



THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 2022  
YAKIMA VALLEY COLLEGE CONFERENCE CENTER

Imagine  
Rotary

MIKE JOHNSON & AARON RUFF  
HOW THRIFT HELPS EVERYONE



Mike Johnson is the CEO of the Union Gospel Mission of Yakima (YUGM).

On his 18th birthday, Mike enlisted into the US Army Rangers. While serving, Mike was privileged to learn leadership from some of his generation’s most distinguished Operators, tested many of the Army’s coolest new toys, and blew up a bunch of stuff -- occasionally including some of the Army’s coolest new toys.

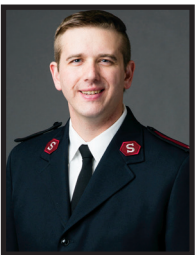
Mike met and married Dena Yackley while he was still a Ranger. They now have 31 wedding anniversaries and 7 adopted children.

Mike is a distinguished graduate of Abilene Christian University & Pepperdine University. After a decade as a church pastor, Mike joined Seattle’s Union Gospel Mission in 2007 as the director of downtown Seattle operations. In 2011, he spearheaded ‘Climbing Out of Homelessness.’ The Program has reached the summit of Rainier 8 times with 43 men and women men overcoming addiction and homelessness.

For over a decade, Mike has influenced his field to adopt trauma-informed practices grounded in research from the CDC and NIMH. In this, Mike owes much to the influence of his wife Dena who has been a practicing licensed mental health professional for 15 years.

Mike was previously the CEO of the Tacoma Rescue Mission, a member of the Pierce County Workforce Development Council, and of the Tacoma 2025 Citizen Advisory Committee.

Mike loves his family, Jesus, his job—and he has absolutely loved moving to Yakima. He is actively recruiting all his friends to join us here in the best city in Washington. He knows this will only drive up housing costs, but some things can’t be helped.



Aaron Ruff was raised in Deer Park, Washington just north of Spokane and received his Bachelor’s in secondary music education and his Master’s in secondary education from Whitworth University.

As an educator Aaron taught K through 8th developmental music and choir for several Catholic schools in Spokane and then became the middle school and high school band director in Orting, WA. It was in Orting that he met his wife, Meagan. Interested in service ministries that they could engage in together, Aaron and Meagan decided to train as officers in The Salvation Army and were commissioned as Lieutenants in 2018.

Their first assignment lasted three years in Kaneohe, HI where they directed The Salvation Army’s food security initiatives, emergency disaster response, youth mentoring, and pastored over a multi-cultural congregation on Windward Oahu. In July of 2021 they were assigned as the commanding officers of all Salvation Amy programming and services in Yakima.

Along with their three daughters ages 6, 4, and 2 they continue to fulfill the mission of The Salvation Army to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and meet human need in his name without discrimination.

When Lt. Aaron manages to find free time, he enjoys coaching, playing, or watching soccer, cooking, hiking, martial arts, and all things music.

FOR THURSDAY’S MEETING

Greeters – Jan Luring  
Music – David Rogers  
Invocation – Tom Froula  
Sergeant-at-Arms – Dana Dwinell  
Program – Bob Gerst

FUTURE PROGRAMS

August 25th – Nick Zentner, Central Washington Geology  
September 1st – Rotary Picnic at Franklin Park  
September 8th – Carol Ross & Gayle Scholl, Women Painters of Washington  
September 15th – Sr. Kathleen Ross

## PROPOSED NEW MEMBERS

Unless written objection is received by the Board of Directors by Friday, August 19, 2022, the following candidates will be elected to membership:

**Jolene Seda**  
CEO  
Triumph Treatment Services  
**Classification: Behavioral Health Administration**  
Proposed by: Craig Mendenhall  
Endorsed by: Erin Black

**Sara Watkins**  
City Attorney  
City of Yakima  
**Classification: Municipal Law**  
Proposed by: Quinn Dalan  
Endorsed by: Amy Maib



### SAVE THE DATE ROTARY PICNIC

Thursday, September 1st  
Franklin Park  
5pm to 7pm



### - REVIEW -

Thursdays are truly one of the best days of the week. There is something special about coming to Rotary to be greeted with a welcome and smile, enjoy conversation, and learn something new from some great speakers. None of it could be possible without volunteers that this week included Past President Greg Luring, Virg Umbarger, President Rick, and Rick Gross all serving as greeters; Eric Silvers with a music choice of *My Wish For You* by Rascal Flats in honor of National Son & Daughter Day; Leanne Antonio sharing thanks for all that we love about our Valley and for the visionaries who invest and bring new and exciting additions to our community; and Casey Corr with a judge themed sergeant-at-arms.

