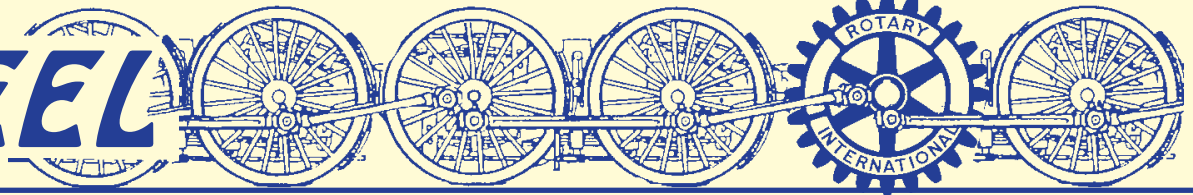


The BIG WHEEL



Rotary Club of Novato

Chartered April 26, 1954

The Golden Nugget of the North Bay

In The Valley of Gentle Seasons



September 11, 2026
Vol. 78, No. 8
Editor:
Maggie Shao

In the Beginning

President **Peter Pelavin** rang the bell at 12:15 and Past President **Phil Dougherty** led us in the Pledge and then had a different perspective for today's thought, usually he wants to be brief, witty and humorous, however, since today is the 25th Anniversary of 9/11 attacks - he wanted to read the timeline of events that day, and for us who were alive then to remember - however, an incredible statistic is 94 million US babies have been born since 9/11 so a third of our population wasn't even born. **Phil** also mentioned that the response from those not directly involved showed great compassion and sympathy, mourning those we didn't even know. You can find a timeline of events similar to what **Phil** read at the following link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_for_the_day_of_the_September_11_attacks

Guests and Visitors

Visiting Rotarians: **Dennis Hagerty** from Rotary Club of Wet Mountain Valley of Colorado introduced himself, nice to see one of our Past Presidents. PP **Lynn Dawson** introduced **John Keenan**, who is visiting different Rotary clubs and we hope he chooses to become a member of our club. **Lynn** also introduced **Julie Jacobson** a member of Novato Unified School District Board of Trustees, they went through Leadership Novato together and also of note, Julie's son is participating in the Teen Leadership Novato program. **Mike Morrissey** introduced his wife, **Jacqueline Janssen**, **Laura Joss** brought her humorous husband **Skip Meehan**, PP **Bill**

McDill brought his favorite wife **Vicki**, and PP **Peian Harness** introduced one of our long-serving Club Treasurer, **Jim Botko** and his wife **Kathy**.

Announcements

District News

President **Peter** made a few announcements, nominations for District Governor are now open. He also announced a District-wide Coastal Cleanup day Saturday September 19 from 9am to 1pm, and an Interact Advisors Training event on September 26, 2026.

Nepal Flood Relief

Jeff Slavitz wanted to again stress the need for financial assistance for the devastating floods in Nepal. To aid Nepal during this time providing housing and support for those displaced, you can make a donation to the Endowment and they will forward those donations to Nepal.

Novato Speaker Series

Mark Bosch reminded us of the Speaker Series and the postcards on table, but wait, PP **Phil Dougherty** was going to make the announcement, and they were competing for the microphone, Past Prez **Lynn Dawson** came up and gave us an update on the season ticket option for all four speakers, and looking forward to our first speaker in October, tenni great **Rosie Casals**.

Camp Big West, AZ

Evan Blacksea just returned from Zone 26/27 aka Camp Big West in Phoenix, AZ and a stunning statistic: one key point during the conference is how Rotary has lost over 100,000 members in the US alone since 2004, and ways to reverse and regain members is one of the goals for Rotary. **Evan** also mentioned his aunt, who worked for the PA PD (Port Authority Police Department), was part of a documentary called Reflections.

Chamber Casino Night

Marcus Combs pointed out the flyers on the table for Novato Chamber of Commerce Casino Night on Sept. 18 at the Jonas Center - good food from local restaurants like Tommy's Salsa, Teriyaki Madness, Beso's. Go to <https://www.novatochamber.com/signature-events/casino-night>.

