



**THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2026
 YAKIMA CONVENTION & EVENT CENTER**

*Unite For
 Good*

**JON DEVANEY, BUD HOLLINGBERY, JACK FIELD
 & SARA HIGGINS**

**PANEL DISCUSSION:
 STATE OF AGRICULTURE IN YAKIMA VALLEY**



Jon DeVaney has served as the President of the Washington State Tree Fruit Association since September of 2014, when the Association was established through the merger of four existing tree fruit industry organizations. In this capacity he oversees industry education and training, data collection and reporting, and state and local government relations activities for the state's apple, pear, and cherry producers.



Bud Hollingbery is a fruit grower (Hollingbery Farm) of 57 years, a partner in Hollingbery and Son hops for 55 years, thus a long-time participant in the economic farming base of the Yakima valley.



Jack Field is the Executive Director of the Washington Cattle Feeders Association where he represents producers on a variety of legislative and regulatory issues. He is also the owner/operator of the Lazy JF Cattle Company, a commercial cow/calf cattle operation in West Yakima.



Sara Higgins is the Executive Director of the Washington Winegrowers Association. She has been with the association for fifteen years, spearheading the organization's education and advocacy efforts before becoming executive director in March 2025.

FOR THURSDAY'S MEETING

Greeters – Bob Price, Joel Ylvisaker
 Inspiration – Kurt Labberton
 Program – Jon DeVaney
 Attendance – Jake Hambly

FUTURE PROGRAMS

February 19th – Blaine Tamaki & Caitlin Oiye Coon, National Day of Remembrance
 February 26th – Megan Murphy, World Marathon Challenge
 March 5th – TBD
 March 12th – District Governor Tracy McCall

UPCOMING ROTARY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

RLI may be the most important Rotary training you undertake, informing you, empowering you as a leader and creating a network of other Rotarians from many clubs around the district. This is your chance to take part in one-day facilitated event that is suitable for members of ANY Rotary knowledge level on Saturday, March 21 from 8:30am – 3:30pm. Participants learn about everything from The Foundation to creating a positive membership experience, to learning about service opportunities outside your own Rotary Club bubble. Sessions are facilitated by various Learning Leaders and are a wonderful opportunity to interact with members from other clubs, exchange ideas and build potential new collaborations with other members.

The location is the Kittitas County Fairgrounds located at 1010 East 8th Street, Ellensburg and will include lunch. Space is limited to 24, so contact the Rotary office to reserve your spot.



FEBRUARY SECOND CHANCE SOCIAL



Ready for a Second Chance Social with a twist? This month we're going with a Small Business Night – Meet Tavolo! Located in Glenwood Square at 5110 Tieton Drive, its name is Italian for Table. Owners Lexi and Morgan will have a winery there to pour wine samples/tastings with wine for sale if you choose. Rotary will provide appetizers and chocolates. Save the date of Thursday, February 12th from 5pm to 6:30pm and bring a friend with you!

REVIEW

Our Black History Month celebration was met with a full house of members, students, and the wider community – a meaningful tradition we have upheld for the past 18 years. It all started with students from Davis, Eisenhower, and West Valley serving as our greeters. Dana Jackson followed with beautiful renditions of *Lift Every Voice and Sing* and *A Change is Gonna Come*. Howard Head shared an inspiration reminding us to take full advantage of meaningful opportunities. Lessons from his grandpa taught him about mindful consumption – it is not just about eating, it's how you eat. CWU was one of our sponsors for today's program and President Jim Wohlpart gave updates on CWU and how they are working for the betterment of students and our community. Last year they were the third largest provider of College in High School in the nation and this year, will be the largest provider of dual enrollment programs at CWU due to legislature that pays the tuition for high school programs. What they are doing is providing amazing opportunities for our youth and working to bring businesses to our region that will provide strong paying jobs for graduates.

Next up, Erin Black introduced our speaker. We have been fortunate to welcome many extraordinary speakers, and this year was no exception. We were honored to host Jennifer King, a pioneering football coach who made history as the first woman to serve as a full-time NFL coach. Prior to that she had a successful basketball coaching career, was a standout two-sport athlete and played quarterback/safety for the WFA. Following coaching roles with the Carolina Panthers and Washington Commanders, she served as an assistant running backs coach for the Chicago Bears before joining North Carolina Central University as an offensive analyst in 2025, specifically working with the team's wide receivers. Moderated by Eric Silvers, what followed was an exchange of thoughtful questions and insightful answers.

