the Tooter

President…… Sheri Bissell
President-Elect…… John Cooper
Immediate Past President…… James DeGrasse
Secretary/Treasurer…… Tony Farina
Executive Director…….... Carolyn Flory

Directors: Ryan Anderson, Rich Austin, Erin Black, Dana Eliason, Celisa Hopkins, Mike Hummel, Anthony Peterson, Charlie Robin

email: yakimarotary@yakimarotary.org website: www.yakimarotary.org

PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE ROTARY CLUB OF YAKIMA
P. O. BOX 464, YAKIMA, WASHINGTON 98907-0464 OFFICE: 1704 WEST NOB HILL BLVD., TELEPHONE 509-452-8332

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2025
YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER

ADULT HOLIDAY PARTY
4pm to 6pm

It's party time, so spread the cheer. Our annual Rotary holiday bash is almost here! This week we'll trade our noon meeting for an evening scene, taking us out of our normal routine. From 4 to 6pm the fun will flow, with laughter and joy and faces aglow.

Wear your festive attire and sip a merry drink from our no-host bar, all while savoring hors d-oeuvres crafted by culinary stars. The Rotary Choir will be showing up with flair planning joyful music for all to share. There'll be Rotary BINGO with Scott Wagner and Brad Hansen, and prizes in store for those who dare.

Bring a friend, invite your crew – we can't wait to see you there for holiday magic beyond compare!

FUTURE PROGRAMS

December 25th – No Meeting, Happy Holidays
January 1st – No Meeting, Happy New Year
January 8th – Rod Jacobson, Air Methods/Airlift NW
January 15th – Dr. Mike Mittelman & Dr. Chris Gilmer, Collaboration Between PNWU and Heritage University

ROTARY BELL RINGERS

ROTARY FOUNDATION RECEIVES HIGHEST RATING FROM CHARITY NAVIGATOR

For the 17th consecutive year, The Rotary Foundation has received the highest rating — four stars — from Charity Navigator, the largest and most utilized independent charity evaluator in the United States.

The Foundation earned the recognition for adhering to sector best practices and executing its mission in a financially efficient way, demonstrating both strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency.

"We are delighted to provide the Rotary Foundation with third-party accreditation that validates their operational excellence," said Michael Thatcher, president and CEO of Charity Navigator. "The Four-Star Rating is the highest possible rating an organization can achieve. We are eager to see the good work that the Rotary Foundation can accomplish in the years ahead."

Charity Navigator analyzes overall nonprofit health and performance based on four key areas: Leadership & Adaptability to help donors understand if a charity has clarity of purpose, Accountability & Finance to explain if they are transparent and fiscally capable, Culture & Community to show how they engage with their constituents, and Impact & Results to explain what they have accomplished.

The Rotary Foundation — Doing Good In The World

REVIEW

With college sports as the theme, team pride was on full display with our favorite collegiate gear. Our greeters for the day were Jake Church and Chris Hutsell. Music was live with the singing of the National Anthem by Christa Blake Parker as our guest vocalist; she was amazing! Rick Pinnell followed with an inspiration message to not take things and people around us for granted. President Sheri presented blue badges to Kate Urwin and Kaitlin Bealer before our newest addition to the team with a new member introduction of Susan Brown-Aaron by Marisol Fast.

Susan was born in Arizona. At the age of 6, her family moved to Willamette Valley on a 10-acre farm where she learned the value of hard work. After 5 years, they moved to the Hood River where Susan studied ballet and fell in love with the outdoors. After high school, she attended Cal State University Bakersfield where she studied education and dance. She taught elementary education and bought and renovated homes as a hobby. As her children left for college, her husband was pulled to Yakima to become Yakima County's Chief Deputy Prosecuting Attorney. During the transition she continued teaching and worked as an event manager at Owen Roe Winery before working as general manager at Dineen Vineyards. Fully retired now, she manages rentals they own here. Yakima has become a place where she loves to hike, fish, dance, and participate in two book clubs. We are so happy to add one more thing to love as a part of Rotary!

Connie Falon and Melissa Brewer as our cheerleaders recognized all new members introduced since the beginning of President Sheri's year (draft class). Each stood up while their mentors waived fat heads in the air. Our goal for the year is 30 new members – we are 1/3 of the way there! As both rookies and veterans, it is up to all of us share Rotary, recruit new members, and get in the game! Rotary business ended with sergeant-at-arms by Nancy Leahy.

