



THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2025 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

*The Magic
Of Rotary*

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR ROBERT DUGONI



Robert Dugoni is the critically acclaimed *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post* and #1 Amazon bestselling author of the Tracy Crosswhite police series set in Seattle, which has sold over 10 million books worldwide. He is also the author of The Charles Jenkins espionage series, the David Sloane legal thriller series, the Keera Duggan legal thriller series, and several stand-alone novels including the literary novel *The Extraordinary Life of Sam Hell* - One of Newsweek Magazine's Best Books of All Time and *Suspense Magazine's* Book of the Year.

He has written critically acclaimed historical novels based on true events: *The World Played Chess* a coming-of-age story and the Vietnam War; *Hold Strong*, an untold story of WWII; and *A Killing on the Hill*, about a 1933 killing and trial in Seattle. His nonfiction exposé *The Cyanide Canary*, was a *Washington Post* Best Book of the Year.

Dugoni is the recipient of the Nancy Pearl Award for Fiction and multiple awards for best novel set in the Pacific Northwest. He has been a finalist for many other awards including the International Thriller Award, the Harper Lee Prize for Legal Fiction, the Silver Falchion Award for mystery, and the Mystery Writers of America Edgar Award. Several of his novels have been optioned for movies and television series.

Robert wanted to be a writer at age 12 (7th grade) and was a student journalist at Stanford University. He was an LA Times reporter and a practicing attorney before authoring his first book that took him 8 years to write and contacting 48 agents before he had his first deal. Today his books are sold in more than forty countries and have been translated into more than thirty languages.

FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Inspiration – Kurt Labberton
Sergeant-at-Arms – Matt Martinkus
Program – Jim Russi
Attendance – Magaly Solis

FUTURE PROGRAMS

May 1st – Jarod Higginbotham, Yakima Bait
May 8th – Sam Cho, Port of Seattle

PROPOSED NEW MEMBER

Unless written objection is received by the Board of Directors by Friday, April 25, 2025, the following candidate will be elected to membership:

Cole Held

President
West Hills Memorial

Classification: Cemetery Management

Proposed by: Jennifer Bliesner

Endorsed by: Sheri Bissell

ROTARY HIKE

Mark your calendars for Saturday, May 3rd for a guided hike on the Cowiche Canyon Uplands Trail starting at 9am. Meeting location is the trailhead parking lot off of Scenic Drive. Suitable for all ages, it will take approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours.

Wear appropriate shoes and bring water. Rotary will provide granola bars. Don't forget to invite your friends and family to come along.



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF JOBS FOR YOUTH PROGRAM



Click on the QR Code to see how you can help whether it be volunteering at the high school Career Fair on April 30th between

11am and 5pm teaching students how to fill out a job application, doing mock interviews, and how to be a good employee. You pick what time and how long you can help.

Students participating will have the opportunity to secure a 4-week 20-hour part-time summer job. You will also be able to sign up to provide a job, sponsor a job, or donate towards a job. One small gift of time and/or treasure will help change the life of a youth in community.

“ROTARIANS AT WORK” DAY! SATURDAY, APRIL 26TH 9:00am to noon

“Rotarians at Work” Day is one week away with volunteers needed at every site. One more volunteer is needed at the Sarg Hubbard Flower Garden to weed, prune, and spread bark. Two volunteers are needed at the Welcome to Yakima Sign weeding, trimming, and spreading bark; with the biggest need at Rotary Lake where 9 volunteers are needed to clean along the pathway and shoreline. Signing up is as easy as contacting the Rotary office or responding to the newsletter email.

Invite your family and friends to join in – many hands make light work. Together, let’s make our community more beautiful.



REVIEW

Spring is here, bringing with it all sorts of fun Rotary volunteer and social opportunities to get on your calendars. It also meant a full meeting that included Tim Teusink providing our inspirational message, a new member introduction, and the presentation of Paul Harris Fellow Recognition Items.

What’s Going On: Assignments have begun for Scholarship Dinners. If you don’t have your name on the list as a host or attendee NOW is the time to contact the Rotary office, Sheri Bissell or Drew Harris. The dates are May 1st through May 10th. The cost is \$125/member; everyone pays whether or not they attend. Do you like to hike? If your answer is yes, mark Saturday, May 3rd on your calendar for a Rotary Hike on the Cowiche Canyon’s Uplands Trail off of Scenic Drive - meeting time is 9am. Invite your family and friends to join in. The Racial Justice Committee is traveling to Wapato for their next Historical Perspective to hear a presentation and share food at the Filipino Hall on Thursday, May 15th. Time is 5pm. “Rotarians at Work” Day is next Saturday, April 26th. Volunteers will be out at three sites cleaning up our community: Rotary Lake, the Welcome to Yakima Sign, and the Flower Garden at Sarg Hubbard Park. Work begins at 9am and should be done by noon. The month of April ends with the Jobs for Youth Career Fair on the 30th. Volunteers are needed to help high school students learn how to complete a job application, mock interviews and how to be a good employee.