Did you know that the Rotary family picnic is coming? Now is the time to mark September 1st on your calendar. The place is Franklin Park. Sign-ups are underway for those attending and those who are interested in playing pickleball. National Hispanic Heritage Month is September 15th through October 15th. We will be celebrating on October 13th with U.S. District Judge David Estudillo as our program speaker. Sonia Rodriguez True is looking for members interested in helping and for members of Hispanic or Latino identity that would like to share their stories.

Bob Gerst had the honor of introducing our speaker, Joey Lawrence who shared his efforts to make Yakima a surfing destination. For the past 6 years, he and a few of his closest friends and family have been on a pursuit to change the Yakima Valley by bringing a new technology, WaveGarden to our community. Why Yakima? It all starts with the weather; after all there is only one place called the Palm Springs of Washington. Yakima is centrally located between 3 main populations hubs, Seattle, Spokane, and Portland; it gets warmer earlier here and stays warmer longer; and it has a distinct culture of agriculture and craft brewing that inspired the name of the park, Barreled.

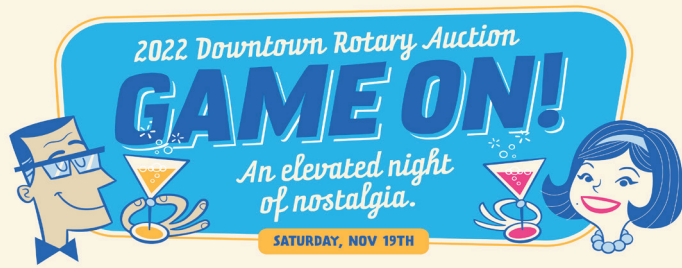
The idea for a surf park started in the Indian Ocean. He saw an Instagram post by world-class surfer Kelly Slater and knew exactly what he was supposed to do and what to call it. At the age of 29 he moved back in with his parents and began developing his business plan. In 2017, he moved to Yakima on a fulltime basis and began searching for a large parcel of land in a pristine environment. In 2019, he sent an email to a bunch of farmers. Mike Roy showed him 2 pieces of property. He chose one of those

parcels 3 miles north of Moxee tucked up against the Yakima Firing Center because of its beautiful view of Mt. Adams. The permitting process began in early 2020 – it took a few years but with approval granted it became the second WaveGarden cove approved in the U.S.

The design of the park will have an agricultural feel. The entrance will be a barn and the bar and restaurant will have the look of a roadside fruit stand. It is also designed to be good neighbors. They are not bringing a Silverwood or Great Wolf Lodge atmosphere. There will be 40 acres between the park and their nearest neighbor dedicated to habitat restoration. The water is coming from a farm south of the park that agreed to stop growing the necessary acreage to offset the use of their water without taking additional water out of the ground. The park will be centered around the 5-acre wave pools with two sections based upon skill. The Reef wave premium section will allow 10 people on each side an hour. The shallow end will be reserved for beginners. The barn will also serve as the merchandise and surf shop, the tractor shed will include locker rooms and auxiliary rooms that can be rented for events. The plan also includes 23 overnight cottages, 21 camping spaces, 21 RV spaces, pools, beach volleyball, a pump track, and an off-leash dog park.

The cost is big - \$50 million. Because the location is outside the urban growth area, they qualify for a USDA business and industry loan guarantee program leaving \$25 million left to raise. How will they pay for it? Projections have 130,000 visits in the first year. The target market is PNW surfers. There are an estimated 220,000 surfers responsible for 1.3 million visits to the coast every year. Barreled would only need 6.3% of that market. Yakima is the perfect place. In 2019, the Yakima Valley welcomed 2.5 million visitors. Who is coming? Athletic families are coming for sports, anyone coming from the south traveling to the Gorge, going to Mt. Rainier National Park via the east entrance, and people coming for our craft beverages – they are the perfect demographic.

The benefits to Yakima are societal by getting kids outside and broadening their global reach; public relations by creating an attraction that people can be proud of; and economic with the creation of 8 year-round and 90 seasonal jobs. The goal is to be ready to go by 2024-25 and to bring a world-class surf destination to the Yakima Valley.



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For more information on how you can get your company's name added to the list,  
please contact John Cooper at [john@visityakima.com](mailto:john@visityakima.com).