Has there been a moment in time when you realized that you were not only pursuing your own dream, but breaking barriers for others who would come after you?

She didn't get into coaching to be a "first". She had a goal to make better players and win games. It was her work ethic that allowed her to do something that hadn't been done before in her position. Initially, she did not realize the magnitude of it. It was when they were playing the Giants that the head coach told her she got the promotion. It didn't hit her until the official announcement was made that she realized she had made history. Now, what is most important to her is to be a great leader and role model, and to be the representation she didn't have. It is important to be visible and to show kids that they are limitless.

How did you handle the pressure and visibility that comes with being a "first" black female NFL coach while still staying grounded and true to who you are?

She comes from a large family and they keep her grounded. She was raised to be thankful and humble in the successes and failures. The teams have been instrumental in shielding her so she can focus on the job. The coaching cycle is a crazy business -you can be hired and fired like no one else in the industry. They have a saying that "you aren't a coach until you have been hired and fired". Being in a community is so important and not something she takes lightly.

Have you experienced discrimination or unfair treatment? Was there ever a moment when you considered walking away? What made you stay?

She is so grateful for the people she has worked with that she has not had those experiences. The players just wanted to be better, be successful and get contracts and didn't care where the coaching was coming from just that it was good coaching. She is aware that not all her counterparts have had the same experience. She credits the coaches and players for their support and willingness to be an ally. Her parents didn't raise a quitter – she has never considered walking away.

What leadership lesson did you learn the hard way especially when you were often the only black woman in the room?

One of the biggest lessons she learned was finding her voice. She went from previously running her own program to beginning at the bottom of the coaching staff at her next gig. Initially, she was trying to find her place and was quiet. She knew what to say but not when to say it. The head coach spoke to her about it. It gave her the comfort and confidence to speak up. Now, she has no problem speaking up. She is thankful for him for challenging her to be more vocal.

Why does representation, particularly in sports and leadership still matter, and what do people sometimes underestimate about its impact?

Representation is huge. As a kid, she remembers seeing famous athletes Jackie Joyner-Kersey and Zina Garrison and wanting to run and play tennis. They allowed her to believe she could do those things too. Diversity makes excellence. We are all so different and can come together for a common goal. That is what a team is. Being visible allows her to have the ability to do what Jackie Joyner-Kersey did for her, for someone else. If the game she is coaching is aired the odds are she will be on TV. She has received messages from parents that their daughter saw her and is now interested in football. Her doing her job allows young girls to believe they can too.

Who influenced you along the way, and how did that help the way you now mentor or create opportunities for others?

Her parents are her first mentors to this day. They did an amazing job raising her and were a great example of a strong work ethic and selflessness. After working all day, they would take her to three different practices, often getting home at 10pm. She appreciates their sacrifices and prioritizes also being selfless as a mentor. She never loses sight that she is standing on the shoulders of so many people to be where she is.

What advice would you give and how do you hope your story contributes to the ongoing Black History narrative?

As a community it is important to uplift our youth, encourage them, and offer programs that keep them focused. Our youth have so much to deal with that can pull them away from their goals. Kids need to hear that they are good enough and are here for a purpose. It's important to have dreams at any age. Go after what you want regardless of age and circumstances. In her industry, the women coaches support and celebrate one another even if they are competing against each other.

Opening the floor for questions gave insight into how she trains running backs and the dedication her work requires. Her days often begin at 5am and can stretch past 11pm. A lifelong athlete who started playing sports at eight, she believes growth through failure is important - not everyone needs a trophy. Coach Jennifer emphasizes the importance of positive mentors who help our young athletes build life skills. While she aspires to be a head coach someday, she's fully embracing the journey right now.

Thank you to our sponsors who made today's program possible: CWU, OIC of Washington, YWCA of Yakima, Eric and Ester Silvers, and Quinn and Aaron Dalan. Thank you to Erin Black, Eric Silvers, Anthony Peterson, and Ryan Anderson for your work on coordinating the various speaking engagements in our community. It was fantastic!



President Sheri Bissell, Jennifer King, Erin Black, and Eric Silvers.