Rich Austin had the honor of introducing our program speaker John Canzano, a 17-time APSE award-winning sports columnist and a radio talk show host based in Oregon. He is known for his daily radio show, ***The Bald Faced Truth,*** and his independent sports writing on JohnCanzano.com. His has worked as a sports newspaper writer, covered Notre Dame football and Indiana University basketball during the tenure of coach Bobby Knight; is a former national Major League Baseball writer and national NFL writer, and has covered 5 Olympic Games and 9 Super Bowls. He holds a Baseball Hall of Fame Vote and is a voter for the Heisman Trophy.

His stories for us were captivating and entertaining, ranging from riding in an Indy car at 180 mph with Sebastien Bourdais who immediately became his favorite driver, to dealing with and butting heads with some of the most famous coaches, to starting his own website and independent column. His interest in sports began with his dad, a professional baseball player for the Mets in the 1960's. His dad not only introduced him to baseball but used to take him to the bookstore where he was introduced to authors such as Steinbeck and Hemingway.

He left his final newspaper role at The Oregonian when he recognized newspapers across the nation were in trouble. He knew from having worked at 6 different newspapers it wasn't headed in a good place. When he started at The Oregonian there were 68 people working in the sports department; when he left there were nine. He decided to launch his own website. He thought his readers would come with him; he began by writing about the Pac-12. He was at the Pac-12 basketball tournament and posted his first column; his phone lit up with subscribers. 50,000 people later, he still gets notified when someone new becomes a subscriber. He loves that personal relationship with his readers. It reminds him of being a kid, reading the sports column, and the diversion that sports should be. He hopes that college sports can get back there – it shouldn't be $6.8 in NIL to one player. He is all for revenue sharing and equity on the playing field. There is something wrong with the system that has the SEC and Big Ten so far ahead of everyone else. When talking to Oregon and Washington fans, they even miss the nostalgia and history of the Pac-12.

His career began at a small community newspaper covering little league games before going to the Santa Cruz Sentinel. Not known as a sports mecca, he learned how to write about people – surfers and girls water polo and make it interesting. His ability to make it relatable, resulted in his editor telling him he needed to cover a big beat. He put a resume together, applied to be the beat reporter for Indiana basketball and Notre Dame football and wound up in Indiana. He had Bobby Knight in front of him on a daily basis and Bob Davie, coach of Notre Dame. He learned how to cover a big program and a difficult personality, so much so that the Fresno Bee recruited him to be a sports columnist to cover Jerry Tarkanian. They wanted someone who wouldn't be afraid to call Tark out. During the first interview with him, all he wanted to know was about Knight. John and Tark butted heads on many occasions. During his time there Tark wrote him 2 letters. They both said the same thing - he didn't like him, he wasn't allowed in practice, and he wasn't fair. The day John left the Bee he had coffee with Tark who told him; you were mostly right.

Sports play an important role in our daily lives. They should be a diversion for what we have going on. Instead, today on the collegiate level and especially for the Pac-12 or Pac-2, it is too much like real life, rift with adversity and controversy. We are in an era when the old way of thinking about coaches is different. Schools are looking for a CEO and someone who can fundraise. He is confident that the Pac-12 will have access to the playoffs and hopeful that geography will win. The day the Pac-12 broke up, John spoke with Stanford coach David Shaw asking him what he made of it. Shaw said, "geography is a force, eventually this comes back together." A 110-year-old conference with a woman, Teresa Gould in charge as the Commissioner of the Pac-12, would have been unthinkable. She has put together a media rights deal and a plan. Oregon State and Washington State who were left for dead have made it through and company to play on and fight. The pacific time zone and west coast have been marginalized; it isn't good for our side of the country. He is encouraged by the passion he sees. We need to do more, fight for our schools, and ask what we can do.

One of the parts that he loves about his job is the engagement he has with his readers and callers. That was not possible as a newspaper reporter. He is honored to be in the position he is in today. He has fun telling stories; he leans on experiences he's had working for different papers; loves reporting; loves telling human interest stories that make you feel; and is not afraid to go in with commissioners and tell them they are wrong.

It was a great program! A special thank you to Rich Austin for asking John to speak to us and to Steve Hahn and Barry Warner for flying to pick him up and take him home.