Icebreaker for Lunch Table

Discuss among yourselves a memorable trip where there was possibly a dangerous element and/or a favorite meal on a trip abroad. **Prez Peter** shared a trip to Italy with eating delicious home-made filled crepes. **Larry Mazzotta** shared when he and his wife were canoing on the Zambezi river for 3 days and they didn't know how to canoe and were in constant stress for fear of tipping over. **Chris Seifkas** mentioned something (sorry didn't catch the whole story) about eating stew with tingling fingers as being a bad sign. **Jim Bates** recalled as an Eagle Scout he had to spend an overnight solo and he was awakened by a bright flash. of light that was the atomic bomb testing in Nevada. **Vicki McDill** recalled traveling to Rotary International conference in Singapore, they were on a flight from Hong Kong with 40 others and the plane suddenly dropped drastically, where one woman walking in the aisle hurt her elbow on the arm rest with the sudden drop. The plane ride for the next 10 miles was very bumpy and scary and she survived to tell the tale. **Keith Axtell** recalled traveling in Guayaquil, Ecuador in neighborhoods that were very sketchy, but a more humorous story was white-water rafting with **Holly** where their raft was lodged on a big rock and **Holly** was perched atop the rock while **Keith** was stuck on the bottom part of the raft having difficulty helping dislodge **Holly** and get the raft afloat again -

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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Rosie Casals

A Golden Return

Thurs., October 22, 2026
7 pm to 8:30 pm

Rosie Casals is an International Tennis Hall of Fame inductee, 12-time Grand Slam champion, and a revolutionary force who fundamentally reshaped professional sports. Rising from the public courts of San Francisco as America's first prominent Latina tennis player, the 5'2" powerhouse defied the era's traditional tennis mold with an acrobat's speed and an unyielding, fiery court presence. Globally celebrated for her historic doubles partnership with Billie Jean King, Casals captured 112 professional doubles titles—the second-most in tennis history. More than a champion, "The General" was a fierce social advocate and one of the courageous "Original 9" players who risked their careers in 1970 to form the first women's professional tour, breaking gender barriers to pave the way for modern player equity and equal prize money.

Tickets: Adults \$30 • Students \$15
www.novatospeakerseries.com



Upcoming Programs & Events

September

- Sept 18 **Meeting at Jonas** - RYLA report by Maggie Shao & Talk about AI by Rene Prado
Sept 25 **Offsite Social** - Greystones Lounge

October

- Oct 2 **Offsite Meeting** - Miwok Park Potluck & Fun
Oct 9 **Meeting at Jonas** - Dora Zuniga
Oct 16 **Meeting at Jonas** - TBD
Oct 22 **Novato Speaker Series** - Rosie Casals
Oct 23 **Non Spaghetti Feed** - The McDill's Home
Oct 30 **Meeting at Jonas** - TBD

ROTARY CLUB OF NOVATO 2025/2026 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

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Jorg Puh-Westerheide
Andy Czajkowski
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Rene Prado
Membership

Sonia Seeman
Jonas Center Liaison

Jim Carriere
President, Nova-Ro Corp.

Jeff Slavitz
Chair, Novato Rotary Endowment

Lynn Dawson
Past President

TGIF

Friday September 25th • 5:30 - 7:00 pm



Greystones Lounge
7377 Redwood Blvd, Novato

*You buy a drink and
Rotary will provide some appetizers*

to the amusement of other Rotarians. **Keith** recalled a favorite meal in Budapest, Hungary with the most delicious sliced duck and pear fanned across a plate. **Mark Bosch** got into some shenanigans Fat Tuesday in New Orleans and I can't get all the facts straight, but a Brazilian dancer and suspicious characters being led up a stairway and being brought to the police were part of the story.

Program

Our own Rotary Club of Novato **Mike Morrissey** spoke about his travel specific to Nigeria and Rotary in 2016 led by **Brad Howard**. Unfortunately, in 2016 when they arrived, there was "Bring Back Our Girls" campaign in response to over 200 girls abducted by Boko Haram, a militant group in Nigeria. The purpose of this trip was both to celebrate World Polio Day and to visit the Africa Rotary Project Fair, where different clubs were presenting their projects, needs, and looking for potential Rotary Club partners. **Mike** met at this fair, **Dr Steve Miller**, an orthopedic surgeon, who years later reconnected and invited **Mike** to videotape a medical mission in Guatemala. Part of this Nigeria trip was to provide Polio vaccines at Ozuoba rural hospital. In 2016, Polio had been eradicated for a few years in Nigeria, however there were 3 cases in 2016. A very meaningful part of the trip to see mothers bringing in their babies and children to receive the polio vaccine. One can see the effects of polio, as several adults with atrophied limbs, many navigating life on a skateboard as their legs are non-functional. **Mike** showed a video of a soccer game of polio survivors playing soccer where all the players were on skateboards using their hands to toss the ball. Another project during this trip was painting a building in dire need of protection and repair as they donned coveralls in 100 degree heat. Members on this trip were hosted by local Nigerian Rotarians in their home, and had a typical dinner. The end of the 10 day trip was a 500 guest gala event and fortunately ongoing negotiations resulted in Boko Haram agreeing to release the abducted girls. There were questions from