Erin Black introduced Tressa Mercy as our newest member, transferring from Southwest Rotary. Born and raised in Yakima, Tressa attended East Valley High School, YVC and Boise State where she obtained a degree in Business Management and Finance. She began her career at First Interstate Bank which today is Wells Fargo Bank. After working in many roles, she serves today as a lead commercial relationship manager serving 6 western states and Canada. She loves her family, that includes her husband Fred Mercy, adventure, and volunteering. She is no stranger to Rotary having served as past president of Southwest Rotary and as an area district governor. She is the current president of United Way and a member of the Rotary Trust Board. She has already been recruited on one of our committees. We are so lucky to have her as part of our club – we are now officially the Awesomest Club in the World!

Paul Harris Fellow recognitions items were presented to 20 members. A Paul Harris Fellow is awarded when individuals achieve a \$1,000 level of giving to the Rotary Foundation. Awarded their first Paul Harris Fellow were Sheri Bissell, Bret Bohoskey, Adrienne Garner, Trevor Greene, Tammy Hanlon, Felix Rifa, and Chuck Stillwaggon. Receiving recognition for their second Paul Harris Fellow were Erin Black, Tony Farina, Bruce Heiser, Brad Kessinger, Mike McKinney, and Joe Park. Multiple Paul Harris Fellows above their second were Jim Berg (6), George Brown (7 & 8), Dave Hargreaves (7), Rod Knipper (4), Duane Monick (8), David Rogers (7, 8 & 9), and Amanda Ryder (2, 3 & 4).

Our featured program began with a beautiful, loving introduction by Jan Luring of her son-in-law JD Bewley as our featured speaker. JD shared that same love for Jan and Greg, and the legacy they’ve created with grit, leadership, vision and heart. They not only built restaurants; they built people - JD is one of them. He started his presentation with questions for both Greg and Jan. For Greg it was, what do you wish you had known before going into the business of McDonalds. The answer was having more experience in the McDonald’s way. McDonalds owns the land and buildings; they owned all the stuff that wears out. Being

part of McDonalds has been a great experience. For Jan it was, how has the role of an operator changed. The answer was technology – it is constantly changing.

JD was naive when he first started the process of becoming an owner/operator. He learned quickly that success always comes back to people. McDonalds cares about their people; they provide 100% tuition assistance, weekly pay, career advancement and much more. What is it like to be an owner/operator? JD has a lot of positions within McDonalds; locally, on the field office level, and nationally. The most fulfilling has been being a part of forming strategy. As Digital & Delivery Lead it’s been powerful to see things he has come up with, or he and his partner have come up with, implemented and actually work in the system. At a field meeting last year in California, he introduced himself and talked about the Yakima Valley - our climate, the fact that 80% of the world’s hops are grown here, and we were voted the #1 wine region in the nation by USA Today – an invitation to visit anytime was extended. He never thought they would take him up on it, but they did. They called one day to say they were coming. After many sleepless nights and meetings with his local team preparing, the President of McDonalds USA and his senior leadership team came to Yakima. They listened, asked questions and wanted his feedback. The pressure was exactly what he felt as a candidate getting into the owner/operator program day in and day out.

Greg & Jan couldn’t just give the keys to JD to take over their franchise. McDonalds takes franchising very seriously and has a say at the table. There are five paths to become an owner/operator: The Next Gen (the program JD and Megan are a part of), Spousal, Registered Outside Applicant, Company Employee, or a Franchise Employee. In order to even apply to one of those programs you need two years of running a restaurant and being successful, two years leading multiple locations as a supervisor, and the financials. Once accepted, the pressure doesn’t ease; you are constantly being evaluated. They watch how you interact with others, how you interact with vendors, and how you conduct yourself. It’s not just about becoming an operator; it’s about deserving to be one. You are held to high standards. JD signed a 20-year contract for one location. Every location requires extensive evaluation and its own contract.

What happens once you’ve been approved as an owner/operator? What does it take to stay qualified? You have to deliver consistency, speed, the highest brand hospitality level at every touch point – drive thru, dine-in, digital, and delivery. Today there are 30 plus ways you can order from McDonalds. The team has to keep up with it, be able to handle the volume, adjust, and still deliver speed and service. McDonald’s is looking for operational excellence. As an owner/operator you are evaluated on everything from restrooms to curb side service. You have to maintain financial discipline. McDonald’s wants their money; you have to make it profitable and predictable. JD and Megan have been working on a succession plan with Greg and Jan for years. Part of that plan includes a new restaurant in Wapato.

Business and legacy are not built in a moment – they are built in early mornings, late nights, shift huddles, and the hard conversations. They are built by people like Greg & Jan. Whether you are an operator, a candidate, future leader, or someone who wants to make a difference in the system, success doesn’t come from owning a restaurant, it comes from owning that standard.



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