

The Downtown

LOW DOWN

SPRING 2015



BYE, TO OUR INTERN

It is already time to say good-bye, and thank you, to our intern, Frances Telles.

Over the course of the past 17 weeks, Frances Telles has served as our Social Media & Communications Intern. Please join us in congratulating her as she receives her Bachelor of Arts from Sonoma State

University with a major in Communications Studies and an Emphasis in Public Relations.

Frances has done an amazing job during her time with the DNBA and leaves us with the message below.



JOIN US IN THANKING
FRANCES TELLES

DEPARTING THOUGHTS FROM FRANCES:

As my internship with the DNBA comes to an end, I wanted to give an update on the progress that has been made during my time here.

The Downtown Novato Business Association social media is in full force. Over the past three months we have seen an increase in all of our platform's followers and interaction. For those of you who are unfamiliar with social media lingo, this indicates that people are seeing what is happening in Downtown Novato!

In one month we raised our Facebook likes by 10%, our Instagram followers by 120%, and our Twitter followers by 62%, which exceeded the one-month goals we set in the beginning of the year. Each week we post about the upcoming events that the DNBA hosts, as well as spotlight a wide range of businesses throughout our Downtown. Dish of the Week, Scene of the week and Stories from our members, are frequent topics in the DNBA's growing social media presence that has generated an average of 10 posts each week on all social media

platforms.

In a continued effort to increase visitors in Downtown, all businesses should actively be posting the awesome services and products we have to offer. The potential with social media is often overlooked, but can make a big difference if followers are properly engaged. With big events like the Novato Festival of Art, Wine & Music, the Farmers Markets, and 4th of July coming up, there are some great opportunities for everyone to pull out their smartphones and 'like' and hashtag Downtown Novato.

It is important to mention that successful online marketing is a combination of organic reach and paid advertising. Earned media (such as the work I have done) is time intensive, so going forward, the DNBA may need to shift more resources toward paid social media advertising.

I wish nothing but continued growth and success for Downtown Novato!



"Downtown Dish of the Day"



Featured member



"Stories from the Trenches"

MEMBER NEWS & INFO



In this second edition of our newsletter, we want to continue the dialouge with you, our valued members. Our goal is to keep you informed about, and connected to, our ever-improving Downtown.

FARMERS MARKET

The Farmers Market has kicked off with a resounding response! The event will continue to take place each Tuesday, until September 29th. The operating hours are 4 pm - 8pm.

Street closures begin with the street shutting down at 3pm and returning to normal at 9 pm. Signs indicating that no parking is permitted are posted 24 hours in advance. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Kelly from Agricultural Community Events Farmers Markets (the non-profit organizers of the event) at 415-999- 5635 or via email at agriculturalcommunityevents@gmail. com.

MEMBER MIXER & BRAINSTORM



The DNBA Member Mixer & Brainstorm which was held on February 24th at Trek Winery generated a great turnout and proved to be an excellent avenue for learning from our valued members. After a little mixing and mingling we got down to business, breaking the 37 business owners up into three groups, by geographical location. We explored five key questions allowing a maximum amount of time for each, i.e. What one single thing could the DNBA do to enhance the downtown? One person in the group led the brainstorm while another captured notes.

The end results were fascinating and a clear indication of how different our members' needs and interests are, and also demonstrated how differently each perceives the role of our organization. The notes from each group are available to any member interested in reviewing them (please email dnba@novato.org). We are now working to ensure that the suggestions and comments gathered are strongly considered as we select our activities and areas of focus. Thank you to all who attended, and we hope to see you at future events.

FRAUD & ANTI-COUNTERFEIT WORKSHOP

A big thank you goes out to the City of Novato, Novato Police Department, Bank of Marin, the Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Insomniac's, and our two speakers Sergeant Mike Howard and Fraud Officer, Jeff Petterson, for their role in delivering the DNBA 'Fraud & Anti-Counterfeit Workshop'. With approximately 20 business owners in attendance, we learned how to spot counterfeit currency and avoid a host of other fraudulent schemes.

In the future, we hope to deliver even more educational opportunities to our members and look forward to partnering with the Chamber and the City in such efforts.



IDA & CDA CONFERENCE IN SANTA MONICA

As we work to become a stronger organization we are investing in the development of our staff and board members. This March, our Executive Director attended the International Downtown Association and California Downtown Association 'West Coast District Summit' in Los Angeles.

