the the RYLA experience that she, **Jeff Slavitz**, **Randall Lee**, **Charlie Strickfaden** and **Ed Lee** had this past week in the Santa Cruz mountains. They all needed a sound night's sleep upon their return, but had the pleasure of seeing the young attendants learn and grow as they were thrown into situations they may not have been so comfortable with at the beginning and emerge

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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Upcoming Programs & Events

August

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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Jeff Slavitz
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Lynn Dawson
Past President

competent and confident. Our Club also donated four scholarships.

Mark Bosch grabbed the mic quickly in his defense to let us all know the reason he signed up twice for Rise Against Hunger was because he had been unable to attend last year!

Program

Having taken care of the announcements, **Chris DeGabriele**, former General Manager of the North Marin Water District, introduced our speaker, **Tony Williams**, current General Manager of NMWD.

Tony started off with his own “jumping out of airplane” story. It seems while he was in the Navy, he had occasion to board a C130 airplane and, ever cautious, those he was with asked where the parachutes were, as they appeared to be missing! When they got back on the ground, they inquired about the absence of parachutes and were told that there were none, as that particular plane engines chewed up parachutes if one jumped out of that plane! Not too helpful!

Tony continued on to tell us about NMWD — providers of potable water and recycled water for Novato and some of West Marin as well as overseeing a small Sewer system in Dillon Beach. The district was formed in 1945 and services 8 miles of transmission pipeline, 30 storage tanks, 25 pump stations, 13 pressure regulating stations, 2600+ fire hydrants, one potable water treatment plant, one dam and reservoir, a full-service water quality lab, as well as its headquarters and corporation yard.

Currently, the district’s biggest challenge is replacement of aging infrastructure, estimated (in 2025 dollars) to be about \$755 million.

Stafford Lake was constructed in 1951 and in 1985 it was raised with a special spillway. It is currently one of the smaller reservoirs in CA and provides from 10-20% of our water usage. The remainder of our water comes from Sonoma County Water, Lakes Sonoma and Mendocino. There is also have a robust recycled water program. We do not get any of our water from ground water, as the aquifer is not deep enough. There is some water obtained from ground water in West Marin.

Drought is the most severe threat to regional water supply resilience. earthquakes are the second most dangerous threat as they can displace pipelines and infrastructure.

We do not rely on Sierra snow pack for our water, but we do really on the Eel River and the Russian River Basin. The Eel connects to the Russian River at the Potter Valley power plant which PG&E is talking about closing. A possible solution is the Eel-Russian Project authority (ERPA), with Sonoma county, Sonoma Water district, Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission, operating as a Joint Power Agreement. The round Valley Indian Tribes would also like a say in the project.

According to a study completed this year, one solution for water resiliency would be to develop a Regional Water Bank to manage available Russian River winter water — which currently becomes run-off — by strategically diverting this water, storing in ground water and/or surface reservoirs and extraction and use of the store water for meeting demands during times of impending droughts or outages. This would be known as the Atmospheric River Capture project (ARC) and would be developed with MMWD (southern Marin water).

Tony then bravely tackled a myriad of questions from the audience. He started with the project stirring controversy in San Marin. Even in our driest years, there is still plenty of water in the Russian River. MMWD is proposing to bring Russian River water through a pipeline down Sonoma county and make a left turn at San Marin Drive, and follow San Marin Drive to Novato Blvd and make a right turn westward to the Nicasio Reservoir. It would run right by Stafford Lake, so some water could conceivably be diverted to Stafford in a water emergency.

However, **Tony** stressed this is not his agency’s project it is MMWD’S!

He said that NMWD’s Cash for Grass program is still in effect, offering \$1.25/sqft of replaced grass. He warned that commerical properties and HOAs will no longer be able to water lawns unless they serve as a park.

All the dust control at the former Fireman’s fund property is currently being done with recycled water.

Burt Hoffmann informed us that recycled water is also used for landscaping at Nova-Ro III. And Marin country club paid for the extension so that their grounds and trenes can use recycled water.

The questions being answered and, for the good of the order, Past President **Peter Oser** moved for adjournment, to finish up a few minutes early.

Raffle

Pat Eklund won the 25er.

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





Toy Story Team



***Here are a few photos from the
District 5150 RYLA
(Rotary Youth Leadership Academy)
camp held in Scotts Valley from
August 1 - August 5***



*Toy Story Facilitators Liam
Friel & Maggie Shao*



*Camp nurse Rich Swart &
Randall Lee.*



Jeff Slavitz & Maggie Shao



*Charlie Strickfaden & Maggie
Shao sending campers home
on buses*