the audience about necessary vaccinations to travel, and where did the 3 cases of polio arise from in 2016, and what is the current situation of health aid in Africa. **Mike** asked his wife **Jacqueline** what she thought about the trip and she said it was meaningful to be there and provide some relief and hope and wouldn't it be great if Rotary ruled the world. On **Mike's** recent trip to Togo, he spoke about local health administrators scrambling to find other sources of funding as USAID (United States Agency for International Development) had been stopped during the current US Administration. One last comment came from **Maggie Shao** (the editor for this Big Wheel issue), as the 25th Anniversary of 9/11 and West Africa assistance really resonated after today's presentation. Maggie explained that the Peace Corps was initiated by **President John F. Kennedy** in 1961 and was a meaningful program that in 5 short years, there were over 15,000 volunteers in over 50 countries. The 3 goals of Peace Corps: The First Goal is to send trained men and women to countries requesting assistance (teachers, health workers, agriculture and environmental experts) Second Goal is to promote better understanding of Americans to people being served and Third Goal is to promote better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans. **Maggie** was serving in Ghana between 1999 and 2001 as an environmental volunteer managing a tree seedling nursery promoting tree planting as well as applying and receiving a US Embassy Grant for \$8500 to build a concrete three classroom elementary school in her village. On September 11, the school building foundation and pillars were being raised by experienced masons driving in from town 12 miles away, and when they arrived they were very sad and profusely saying how sorry they were regarding the planes hitting the building that fell down. My village had no electricity or running water, and my main form of connection with the outside world was through a short wave radio. At first, I thought they were talking about a movie they saw, and it slowly dawned on me that something terrible had happened. That night I listened to the short wave BBC broadcast and it slowly became real. The biggest takeaway for me as I didn't see the news or television and

those horrific images, was the huge amount of sympathy the Ghanaian people had for the US, earlier when **Phil Dougherty** was speaking about the 9/11 Attacks timeline, he mentioned how people were mourning for those they didn't know who suffered and died, and that's the feeling I had 25 years ago - and the impact of 40+ years of Peace Corps volunteers working in Ghana building schools, teaching, providing healthcare and that soft power and long support and strong impression of how good Americans are and their sadness for such a terrible event.

\$25 Raffle Winner this week

\$25 Raffle Winner this week, **Burt Hoffman**



Friday, October 23rd
5:30-7:00 PM
at The McDills'
18 San Luis Court, Novato

Vicki and Bill McDill will be opening their home for the Annual Non Spaghetti Feed. Everyone should bring a finger-food to serve 4-6 people and their good humor, so we can enjoy the fellowship and celebrate Fall. Spouses and significant others are encouraged to come and join in the fun.

Hosted by Bill & Vicki McDill



President Peter announced upcoming District 5150 Events.



P.P. Phil led the pledge and gave a recounting of the events on 9/11/2001.



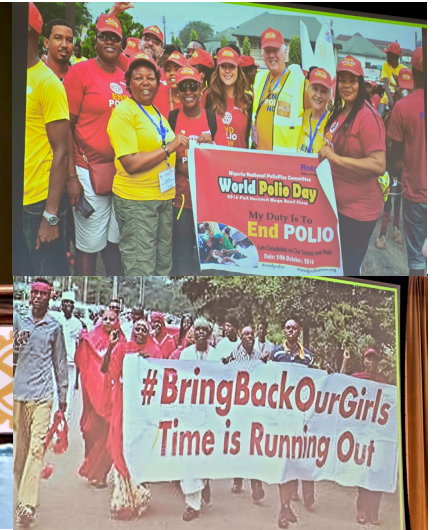
Jeff Slavitz reminded us that funds are still needed for Nepal flood relief.



Maggie Shao told us she learned of the 9/11 attacks via shortwave radio while serving for the Peace Corps in Ghana.



Mike Morrissey spoke about his 2016 trip to Africa



From left to right across photos: Rene Prado, Adele De La Santini, Melissa Rink, Leslie Prado, Michelle Whiteside and Tom Young (and Rene again).



The Bocce Ball Endowment Fundraiser hosted by Frank and Robin Bruno on 9-12-26 was fantastic, as usual.

Mission San Rafael Rotary Sunset Cruise 2026

**"Having fun is part of
the Rotary package!"**