The event was an opportunity to learn the 'latest & greatest' things happening in downtowns across the West Coast. Members interested in learning the take-aways from this event can request a copy of the Powerpoint presentation that Tiffany delivered at the General Membership meeting upon her return.



EVENTS UPDATE

EVALUATING PAST EVENTS AND ANTICIPATING UPCOMING ONES

A LOOK BACK AT OUR SPRING 2015 EVENTS.

Spring 2015 has found Downtown Novato bustling with activity. Below is an overview on the events that took place in our Downtown:

ST. PATRICK'S DAY SCAVENGER HUNT

On March 14th, 2015 the Downtown Novato Business Association hosted the St. Patrick's Day Scavenger Hunt. Thirteen Downtown Novato Businesses hid a special green item in their store for eager Novato residents to find. Almost every participant of the Scavenger Hunt walked away with one of our awesome prizes. Tickets, gift cards, sporting goods, and more, were donated by our amazing sponsors: Athas & Associates Real Estate, Century 21 North Bay, Jodi Fischer at PNC Mortgage, Continental Jewelers, All Season Soccer, and the Bay Area Discovery Museum!



FRIDAY NIGHT LIVE MUSIC

Over the course of three months this Spring series of live, free concerts have taken place at City Hall. The DNBA has been working with the Parks, Recreation & Community Services to support and promote the con-

certs. Members, such as Bicycle Brüstop and Finnegan's, have hosted bike valets and provided food and beverage options.

Averaging about 70 guests per concert, attendees have expressed overwhelming excitement for these new events happening in the heart of Novato. The music has been exceptional, under the expert guidance of Bill Hansel from Appleberry Jams.

The final spring concert took place on Friday, May 8th from 6-8pm, and featured the very talented Jeff Campbell! Jeff recently performed a few hits from his upcoming album on the Jimmy Kimmel Live Show.

Based on the positive outcome of this spring concert series planning has begun for a summer/fall series to take place on the Civic Green. More information about these upcoming outdoor concerts will be released shortly at www.cityofnovato.org/concerts.



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"THANK YOU! IT WAS FUN! KEEP THE FESTIVITIES COMING!"

THE HUNT IS BACK!

On April 4th the DNBA took on the much-loved (and missed) egg hunt in Downtown Novato. We decided to call it 'Egg-Stravaganza' and with the help of the JV San Marin High School girls soccer team we filled 3,000 eggs for the over 400 children that attended. The event covered a range of age groups in numerous grassy areas.

The hunt was a mad 'dash and grab' by kids ranging from 0 -8 years old. Prizes consisted of thousands of dollars in donated items, including swim, dance, teeball, basketball, soccer and gymnastic lessons, event tickets, a bicycle, and a tea party, in addition to hundreds of dollars in gift certificates.

In an effort to evaluate our work and collect data, we handed out surveys at this event. The majority of attendees heard about the event on our website or via our social media and 53% gave the event a rating of 5/5, with 20% giving it a 4/5. The smiling little faces and buzz downtown certainly made this year's effort worthwhile, and we look forward to building on that success with an improved event next year!

"GREAT EVENT."

3,000 EGGS & 400 KIDS= FUN



*"Easter Bunny. Check.
Easter Eggs. Check.
Kids having fun. Check.
Good job everyone."*

We would like to thank all our generous volunteers and sponsors, including many of our very own DNBA members for making this event possible. Our lead sponsors were Five Little Monkey's, Powell's Sweet Shoppe, and Jelly Belly. Supporting sponsors included A Closet Affair, All Season Soccer, Bay Area Discovery Museum, BasketballKids, Bicycle Brüstop, Cal-Star Gymnastics, City of Novato, Forever Aquatics, Love2Dance, SoccerKids, TeeballKids, teeny cake, UrbanSitter, and WholeFoods. Thank you for everyone who donated and volunteered to make this event a great success, with a special thank you going to the amazing Peter Serchia of All Season Soccer and Carolyn Thompson of Bicycle Brüstop.

Upcoming Events

LET'S PLAY!

SUNDAYS ON SHERMAN

BRINGING NOVATO TOGETHER

A new event is on the horizon in Downtown Novato!

An exciting new event is coming to Downtown Novato, brought to you by the Novato Parks, Recreation & Community Services Department! Sundays on Sherman will take place on Sunday, July 26th from 11am -3pm on Sherman Avenue and the Civic Green.

The event is a chance for community members of all ages to come outside and participate in structured and unstructured play without traffic restrictions. Guests can participate in organized exercise activities lead by an instructor onsite, or bring their own bike, roller blades, balls, Frisbees and other toys and simply PLAY!



SUMMER CALENDAR

Tuesdays, 4pm - 8pm, May - Sept.- Novato Farmers Market

Saturday & Sunday, June 13th & 14th- Novato Festival of Art, Wine, & Music

Saturday, July 4th- A perennial favorite: the July 4th Parade!

Saturday, August 15th- Nostalgia Days, custom car show

Sunday, July 26th- Sundays on Sherman: Play in the street!

July - October- Music in the Streets AND Friday Night Live Music, dates pending approval

The Novato Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department is interested in working with downtown businesses in Novato as partners or sponsors of this event. If your business is focused on health or fitness, you could set up a booth, teach an exercise class, host a cooking contest, etc.

The planning committee for this event meets monthly and includes representatives from the following agencies: DNBA, Novato Public Works, NUSD, Novato Parks, Recreation and Community Services, Novato Fire District, Novato Police Department, SF Marin Food Bank, YMCA, and Whole Foods.

For more information please visit their webpage at: www.cityofnovato.org/sundaysonsherman

NOVATO FESTIVAL OF ART, WINE & MUSIC

The renowned 'Novato Festival of Art, Wine and Music' is upon us again, now in its 32nd year! This year, the festivities will take place on Saturday, June 13th from 10am - 7pm and Sunday, June 14th from 10am - 6pm.

Grant Ave, between Redwood Blvd and 7th St., will be closed from 9pm on June 12th until midnight on June 14th. Additional side streets may be closed to facilitate traffic flow. For those businesses needing parking passes for their employees, please contact the Chamber at 415-897-1164.

The DNBA will have a booth at the festival and opportunities exist for DNBA Members to have a presence, and promote their businesses. Unique sponsorship opportunities are also available. Please contact dnba@novato.org to learn more!

LET'S DIALOGUE.

With the goal of starting interesting conversations that will lead to change and improvement in our Downtown, this section will introduce a new topic each quarter. We hope to hear from you with thoughts and questions!

ARE WE BORING?



Aaron M. Renn's recent article in The Guardian, entitled "In Praise of Boring Cities" got me thinking: Do you really need six different latte offerings, artisanal versions of every food product, and hipsters strolling in skinny jeans to make a city and its Downtown a desirable place to live and be? Trendy urbanites may scoff at suburban dwellers and call our towns boring, but everyone has a different take on what qualifies as 'the good life'.

As I get to know more and more Novatoians, I am learning that the people in our town equate quality of life with safety, serenity, friendliness and access to nature. This little oasis we call Novato is a special place with all the essential ingredients for a life well lived, already in place.

As Reem says, "Cities would be well-served by putting as much focus on getting vanilla right as they do in creating those exotic flavors so many of us love. The boring parts of cityhood are just as important as the sexy ones."

As we work to build the variety, novelty, and energy of our Downtown I think it is important to remember that Novato has truly nailed 'the boring parts' making it a great base for creating a world-class city and way of life.

What do you think? Please feel free to send thoughts and feedback on this topic to dnba@novato.org.

P.O. Box 312
Novato, CA 94948

E-mail: dnba@novato.org

WWW.DOWNTOWNNOVATO.COM

CITY CORNER

Updates from the City of Novato on topics that impact our Downtown.

City Launches a New & Improved Website. Novato.org-- easier to navigate, locate info, & contact City staff

Now it's even easier to find information on City services, improve self-service options, and connect with City staff with our recently-redesigned website. The new design still provides a tremendous amount of information, but in a streamlined and easier-to-navigate format geared toward the user.

The redesign was based on input from regular visitors to the website as well as from focus groups representing various demographics and interests. The feedback identified issues including usability of the homepage, the organization and presentation of information, and the reliability and usefulness of the search function.

Some enhanced features include:

- A "Service requests" page where visitors can report an issue

such as potholes, graffiti, illegal dumping, streetlight outage, and traffic signal problems, and upload photos if desired, directly to the appropriate City staff and track its progress.

- Responsive design--website adapts to smart devices
- Translation integration--website translated in a variety of languages including Spanish
- Staff directory--locate and contact a City staffer directly
- Park & facilities directory--photo, location, and amenities
- Friendly-URLs--easy-to-locate pages
- Improved search function
- One-click Social networking
- An "I Want to..." quick-launch menu

Visit us now at novato.org and let us know what you think: publicinfo@novato.org.

